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ABSTRACT

Home – No Home reflects through expanded photographic artworks and elucidate – through heuristic introspection, auto-ethnography, and critical text analysis – notions of expatriation and social integration, such as home, (Blunt & Dowling 2006; Blunt *et al*., 2007) home displacement and attachment, nostalgia (Vidler, 1992; Koerner, 2017) and homesickness (Fink *et al*., 2007). Attached to these concepts are deeper questions rooted in societal discourses about today's global trends and discourses of expatriation, (Fechter, 2007; Leonard 2010; Walsh, 2010, 2012, 2014; Mathur, 2011; and Kunz, 2016) and the politics of border assertion and control. Is the ability to live abroad, in unfamiliar countries, a venture into pursuing present-day promised lands? If expatriation, or skilled-worker mobility, is a venture to paradises on earth, does it come without social and psychological baggage for the individual? Does repatriation (Chen & Morley, 2008) help in any way to alleviate them? In this paper, I consider these questions by offering a theoretical analysis of concepts such as home, home displacement and attachment, nostalgia, homesickness, self and its past and memory, along with creative work portraying them.

Keywords: Expanded Photography, Expatriation, Home, Social and Cultural Integration.

I. IDEA DEVELOPMENT – CREATION OF WORK AND PRODUCTION SPECIFICS

The series Home – No Home explores how notions and lived experiences of home, attachment and displacement and nostalgia of the past have informed my views of place. Home – No Home (Fig. 1) is evocative of the trials and spoils offered by expatriation within the expanded context of human migrations. If all these places where I have lived, outside my hometown of Patras, could be defined as Expatria, then what do home, and home attachment mean for me? Could it be the place I was born or lived in as a child? What are the social and psychological factors that define this?
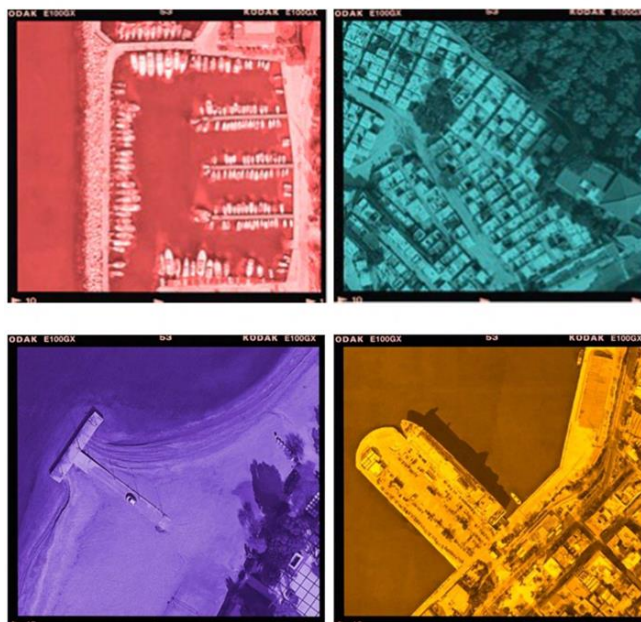

Fig. 1. Works from Home No Home.

I take as a fact and as a working condition that leads to the images of this series that the 'privileges' of globalization 3.0 (Friedman, 2004, p.np), the unceasing effort to adapt to new environments, the constant struggling with culture and reverse culture shock (Oberg, 1960), the temporality and instability of my thoughts and feelings during various relocations, and the many strategies (self-remedies) I have adopted, to cope with living abroad have progressively made me a stranger to the place I once called home. I have lost sight of the places tied to my childhood experiences and this has reconfigured my identity. Further to this, the place I once considered home has changed, which further complicates matters. The series displays how ambivalent home and home attachment is for the expatriate, and how home and place of youth feel from afar and at different times in one's life.

A strong history in cultural narratives has formed an important part of the research in this series. History and current contemporary art practice illustrate the fact that being at home and being away from home are interwoven ways of being in the world. This meets my lived experience and my identification as a skilled-worker and artist in transience. I draw upon these ideas in the mixture of creative practices I used for the series.

In terms of practices, the series uses non-camera photography, image appropriation and digital manipulation methods, which align with current "Post Photography practices" (Shore, 2014, p. 7). In this regard, the *Home – No Home* series additionally serves as an invitation for the viewer to access the past, present, and future of photographic representation.

My works' evocation to memory, autobiographical character, my expanded and computational practices that lead to personal place significations and the synergy of concepts from history, art, psychology and human geography function as an experiment, whose results urge for a richer conversation on home, home displacement and attachment, expatriation, transience, and identity. I anchor this prolonged discussion in the following sections and present creative work, literature and practices that inform it:
- Viewing and searching for Home: Remote Practices,
- Nostalgia-Melancholy-Longing for Home,
- Home attachment,
- Expatriation and the pursuit of the Promised Land.

II. VIEWING AND SEARCHING FOR HOME: REMOTE PRACTICES

Home has been defined as the house/apartment where you live, especially with your family; a house/apartment that is considered as property you can buy or sell; the type of family you come from; a place where people or animals live and are cared for by people who are not their relatives or owners; your own country or your own area (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020a). Scholarship supports and extends these definitions. The geographers Blunt and Dowling include non-tangible experiences such as memory and imagination:

> "Some may speak of the physical structure of their house or dwelling; others may refer to relationships or connections over space and time… Your sense of home might be closely shaped by your memories of childhood, alongside your present experiences and your dreams of the future" (Blunt & Dowling 2006, p. 1).

In *Home – No Home* by viewing home remotely, I reclaim the memory of places of my youth in an attempt to resurrect my fading childhood experiences. To do so, I used various computational and digital pictorial practices; capturing views of my hometown, Patras, in western Greece through Google Maps and using screen shot post-production, image appropriation, pseudo-aerial vantage points, glossy saturated surfaces, and manipulated colour (Fig. 2). I worked in this way, in order to position expanded photography as a method and interpreter of my lived experience of expatriation and define the binary Expatria versus home and the notions home and away from home.

Fig. 2. Rooted – Uprooted from Home – No Home.

The appeal of expanded photography, as a part of the creative practice and research narrative, was to explore ways of shifting away from creating indexical views of place with myself in them, align it with the idea of being expatriated and to convey the complexity of being free of spatial restrictions. This marked a shifting away from an established tradition that called for practitioners being in place, in and of the landscape, and being a part of the environment when working with place.

The global, digital aerial photographs from Google Maps are pristine examples of contemporary technological and scientific ability that underscore displacement and remoteness. The free-of-spatial-restrictions, simulated views have become important norms our everyday human vision and needs. Google Map's consensual authority in our everyday lives is exercised through digital photogrammetry, and its output is based on post-produced satellite images. Although contemporary military warfare uses aerial views and GPS technologies extensively, in Home – No Home, my pseudo-aerial views have no power-related, political, nationalist, or military use. I have associated them with distancing from home, viewing remotely and a hazy past. My aerial views serve as metaphors of mobility and being in the air (in transience) and are there to highlight my transience and my current expatriation.

My works for Home – No Home are made up to mirror 'real' (indexical, i.e., of a specific time and place) aerial photographs, which brings an additional set of discourses onto the table. The decisions I made about altering the surface of the screenshots are connected to my experiences of home, home attachment, expatriation, and transience. I coloured every frame in keeping with the colour layers of the Kodak colour film (that is, subbing layer; red light-sensitive layer; green light-sensitive layer; yellow filter; blue light-sensitive layer, and UV Filter) to signify frivolous but strange and forsaken colourful childhood memories. I used the tactile surface of the film (a strong reference of photograph's legacy) as a metaphor of my past, which is now intangible because of my displacements and attachments and all intricacies of expatriation and transience lived and felt.

With my pseudo-slides I further argue that time stands still, in a temporary present during expatriation. Displaced individuals tend to remember the home they left behind unchanged. I achieve this by repeating not only the same film base in every image, but also the same numbers and indexes on the edge of every transparency. We read on every film base: Kodak E100GX 10 53. Users of analogue film would know that this is impossible, as the number of the captures advances frame by frame. In this regard, my digitally remastered pseudo-slides are not only equivalents of my current state of mind and anima, but also 'false sites' that intertwine with photography's representational orthodoxy. In fact, with my decision to doctor aerial screen shots and make them similar to archival film slides I seek to tamper with the once-believed veracity of landscape photography.

The false slides depict places and events of that past, distant, fading childhood memories and a lurking longing for a place once considered home from afar.

Fig. 3. Summer Splashes from Home – No Home.

Summer Splashes (Fig. 3) is a false view of place that illustrates the social and psychological complexities of displacement and attachment, the longing for an 'unchanged' home facing the self in transience, and the shifting of this aerial supreme view of Google Maps into a personal instrument for depicting expatriation.

The image is a doctored aerial shot of a poorly equipped or maintained beach, with a jetty. The beach could be anywhere on (Google) Earth. A car is strangely parked midway on the jetty. The surface is of monochrome purple. This is a public beach close to a hotel resort where I used to swim with my school friends. We dived from the jetty, again and again, finding shade underneath it during the scorching days of summer. Without the title *Summer Splashes*, we could not read the image as a colourful childhood memory. The parked, white car, the purple surface, and the empty beach create a charged atmosphere of decadence, suspicion, longing, or anticipation. The purple light, from a purple sky, is nearly post-apocalyptic.

Re-authoring memory and autobiographies are central to this image. The digital transfiguration of my works suggests a self-in-crisis, baffled by mixed thoughts and feelings of displacement and attachment and struggle to define what home is with in the aftermath of pursuing the ideals of global mobility. Never being

close to and never too far from home makes any place I inhabit seem temporary. By showing these pseudo, blown-up, composited screen shots as nearly spotless and highly groomed, and by rendering my places of youth both as welcoming and unwelcoming places entertains the fact that I can never fully return to the raw lived experience of these places of childhood. I can never go back home, as the place and my life have grown apart after many relocations. With the series *Home No Home*, I find home, far away from home, in the metaphorical and autobiographical realm of images, which form the theorized fictitious place I called *Expatria*.

III. NOSTALGIA, MELANCHOLY, LONGING FOR HOME

Nostalgia is "a feeling of pleasure and also slight sadness when you think about things that happened in the past" (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020b). Etymologically, nostalgia is a Greek compound word comprising the words nóstos, meaning homecoming, and álgos, meaning pain. Together they mean "homesickness; the desire when away to return home, amounting sometimes to melancholia" (Encyclopedia Britannica, 1911, p. 822). Nostalgia and homesickness can lead to melancholy. Melancholy from "Greek melán 'black', dark and cholē bile" (Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2020b) is still considered a psychiatric illness and a "depressive disorder" (Fink *et al*., 2007, p. 1).

All these terms – nostalgia, homesickness, and melancholy – are highly relevant to the *Views from Ex*patria project. While moving from place to place for 13 years now, I have found myself in a vicious circle of leaving home for another place and then leaving that place for another. The more I travelled away from home, the more I faced recurring, odd, short-lived, shifting thoughts and sentiments of belonging to a home, homesickness, and nostalgia. I was in this contradictory condition feeling pleasure from being away, anywhere I wanted, and sadness for leaving place after place and parting from people, objects, places and experiences of my youth related to them.

Rendezvous (Fig. 4) is an example of how a doctored aerial 'view' of a hypothetical home, or a childhood memory tied to a place can conjure up nostalgia, melancholy, and longing for home. It is also an example that portrays the blending of thoughts and feelings of expatriation and the clashing between non-geographically specific, represented, and once bodily experienced place.
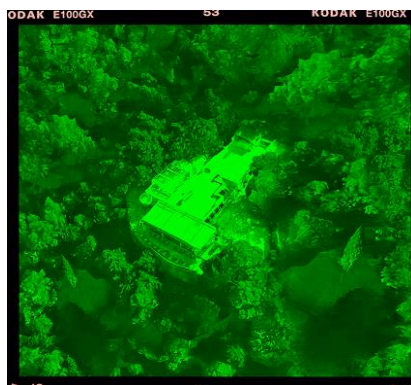

Fig. 4. *Rendezvous* from the series *Home – No Home.*

The title, *Rendezvous* calls for a hypothetical meeting place with certain individuals, lovers, and friends. It is a familiar (strange) place of my childhood. Portraying it in an aerial doctored picture confuses the reality of its memory more than recalling it. The view reveals a place in the process of becoming, informed by fluctuating personal thoughts, feelings, and lived experiences. Also, it is informed by a ceaseless struggle between my childhood memories, expatriation, and the tides of time. The building is hidden in the woods and once served as a retreat for all my teenage expressions. It serves as a retreat for a city boy, hiding from his father whilst growing up. The view of this mysterious place is also a representation of pleasure and also slight sadness when re-enacting past experiences. A becoming place, which reflects open-ended relations with people, objects, and the renegotiations of past events of my youth, as triggered by place.

When you become an expatriate, not everything fits into your suitcases when you move away from home. You leave some memories pasted on the ground where they occurred. You are left with only fragmentary, melancholic representations, photographs of the one place or another. Photography is an "elegiac art as it promotes nostalgia" (Sontag, 1973, p. 11). Nostalgia, photography, and their relation to the past involve what French critic Roland Barthes calls "the fatality of photography" (Barthes, 1977, p. 6). For Barthes, every photograph involves something or someone and these two without exception remain in the past, packed into a specific instance of time that will never re-occur. He asserts, that every photograph is "a certificate of presence in the past" (Barthes, 1980, p. 87). This means that, through photography, we nostalgically link people, places, and our lived experiences in them with an unbroken bondage, which we

invariably situate in a 'dead instant' of the past. "That instant, however brief, in which a real thing happens… never denies that the thing has been there" (Barthes, 1980, p. 78). As Susan Sontag has written, we infuse photographs "with a memento mori ideology" (Sontag, 1973, p. 11).

I believe in the elegy and nostalgia of photography, when they involve picturing expatriation, melancholy, and the longing for home. But I am not entirely convinced of its fatality and anchoring in the past. Photographs and poems 'can live forever' and can become the object of contemporary time, as long as new contexts are applied to them. This occurs in *Home No Home*. I used nostalgia, longing for home metaphorically as triggers to create representations of the familiar but forsaken 'home' I left behind. In addition, to portray the contradictory conditions of expatriation and the instability of my thoughts and feelings, while being away for many years. Artists like myself learn their craft under the principles of experimentation, versioning, and transfiguration, which account for a more synthetic way of perceiving life, time, and art making. Adding expatriation and transience to the equation, the line between reality and representation becomes blurrier.

The British academic Anthony Vidler historicizes the European notion of nostalgia (and being at home and not at home) in *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* (1992). Vidler traces estrangement from home in the realm of the architectural uncanny of the 19th century and in the definition of the uncanny in itself. I connect the uncanny to our topic here, as familiarity and unfamiliarity are constructed ideas and sentiments pertinent to binaries homely ease vs. estrangement provided by the state of being in home and out of it. Vidler contends:

> The sensation of uncanniness was an especially difficult feeling to define precisely. Neither absolute terror nor mild anxiety, the uncanny seemed easier to describe than in terms of what it was not than in any essential sense of its own… The psychologist Ernst Jentsch, in an essay of 1906 … attributed the feeling of the uncanny ("Unheimlich") to a fundamental insecurity brought about by a lack of orientation, a sense of something new, foreign, and hostile invading an old, familiar, customary world (Vidler, 1992, p. 23).

Artists, in different social and political contexts throughout time, have illustrated social and psychological instability stemming from a lack of coping with 'foreign' environment and the existential estrangement it entails. Some examples, other than my series *Home No Home*, include Albrecht Dürer's experience of himself as a parasite in Germany, Paul Gauguin's self-perception as a genius standing apart from society, Oskar Kokoschka's likeness of himself as an outsider after his rejection by the Viennese public (Koerner, 2017, p. 39–41). In photography, André Kertesz's photographs of a *Hungarian Memory*, Constantine Manos's *Greek portfolio*, Shirin Neshat's *Rapture*, and An My Le's *Ho Chi Minh City* are photographic works portraying displacement from home and social and psychological turmoil.

IV. HOME ATTACHMENT

Home attachment is the overarching concept from which nostalgia, melancholy, and longing for home derive. You are attached to this or that 'home' and the narratives it carries, hence you feel nostalgic. However, home is "inflected with mobility and conversely, with the ways mobility is inflected with gestures of attachment" (Ralph & Staeheli, 2011, p. 2; Easthope, 2009; Flynn, 2007). In reaction to this crossing between home, home attachment, and global mobility, many scholars investigate mobile geographies of home, observing ways in which travel, "mobility and stasis, displacement and placement, as well as roots and routes" (Ralph & Staeheli, 2011 p. 517–530.) contribute in the conceptual and experiential formation of home and how they become forms of attachment.

The notion and place of home is "typically configured through a positive sense of attachment, as a place of belonging, intimacy, security, relationship and selfhood" (Murray & Dowling, 2007, p. np). However, this homely sense of belonging and home attachment is short-lived. After a couple of weeks in Greece I feel rather uncomfortable, and I am ready to go elsewhere, or return to my temporary residency. Keeping contact with places of origin "serves as an adaptive response to the hostile or unreceptive host context in which migrants often find themselves" (Ralph & Staeheli, 2011, p. 7). However, recurrent travels to my place of origin have been unsuccessful for me as a remedy of re-attachment to a home. In fact, the more I return to my home country, the further away 'home' grows. In psychological terms this is known as "reverse culture shock" (see: Clarke, 2016; Garone, 2014; Pedersen, 1995; Oberg, 1960). It is a worrisome experience that has me feeling uprooted and not belonging anywhere. In today's Patras, Greece, where I spent my childhood, nothing is the same. The "places of my youth" leave me feeling estranged because their signification has been washed away by the tides of time, which I have not witnessed for I was absent. Constant relocation and the complex thoughts and feelings involved in expatriation, transience, and social and cultural integration render the place I once considered home unrecognizable.

Another factor beyond reverse culture shock is 'pseudo-familiarity'. Expatriation and repatriation is a turbulent "diasporic experience that considers home as a familiar stranger" (Chen and Morley, 2008, p. 492). A familiar but strange place is the home that no longer feels like home because of the changes incurred in the place and in the transient individual. What triggers pseudo-familiarity is the repetitive action of revisiting home over time after having lived elsewhere.

To return 'home' requires much social and cultural alertness and interpersonal ability to re-integrate into the social and cultural conventions of the place you once lived in and the place where you live now, after 'the visit' is over. Apart from reverse-culture shock, pseudo familiarity and re-integration, expatriates need to attain what British academic Martin Haigh calls cosmopolitan independence, a state when one has achieved enough "emotional intelligence to be able to operate effectively using this cross-cultural awareness" (Haigh, 2018, p. 8).

But yet again, this process of awareness is progressive, unmeasurable, complex and constantly shifting. Speaking from experience, thoughts and manifestations of strange, evanescent home attachments, nostalgia, and homesickness continuously arise. These sentiments surface in open-ended relations with people, objects, and places from my familiar, but estranged home. This in turn results in a peculiar game of shifting home attachment and identity, as it constantly has me negating home and where home is, who I am and where I belong. This complex lived experience informs my series *Home – No Home*. I therefore see home not as a place of stasis, rest, or security, but as a highly contested area and home attachment as a shifting and variable concept.
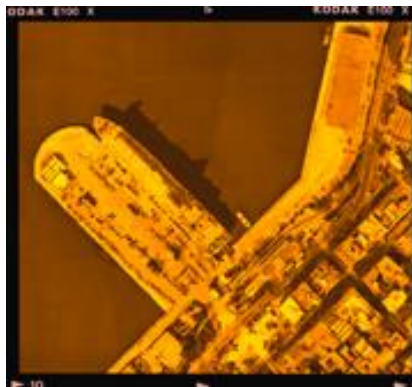

Fig. 5. Vagabond Wanderings from Home – No Home.

Vagabond Wanderings, aided by pictorial practices and an emphatic title that conjures up personal narratives and metaphors, demonstrates ways in which a view of a place can evoke a sense of how home, and longing for home from afar, are perceived and felt, together with all of their complexity. It shows, yet another image of an undisclosed urban coastal location, from above (Fig. 5). It appears accessible to people, but there are no obvious leisure facilities nearby. Yet, this was one of my haunts with friends, while watching large vessels manoeuvring in the jetty's vicinity, dreaming of trips abroad and holiday cruises. The waters and the grounds around the jetty were murky, since it was a port. Apart from the social function of boarding ships to travel it was strictly a working area, a port establishment with workers, not a place for young children to frequent.

This 'view of a place' arouses curiosity, but at the same time estranges the viewer with its elusive clues and its blatant fake factuality. The image succeeds in representing and conveying familiarity, unfamiliarity, and the blurring of memory. This is how blurry home and longing for home are engulfed in my consciousness. The meaning of my youthful wanderings has been eroded with time, but yet is still there lurking on the enigmatic surface of the fake slide film. The absence of full meaning, the non-factual geography of the place, and the polysemy of clues in the picture are ironically the protagonists in this axonometric, aerial photograph. Only a biographical confession can set the record straight literary and metaphorically.

Scholarship stemming from cultural geography, sociology, and psychology sees home and home attachment as portals of both negative and positive experiences:

Many reinforce their sense of self, their identity, through an investment in their home, whether as house, hometown or homeland. But at the same time, home is not always a wellspring of succour and goodness; others experience alienation, rejection, hostility, danger and fear "at home." Home can be a site of domestic violence or 'house arrest'; young gay men and lesbians may feel alienated in the family home; asylum seekers are banished from their homelands (Murray & Dowling, 2007, p. np).

This means that experiencing home within displacement and attachment, can carry both affirming and damaging feelings; it can be faithfully fashioned by one's childhood memories; and it may apply to abstract complex affiliations with place, time and the sense of self. These ideas lead to my realization that 'home'

(more so for the expatriate) is certainly neither a static place nor a place of stasis, but a dynamic conception and function through idiosyncrasy, time and social circumstance. I capture this predicament in my pseudo-slide-views of questionable validity, in terms of place, time, and biographic truth.

V. EXPATRIATION AND THE PURSUIT OF THE PROMISED LAND

The contents of the journal are peer-reviewed and archival. The journal publishes scholarly articles of archival value as well as tutorial expositions and critical reviews of classical subjects and topics of current interest. The history of displacement, attachment and estrangement from home has been rooted in collective ideology, knowledge, and consciousness for centuries. The epic of *Gilgamesh* centres on travel out of home and the quest for immortality. The *Odyssey* and other home returns (*nostoi*) in Greek epic poetry deal with treacherous journeys and painful longings (*algeis*) and homecomings. The Christian Book of *Exodus* pivots around the ordeal of exile and longing for a promised land (Koerner, 2017, p. 34). The Indian myth *The Panchatantra* documents the journey of the dog Tschitranga (Ashliman, 2019, p. np), who after a lengthy starvation leaves its family in search of food in another country.

Particularly in pre-modern Europe, painters, architects, and artisans travelled to develop their crafts thanks to the practice of apprenticeships. Their foreign relocation was expected to last years, before the artist could return and practice. This is what Koerner calls "the journeyman years" (Koerner, 2017, p. 35). In *Home and the World* (2017), Koerner asserts that artist (and worker) mobility has concerned finding and making work that would be appreciated in the host country, tagging along with peers, being close to places where artistic productions flourishes, finding financial support, and finding venues to disseminate the artist's work.

Today's art world "may have multiple centres, but it remains vital – in career terms – that an artist be exhibited and known in one or, even better, in several of them" (Koerner, 2017, p. 39–41). My professional choices and lived experiences illustrate my complicated journey pursuing a career in the arts elsewhere than at home: finding employment, making work that would be appreciated globally, being close to places where artistic productions flourish, finding financial support to advance my art, and seeking venues to disseminate my work. For some, this may seem a trivial pursuit of today's fabled promised lands or a privileged aftermath of globalization 3.0. For me, it is a social, political, and psychological venture that determines my sense of self.

Expatriation as I portray in *Home No Home* is not only a venture to a 'paradise' on Earth, where the expatriate unfailingly attains positive outcomes: creative, spiritual, recreational, and financial. It is a type of transience away from home that has left its mark on my sense of place and has redefined my identity. Expatriation and transience are tempestuous experiences that come with negative, challenging thoughts and emotional responses, including: a fragile sense of belonging, dysfunctional social and cultural adaptation, disintegration/alienation, chronic culture and reverse culture shocks, and incomprehensible home attachments -that often lead to nostalgia and false nostalgia- for a home that no longer is. I express these experiences in the series *Home No Home* and as topics they are recurring in the research

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