

NOISE TRAFFIC: RECLAIMING MEMORY ARCHIVES

5-8 October 2025

Vapaan Taiteen Tila
Vilhonvuorenkuja 15
00500 Helsinki



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Aloes | Rafaella Constantinou | Daniela Pascual Esparza | Ana Gutieszca |
Maryam Dahir Ilmi | Claudia Konyalian | Argyro Nicolaou | Elham Rahmati
representing NO NIIN Magazine | REUTERS featuring Yiannis Kourtoglou |
Efi Savvides | Nicolina Stylianou | Sumu

curated by **Nicolina Stylianou**

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to take a moment to say a warm heartfelt thank you to all the people involved in this creative initiative. Their creativity, trust, and love were present throughout every step of imagining, planning, and producing this project. I am grateful to each one of them who believed in this project and worked alongside me to bring it to life.

This project would not have been possible without the artistic vision and creativity of Aloes by Marloes van Son and Alex van Giersbergen, Rafaella Constantinou, Daniela Pascual Esparza, Ana Gutieszca, Maryam Dahir Ilmi, Claudia Konyalian, Argyro Nicolaou, Elham Rahmati (No Niin Magazine), REUTERS featuring Yiannis Kourtoglou, Efi Savvides, Nicolina Stylianou, and the duo Sumu by Emīlija Rozenšteina and Jekaterina Viltšenko.

Behind the scenes, an incredible team made the heartbeat flow: Chih-Tung Li, niko wearden, Paloma Bautista, Jonathan Mayhew, Karolina Korvuo, Konstantinos Kostas, Olga Spyropoulou, Aman Askarizad, Gesa Piper, Rong-Ci Zhang, Paria Mohajerani, Stella Tähtinen and Emīlija Rozenšteina.

Over the four days, we successfully brought together 14 voices across borders from Cyprus, Somalia, Finland, Spain, Latin America, Iran, Armenia, the Netherlands, China, and Latvia and welcomed around 178 visitors from more than 15 countries, including Spain, Mexico, Brazil, Ecuador, Greece, Cyprus, Finland, Italy, Somalia, Albania, Kenya, Syria, Iran, the United Kingdom, Ireland, the Netherlands, Taiwan, and the United States, among others.

Our pop-up stand featured items from local artist-run initiatives including NOT, NO NIIN Magazine, Fantasy Football Magazine, infra record label, ALOES, and Cello Fest.

Nicolina Stylianou
N.O.T Founder



2025 N.O.T TEAM

Nicolina Stylianou | Founder, Producer, Curator
Olga Spyropoulou | Catalysti ry representative
Chih-Tung Lin | communication and social media
Stella Tähtinen & Emīlija Rozenšteina | Cello Fest collaboration
Konstantinos Kostas | PR and outreach
Paloma Bautista | production assistance, Catalysti ry
niko wearden | production assistance
Gesa Piper | TIAN coordination
Rong-Ci Zhang | artist interviews and podcasts, TIAN
Paloma Bautista | production assistance, Catalysti ry
Jonathan Mayhew | technical assistance
Karolina Korvuo | invigilation and hospitality, Vapaan Taiteen Tila
Aman Askarizad | photographer, Catalysti ry

PARTNERS

produced by **Sensorium Space Happenings** in collaboration with **Catalysti ry**
supported by **Cyprus Deputy Ministry of Culture, Taiteen edistämiskeskus,** and
TIAN - Teak's International Alumni Network.
visitor **Cello Fest**

WHAT IS N.O.T - NOISE TRAFFIC?

The future of thousands of lives is currently at stake. Grass-root counterculture urgencies emerge more than ever in the fight of human rights, the stability of democracy, and justice.

Noise Traffic is a creative initiative that emerges from such an urgency and through creative methodologies, art and research, it aims to map out the performativity of social systems and examine the role of *noise* as a critical necessity in today's contemporary society. It seeks to address the realities of the impacted people as well as to amplify voices that often remained unheard.

Noise Traffic aims to foster space for research, exhibitions, podcasts, sound art, community projects, and performances that engage a diverse audience beyond the artistic community. Drawing from the avant-gardists' tradition who dreamed of freedom, collectivism, and community, Noise Traffic aims to become a site of reflection, a living archive where one can find the reality which exists in sites of ontological and performative nature.

Noise Traffic was founded in Helsinki in 2023 by Nicolina Stylianou and initiated a cultural exchange between Cyprus and Finland. It emerged as a counterculture underground do-it-yourself event held on 14 January 2023 at Vapaan Taiteen Tila in Helsinki held in collaboration with Station of Commons, and was supported by the Cyprus Deputy Ministry of Culture and Vapaan Taiteen Tila.



NOISE TRAFFIC: RECLAIMING MEMORY ARCHIVES

The question of refugees seeking asylum in Cyprus cannot be understood outside the island's political landscape and the legal variabilities that accompany it. In 1964, only three years after independence from British colonial rule, inter-communal conflict between Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots prompted the United Nations Security Council to adopt Resolution 186, establishing the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). Conceived as a temporary measure to prevent inter-communal conflict, a demilitarised buffer zone was established after the 1974 coup against President Makarios and the subsequent Turkish military invasion, which resulted in the occupation of approximately 36% of the island. A ceasefire declared on 16 August 1974 entrenched the island's division: to the south, the internationally recognised Republic of Cyprus, now a member state of the European Union; to the north, a self-declared "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus," recognised solely by Türkiye; in between, the United Nations controlled buffer zone, and the British Sovereign Base Areas in Akrotiri and Dhekelia. This geopolitical constellation continues to structure the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers who seek international protection in the European Union.

Since the European refugee crisis in 2015 and until the present day, Cyprus has the highest number of asylum applications per capita in Europe. The island's geographical proximity to the Middle East and North Africa make Cyprus the closest entry point to the European borders. By 2023, most asylum seekers enter Cyprus through the occupied north via air travel and then move to the Republic of Cyprus on foot and via vehicles through the buffer zone to seek international protection. Since the occupied northern part of the island is not recognised by international law nor an asylum service exists there, asylum seekers' rights cannot be ensured nor recognised. Asylum seekers cross the buffer zone to seek international protection in the Republic of Cyprus which is bound by the European Convention on Human Rights. Their entry is considered irregular because the buffer zone is not an international border. The humanitarian consequences of the political warfare strikes on people in vulnerable positions who fall into legal loopholes due to their unawareness of the political complexities in Cyprus.

The current situation offers a fertile ground for border violation, systematic pushbacks, migration weaponisation for political warfare, human trafficking and smuggling of persons in vulnerable positions, xenophobia, and violation of the right to life.

Reclaiming Memory Archives was a four-day event that addressed how geopolitics collides with the fate of people in vulnerable positions as represented across media and within the cultural sector in both Cyprus and Finland. The edition collected a plurality of voices

focusing on themes related to migration, displacement, buffer zones, and internationalisation. Drawing from the avant-garde traditions of the 1960s, where artists embraced community-building, collectivism, social engagement, playfulness, and freedom of expression, The event aimed to map out the fragments of the sociopolitical landscape of Cyprus and the social issues emerging from it. It examined the role of noise as a critical necessity in today's contemporary society. The edition became a call to question how do we respond to urgent issues and what our actions inform.

By producing *Reclaiming Memory Archives* in Helsinki, Noise Traffic bridges the local and the global; the Mediterranean and Nordic contexts. The program positions Cyprus as a case study and reflects on Finland as both a host country and a site where global migration narratives converge. The four-day event program includes artworks, participatory performances, lecture performances, talks, film screenings, sound art, live concerts, and workshops by Finland-based transnational artists and cultural professionals from Cyprus.

Nicolina Stylianou
N.O.T



©Nicolina Stylianou 2025, *Buffer zone: Worlds frozen in time | An escort guided by UNFICYP soldiers at Nicosia International Airport*, captured by Aman Askarizad.

PROGRAMME

5 OCT 2025

- 18:00 Exhibition doors open
- 18:45 *Camp Pournara (2023 / Cyprus)*
film screening with English subtitles by **Efi Savvides**
- 19:30 *Working session n°4: in each step, a fragment*
performance lecture by **Daniela Pascual Esparza**
- 20:15 *Kräftegleichgewicht | Balance of Power*
participatory performance by **Rafaella Constantinou**
- 21:00 *SOLSTICE*
live techno performance by **Ana Gutieszca**

6 OCT 2025

- 12:00 Exhibition doors open
- 14:00 Exhibition guided tour by **Nicolina Stylianou**
- 15:00 *Kräftegleichgewicht | Balance of Power*
participatory performance by **Rafaella Constantinou**
pre-registration required
- 17:00 *Politics on Play*
Artist talk by **Rafaella Constantinou**
- 17:45 *How to Create [for] Change: Expanding the space for refugee
integration through cultural production*
Talk by **Claudia Konyalian**
- 18:30 *Pluralist Narratives of Internationalist Art and Culture*
Talk by **Elham Rahmati**
- 19:00 *Camp Pournara (2023 / Cyprus)*
film screening with English subtitles by **Efi Savvides**
- 20:00 *Elsewhere*
live concert by **ALOES**

7 OCT 2025

- 13:00 Exhibition doors open
- 14:00 *A pot of sugar and spice*
Somali Halwa workshop by **Maryam Dahir Ilmi**
- 19:00 **Cello Fest** visits Noise Traffic with
UTU a live concert by **SUMU**

8 OCT 2025

- 10:00 Exhibition doors open
- 10:30 *Kräftegleichgewicht | Balance of Power*
participatory performance by **Rafaella Constantinou**
pre-registration required
- 15:00 Exhibition doors close

ARTWORKS ON DISPLAY

- 1 *Screen Recording 2020-11-20 at 1.59.44 PM, (2023)*
short film by **Argyro Nicolaou**, Courtesy of the Artist
- 2 *Strap sandals, (2024)*
artwork by **Efi Savvides**, Courtesy of the Artist
- 3 **REUTERS / Yiannis Kourtoglou**
photographs on display, Courtesy of REUTERS
- 4 *Buffer Zone, (2025)*
photographs on display by **Nicolina Stylianou**, Courtesy of the Artist
- 5 *The Nouris Wire, (2025)*
artwork by **Nicolina Stylianou**, Courtesy of the Artist
- 6 *Kräftegleichgewicht | Balance of Power, (2021)*
artwork by **Rafaella Constantinou**, Courtesy of the Artist
- 7 *Working session n°4: in each step, a fragment (2025)*
performance lecture remains by **Daniela Pascual Esparza**

POP-UP STAND Noise Traffic | Cello Fest | NO NIIN Magazine |
Efi Savvides | Infra Record Label | ALOES | Fantasy Football Magazine

CAMP POURNARA (2023 / CYPRUS) Efi Savvides, film screening with English subtitles



Camp Pournara (2023) is the first film in a quadrilogy that documents asylum life in Cyprus while tracing the continuous impact of the 1974 Turkish invasion on local ideological divisions surrounding the presence of asylum seekers on the island. The film guides viewers through a landscape shaped by conflict, hostility, indignity, fear, and perseverance. It captures the daily realities experienced by both locals and asylum seekers in their encounters with one another. While Camp Pournara offers a nuanced commentary on the complexities of Euro-Cypriot politics, the quadrilogy as a whole reflects on borders, otherness, transformation, and neglect, linking the local with the global.





KRÄFTEGLEICHGEWICHT | BALANCE OF POWER (2021) **Rafaella Constantinou, participatory performance**

Kräftegleichgewicht | Balance of Power is a 15 to 30 minutes participatory performance that reimagines the rules of table tennis turning it into a performative buffer zone. Drawing from the buffer zone's characteristics, the table tennis foregrounds the multiplicity of institutional actors that seek to assert control over this contested space. By subverting the rules of ping pong and introducing play, the participatory performance opens a field of negotiation around authority, ownership, governance, and power. In this way, Kräftegleichgewicht | Balance of Power situates itself within broader conversations on the politics of shared spaces and play.





STRAP SANDALS (2024)

Efi Savvides, artwork on display

from the series, *The Empire is perishing; the bands are playing (2016-)*



Richmond Village was an unauthorised settlement on the Dhekelia Sovereign Base in Cyprus, home to refugees whose boat had washed ashore at the Akrotiri Sovereign Base in 1998. For nineteen years, its residents lived in limbo, until the British government granted them permission to resettle in the United Kingdom, bringing the settlement to an end. Since 2016, Efi Savvides has been visiting Richmond Village, documenting the lives of its inhabitants. *Strap Sandals (2024)* emerged from her return to the now-deserted site, where she unearthed several identical children's sandals in different sizes, left behind. Through this quiet trace, Savvides evokes themes of displacement, growth, youth, memory and the poignant loss of one world as another begins.

Efi Savvides is a visual artist, researcher and art educator based in Nicosia, Cyprus who incorporates a variety of media in her work. Her practice is rooted in participatory methodologies, working closely with displaced communities to co-create narratives that reflect their lived experiences. It is deeply embedded in the Cypriot socio-political landscape, engaging with broader European and global issues on migration and displacement allowing to situate her work within a wider geopolitical and cultural context, strengthening its relevance and impact beyond Cyprus. Her work seeks to investigate conditions of exclusion set up by institutions of power, especially in relation to minority groups of migrants and refugees in Cyprus. For years now, she has been working with borders, physical, social and internal. Through building long-term relationships with affected individuals she gathered abundant material and recorded their in limbo state of being, their resilience and will to survive.

POLITICS ON PLAY

Artist Talk by Rafaella Constantinou



In this talk, artist Rafaella Constantinou discussed about her practice, the context she is working with and the journey of Kräftegleichgewicht | Balance of Power participatory performance project.

Rafaella Constantinou's body of work revolves around the public space and questions the ephemeral nature of public art. She studies the urban fabric through an archaeological aesthetic spectrum, and as a result her practice is spanning from digital art to sculptural composition of found objects and spatial installations. In her in-situ art works she negotiates materiality and memory, space versus place making, and dipoles as presence-absence. The visual of her works is a puzzling image that highlights a limbo state of spaces and their transient dis-order. It takes the form of marking spaces and the elusiveness of their historicity. Constantinou completed her Master's Degree in Public Art and New Artistic Strategies at the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, Germany, in 2018 as a holder of the DAAD scholarship. In 2022, she formed RALLY Space in her home city Paphos, a hybrid space that she uses as her studio, shifting to an exhibition space that hosts periodical shows from local and international artists.

WORKING SESSION NO.4 IN EACH STEP, A FRAGMENT **Daniela Pascual Esparza, performance lecture in English and Spanish**

“Cyprus and I are two strangers. What it asks from me, I partly ignore, yet the echoes I catch bring discomfort. They bring grief, they bring doubt, they bring inadequacy. And so, in each step, a fragment: a weed, a poem, a whisper.” Working sessions are the artist’s personal laboratory; moments during which she shares her artistic process with an audience. The task she realised, as she claims, is articulation. “Reading, writing, and gleaning in an attempt to hold space for life and grief when everything feels too big to seize.” - Daniela Pascual Esparza

Daniela Pascual Esparza is a Helsinki-based performer, curator, and educator. She is the creator of Candama, a platform that offers art and poetic consultancy services. Daniela brings together different fields and contexts to practice hopeful ways of being. She has experience in participatory performances, urban consulting, coaching, working with children, and curating site-specific works. Plants, urbanism, rituals, astrology, and Andean Cosmivision inform her practice.





SOLSTICE

Ana Gutieszca, live concert

Ana Gutieszca is a visual & sound artist born in the northern Mexican plateau. She is an inventor of broken noises and graphite universes: she is fascinated by the transformation of drawing into sound and using graphite as a tool for sound making. With a background in visual arts and music, she sculpts the unfathomable boundaries of drawing through the creation of analog instruments, the sonification of graphite and its deconstruction into performance art. Her music is rough as the desert, combining hypnotic brain-melting noise from self-made analogs and minimal/brutal techno beats from drum machines. In 2023 she co-founded Äänitaiteen Seura, and the founder and sonic mind behind Third Space. She curated numerous exhibitions and the Sound Room concert series from 2013 - 2021.

CREATING [FOR] CHANGE: EXPANDING THE SPACE FOR REFUGEE INTEGRATION THROUGH CULTURAL PRODUCTION

Talk by Claudia Konyalian, Cultural Producer

In this talk, Claudia Konyalian drew on threads from her heritage and her own migratory experiences, alongside her work with refugees in Cyprus and questions around culture, identity, and belonging. She reflected on artistic and cultural production, where ideas, awareness and connection are sparked, as the space for social change. She made a case for refugee integration through cultural initiatives that generate opportunities for co-creation and transformation.



Claudia Konyalian is a cultural project manager and communications professional who has been working with the UN Refugee Agency for over eight years, capturing refugee stories and collaborating with the refugee community and other organisations on various integration and refugee empowerment initiatives. Most recently she collaborated with the Nicosia International Festival and the National Museum of Contemporary Art Athens on a refugee integration program through contemporary art; her current projects include supporting a community garden for LGBTIQ+ refugees and co-curating an exhibition of artwork by refugee women in rural Cyprus. She is interested in themes of identity and belonging, and the application of cultural production towards bringing social change. She has worked in the non-profit cultural sector and as a team member on an EEA/Norway Grants-funded project exploring art in public space in the city. She is a descendant of refugees, with her own migratory lived experience that informs her work. She is part of the Armenian diaspora and lives in divided Nicosia.



PLURALIST NARRATIVES OF INTERNATIONALIST ART AND CULTURE

Talk by Elham Rahmati, co-founder & co-editor of NO NIIN Magazine

In this talk, co-founder & co-editor of NO NIIN Magazine, Elham Rahmati, discussed how an internationalist editorial approach actively builds bridges across diverse cultural landscapes and amplifies voices that might otherwise remain peripheral in mainstream discourse. The talk reiterated how the magazine contributes to a pluralistic, inclusive, and interconnected artistic dialogue that encourages knowledge exchange, mutual understanding, and solidarity.

Elham Rahmati (b. 1989, Tehran) is a visual artist and independent curator based in Helsinki. She is the co-founder and co-editor of NO NIIN, an independent online monthly magazine at the cusp of art, criticality, and love.

NO NIIN is an online monthly magazine at the cusp of art, criticality, and love. Co-founded and co-edited by Elham Rahmati and Vidha Saumya in 2021, the magazine has published 32 online issues and 4 print publications. NO NIIN absorbs the disruptive sparks emerging from the intersectional art and culture environs that counter the status quo, aspiring to develop them as springboards for new ways of thinking and working towards hope, liberation, and building internationalist, feminist, anti-colonial and anti-imperialist solidarities. NO NIIN has continuously operated with an internationalist perspective, rooted in the belief that art transcends national, cultural, and political borders. Contributions on the magazine's platform connect art discourse in Finland with global conversations through the presentation of voices from the Nordic countries, Baltic states, Eastern Europe, Southwest Asia, South Asia, North Africa, and South America.

ELSEWHERE

Aloes, live concert

“Water dripping, doors slamming, glasses clinking, soft humming, synths buzzing and a hint of clarinet: a rhythmic audiovisual soundscape built up from local noises combined with atmospheres from elsewhere”. - ALOES



ALOES creates atmospheric soundscapes with pop-like melodies, vocals and occasional crude beats. They often use custom software, self-built instruments and field recordings, but also perform with sequencers and clarinet. ALOES is a collaboration between new media artist Alex van Giersbergen and sound artist Marloes van Son (born in NL, based in Helsinki).



A POT OF SUGAR AND SPICE

Somali Halwa Workshop by Maryam Dahir Ilmi

Sweetness becomes memory; memory becomes story. In this workshop, we learned how to make Somali Halwa guided by **Maryam Dahir Ilmi**. She talked about how Somali women carry the tradition forward and how it has become a symbol of community and women's resilience against violence and strength for their rights. Somali Halwa is a traditional sweet made for weddings and moments of coming together to celebrate and share moments.



UTU SUMU, live concert

Sumu is a collaborative project between sound artist **Jekaterina Viltšenko** and cellist **Emīlija Rozenšteina**, formed in early 2025. Sumu's music unfolds through an exploration of tone and timbre at the intersection of acoustic sound and electronics, where shifting textures, resonant drones, and subtle dissonances are amplified and reshaped into an evolving ambient landscape. At Noise Traffic 2025, they premiered a new work titled UTU that combined electroacoustic composition and improvisation. They explored the interplay between cello and electronics in a live, immersive setting. Sumu's concert was possible as a visit by Cellofest at Noise Traffic.

Cello Fest is the first ever International Cello Festival in Finland and its first edition took place in 2019, in Helsinki. The purpose of the festival is to bring together young promising cellists and established artists from around the world.



BUFFER ZONE (2025)

Nicolina Stylianou, photographs on display



©Nicolina Stylianou 2025, *Buffer zone: Worlds frozen in time | An escort guided by UNFICYP soldiers at Nicosia International Airport*, captured by Aman Askarizad.

01. 02. An escort at the buffer zone in Nicosia's green line guided by UNFICYP soldiers depicting abandoned buildings inside the buffer zone which are reclaimed by nature alongside abandoned clothes of asylum seekers.

SCREEN RECORDING 2020-11-20 AT 1.59.44 PM (2023)

Argyro Nicolaou, short film on display with English subtitles

In 1974, following the Greek-backed coup d'état and Turkish invasion of Cyprus, Nicolaou's mother's hometown, Varosha, was turned into a forbidden military zone by the occupying Turkish army. Uninhabited and inaccessible for 46 years, the once-bustling seaside resort became an eerie ghost town, until one day in October 2020, when it was suddenly opened to the public as a bizarre open-air museum. In this short film, Nicolaou's mother and herself reflect on the experience of returning to her childhood home as tourists, 46 years after her mother was forced to flee.

Argyro Nicolaou's work deals with the intergenerational effects of displacement in post-conflict, post colonial societies like her home country of Cyprus. Its goal is to center the role of art, memory, and female experience as thorns in the side of official history. Through an interdisciplinary, research-based practice that draws from visual and textual references from her native Mediterranean and elsewhere, she harnesses her background as a woman born to a family of refugees to create film and video works that interrogate the effects of the past on the present. What should we do with the traces of history in their material and immaterial forms, in a world increasingly enthralled by the revisionist promises of the new? Argyro Nicolaou is a Cypriot filmmaker based in Brooklyn, NY. Her short films have screened at festivals and art exhibitions in Europe and the US, including at First Look (Museum of the Moving Image, NY), Tallinn Black Nights, Los Angeles Greek Film Festival, Drama International Short Film Festival (Greece) and Gallatin Galleries (NYU). Argyro holds a PhD in Comparative Literature and Critical Media Practice from Harvard University. She is currently an Artist-in-Residence at Bard College's Center for Human Rights and the Arts.



THE NOURIS WIRE (2025)

Nicolina Stylianou, artwork on display



In 2021, Interior Minister Nicos Nouris, announced plans to install barbed wire fencing along stretches of the UN buffer zone to prevent the asylum seekers from crossing the Green Line into the Republic of Cyprus government controlled areas. In 2024, the Council of Ministers formally decided to remove the wire, acknowledging it had no real effect on migration management. The dismantling of the wire marks the tension over borders, movement, and humanitarian responsibility.

REUTERS / YIANNIS KOURTOGLOU

Photographs on display



©REUTERS / Yiannis Kourtoglou

01. In 2024, 159 asylum seekers including trafficked women, unaccompanied children, and survivors of cancer from Syria, Cameroon, Iran, Nigeria, Afghan, and Türkiye attempted to enter the Republic of Cyprus irregularly via foot through the buffer zone. The government denied their entry to the Republic of Cyprus, confiscated their documents and pushed them back to the buffer zone. As a result, they were stranded for more than five months in limbo under increasingly terrible weather, health, and welfare conditions. During that period, they didn't have access to private life, the children didn't have access to education, nor had a standard of living adequate for the children's development. After months of negotiations between the UNHCR Country office in Cyprus, the UN Peacekeeping force in Cyprus (UN-FICYP), the European Commission, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, European Council on Refugee and Exile, and the Republic of Cyprus, the asylum seekers were allowed entry to the Republic of Cyprus and access the asylum service.



©REUTERS / Yiannis Kourtoglou

02. After more than a year of separation Syrian refugee Ammar Hammasho was finally, though briefly, reunited with his wife and four children through a chain link fence topped with barbed wire in Cyprus. Falling to his knees, Hammasho, who is from the war-battered city of Idlib, kissed each of his three eldest children through the three metre-high barrier encircling a migrant reception centre at Kokkinotrimithia, west of the Cypriot capital Nicosia. “The policeman told me to wait half an hour to finish the count. I couldn’t wait, I saw the kids through the fence and I did this,” he said, waving his hands over his head. “The kids ran over. I just wanted to see them, for my heart to go back into its place,” the 34-year-old construction worker told Reuters on Wednesday. The reunion came on Sunday, just hours after Hammasho’s wife and their children aged 7, 5, 4 and 18 months came ashore with 300 other Syrians in north-western Cyprus after a 24-hour trip on a small boat from Mersin in Turkey, in what was one of the largest mass landings on the island since the Syrian war began. Hammasho knew his family were trying to leave Syria, but didn’t know precisely when. “When I read on the Internet that about 250 were heading to Cyprus I knew it was them,” he said with a broad smile.

ABOUT THE CURATOR

Nicolina Stylianou is Cyprus-born artist and cultural producer specialising in live art and performance studies. Her interests are informed by her cultural identity and embody the effects of growing in the last divided city which is illegally occupied by Türkiye. She explores social systems through the lens of noise and performativity. They are tools to challenge the status quo and unlock the performativity of the world.

She has recently co-curated a refugee integration program based on creative methods organised by Nicosia International Festival in collaboration with | National Museum of Contemporary Art Athens. The program included creative workshops, photographic portraits exhibition, educational program for primary schools, guided tours in the city of Nicosia, seminars, and lectures.

Between 2023-2025, she worked as the lead producer at Nicosia International Festival and she produced 30 large national and international performing arts productions involving 671 artists and over 15 organizations from over 12 countries, achieving an audience outreach of 46,000. During that time she collaborated with Festival d'Avignon, Onassis Stegi, Athens Epidaurus Festival, Schaubühne, Mercat de les Flors, Teatros del Canal, Broadway Entertainment Group, Sadler's Wells, Pina Bausch Foundation, Greek National Opera, among others. She graduated with a Master of Arts in Live Art and Performance Studies from Teaterikorkeakoulu - Taideyliopisto in Helsinki (2020).

She is a Koneen Säätiö alumni fellow (2020-2022), artist resident of Art OMI Center in New York (2023). She was commissioned by Museum of Impossible Forms, Kontula Electronic, Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, Goethe Institut Zypern, Defibrillator Art Gallery in Chicago, and Luisa Catucci Gallery in Berlin.

ABOUT CATALYSTI RY

Catalysti Ry is a non-profit art association based founded in 2013 in Helsinki. Formed as a network of transcultural artists, they work at the intersection of activism and artistic production. They promote member activities, organise exhibitions and events, provide networking opportunities, employment possibilities, and promote knowledge sharing between members that want to develop their craft. Diversity, inclusion, and equity are the pillars on top of which Catalysti was created and still functions today.

Since its establishment in 2013, Catalysti has initiated, produced, and participated in over 200 art events. Since 2020, their main focus has been to further democratise their operations and move towards a more sustainable multi-voiced organisation.

