E.U. GAME LAB, UCY

Go Natural
At Your Own Risk

Project Team
Project leader: S. Stratis, E.U. Game Lab Director, Department of Architecture, University of Cyprus
Assistants: Ch. Constantinos, architect, UAW July workshop, team leader
Assistants for Design adaptation and implementation to EU 06 View Finder: V. Athinodorou, M. Proven, G. Antoniou, students of architecture.
Volunteers: students from the Department of Architecture, University of Cyprus

Kit of parts
A map: it depicts left over non urbanized fragments of territory which are located at the urban periphery of Nicosia. On the map you can see:
- Three paths of diverse color: red for high risk, yellow for medium risk and blue for low risk.
- Road points located along the paths, where you could choose the risk degree of the path to follow. The course duration of paths from node to node is depicted in minutes.
- Section diagrams that show the topographic characteristics which define in fact, the degree of risk along the paths, (big slopes, cliffs, etc.).
- Empty frames where you can stick on views, seen along the path (the EU 06 view finder part of the project).
- An A4 page with photo stickers to be placed on the eight frames.

On site: There are wooden signs located on the nodal points shown on the map. The signs have a green flag on top and three images with description about the character of the path to follow, depending from which direction one comes from. On the card, you can see descriptions of special things you can run into along the walk: from plants, to views, to topographic characteristics, to buildings.

Modus Operandi
Choose a day when you would have a couple of hours of free time to walk. The best would be, just when rain stops and the sun comes out. You would get the clearest atmosphere and the best views.
Get a map from the municipality or from the project’s website at www.urban-where.com. Enter the path at any of the nodal points shown on the map and then just follow the map. Every time you find a wooden sign you reevaluate your “adventure mood” and choose the path with the risk you can handle. Get off the path anytime you feel like.

Aim
What if “Going Natural” is demystified in two ways? Firstly, “Going Natural”, is not about going away from the city. Secondly, and even more important, “Going Natural” is not riskless.
“Going Natural At Your Own Risk” is the name of an activity about an alternative navigation path across
Nicosia’s built-up suburbs, through fragments of territories that were left out of private development, with the city turning them its back.

The aim of this activity is to make public a body of knowledge produced by a research done by S. Stratis. It demonstrates the decisive role the topography has played in the periphery of Cypriot cities, regarding the relationships between public and private domains. Explaining shortly, the fertile land was cultivated by the peasants in order to cope up with the increasing taxation imposed by all those nations that ruled Cyprus over the centuries. Non fertile land such as topographic rifts of rock, which is the environment in which “Go Natural At Your Own Risk” takes place, was left unclaimed, as a no man’s land and consequently became State Land. The absence of any city development plans until the early 1990s, has guided the young Cypriot State to locate any public program within such territories. Clumps of them have also remained undeveloped within which natural species thrived, (sort of third landscape territories evoked by Gilles Clement).

The “Go Natural At Your Own Risk” activity proposes new ways of navigating within the city through such third landscape territories (References to Francesco Caceri spatial practices with the Stalker group who were walking along such unknown territories in Rome). The gain is an experiential reconnection of such topographic fragments, offering an urban unifying public territory within a private fragmented territory.

Furthermore, this activity aims to be a sort of an “avant projet”, raising awareness for possible communal informal use of such territories, aiming to influence the Municipality’s existing policies on top down public space creation.

In other words, “Going Natural At Your Own Risk” aims to assist the becoming of a common space that could be generated by the inhabitants of the area.

On Sunday, 11th of November 2012, a tour was organized along the path, inviting people to take any kind of “risky” path along the natural gulf, groups of two to three persons gave it a try. I had the chance to walk along with two young boy-scouts, trail finders par excellence, who chose to follow only the high risk paths and enjoyed going natural at their own risk.

(Text by S. Stratis)
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Experience an Alternative Navigation of the city!

Sunday 11th of November 2012
Find us at: Alassia Conference Centre, Skal Ageria and Agios Georgios Park
From: 10:00 a.m., Last entries at: 11:00 a.m., Game ends at: 12:00

U V I E W  F I N D E R

"Urban-A-Where?"
Department of Architecture
Organised for the University of Cyprus

THE "U-A-W" NATURAL URBAN WALKER

"No Natural at Your Own Risk" / E.U.same Lab, UCY