“In the Ruins of Futures Past: Potentiality, Planning, and the Contested Revival of Cyprus’s Ghost City”

Since the de facto division of Cyprus in 1974, the former resort town of Varosha has been held hostage, a pawn in negotiations. For 46 years, highrise hotels rusted on pristine beaches inside a Turkish military camp, awaiting a political agreement that would restore the town to its 30,000 displaced owners. In October 2020, the surprise opening of this ghost city turned a site of dark tourism into a space producing increasingly contested visions of what the town’s future should be. This presentation will discuss a new research project examining both past and present futural visions for this hostage city and the ways in which these imaginations intersect with the political, social, and economic life of an unresolved conflict. Viewing the modern urban ruin as a field of potentiality, the presentation will examine the competing imaginaries, materialities, and subjectivities that are today emerging around the ruined city.

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