

Paste-up art says YOU ARE HERE

REFERRED TO AS PASTE-UP ART, WORKS ARE INITIALLY FINISHED ON PAPER AND ARE THEN GLUED TO WALLS

I met astraki* within the winding streets of the old town where the artist displays arts works she creates to adorn walls and available facades that accommodate her whims.

Street art, graffiti, tagging, all are familiar to the eye. Looking closer at these trends within the old Nicosia centre, it would be difficult for one not to notice a new variety blossoming in the street art scene. Locally this new trend is colourful, it depicts animals from far away lands, and most, if not all depict the words 'YOU ARE HERE' on them.

What makes these works of art differ from common spray graffiti is the technique used to bring them to life. Referred to as paste-up art, works are initially finished on paper, within a studio or home, and as opposed to being drawn on facades are then glued (pasted), allowing artists to put small and big, pre-made 'pieces' up on public walls in a matter of minutes.

Talking to astraki* in the old town, it's obvious we're playing a hide and seek game. While she talks to me about her work and the ideal of paste-up art in general, she's ambitious about what she

does. Her identity is perhaps irrelevant, yet somewhat all the more intriguing as I try to imagine the processes she goes through to project her work.

Nothing is a coincidence. The YOU ARE HERE project has a concept, it's maturing on street facades and naturally perhaps, its life span is uncertain.

"This type of art has a wear and tear that I like. Sometimes it's a natural decay, sometimes not. There's always



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a risk that you put your artwork out there and someone will take it down, to take it home for themselves or for any another reason," astraki* tells me, filled with awe. "This is the joy of street art, you make something, you put it out there and you share it with people that pass by, various people."

But astraki* is also quick to reflect on this, as she seems to know what I'm going to ask her next. "And yes, you could say that I force people to

see my work because I put it right in front of their face. But, it's the same for me. People put buildings in front of me that I don't really want to see or look at."

This proves her point, and she has a point. Her project, at its core, is a cartography of the old town which she creates under a pseudonym but also in collaboration with other like minded artists such as Cacao Rocks.

Depicting animals – dinosaurs,

koalas, flamingos or turtles – these are placed at various spots within the walled city and if feasible, their location is selected according to some point of reference with YOU ARE HERE discretely written somewhere on the image.

"In the best of cases, I make sure that they are placed in spots that show... The most recent one I put up is at the 7 Klidia bar. There I pasted two dinosaurs; one's holding a tomato and the



Astraki* is a pseudonym that derived from astraki* strikes which the artist used as a DJ. Astraki* works under the studio name admiradOres deL circulo* which you can search on Facebook for more information.

YOU ARE HERE



other is seen with the tomato squirted in its face while holding a cocktail in its hand. YOU ARE HERE, it's a bar," reveals astraki*. "There's another drawing outside Club D where again there's a dinosaur that's holding a huge old school cassette player on its shoulder, this isn't a coincidence."

Attributing a purpose to her work, astraki* admits that street art suites her as an ideal, as well as a technique. "I want my art to be out there and

I want it amongst people, for them to see it. I don't want people to have to go somewhere in specific to see my work, in a gallery, for two weeks, to see five works of mine."

As she hesitates to pinpoint the reason why she initially got into street art, she comes out with it: "I don't have the words to explain it. It's difficult to explain the urge," and she questions me: "Is it an internal need of an artist?"

