

drastic

awareness campaigns

Myrto Papadogeorgou, START Fellow 2019/2020

THE CONTEXT: GREECE

Civic Education

THE CITY IS WHAT ITS CITIZENS ARE

In order to create better cities, we inevitably need to create better citizens. However, caring for ones city and community, is not a characteristic we are born with. It is cultivated through civic education, which is most often taught with little imagination, in a manner that is both unattractive and insufficient. This can maybe explain why the majority of the Greek society is widely indifferent to matters concerning the public sphere and space.

For the past decade I have been active in the field of civic education, working with the civil society to create audiovisual content that focuses on and promotes those who lead by example. Their impact is immediate, easily replicable, scalable and primarily based on materials sourced by the local community. Ironically, in a society that so desperately needs these visionaries, they remain invisible, struggling most of the times to get their call to action across.

VISIBILITY FOR SOCIAL CAUSES

Disruption

NEW WAYS OF RAISING AWARENESS

With Drastic Awareness Campaigns my aim is to experiment with innovative forms of visual storytelling that target emotion rather than reason, in order to raise civic awareness and give social innovators and their calls to action, the visibility they need and deserve. Starting with “Dear Driver” (Φίλε Οδηγέ) a campaign about the way we drive in Greece: aggressively, selfishly and irresponsibly.



ROAD SAFETY AWARENESS

#deardriver

Through [START: Create Cultural Change](#), we will develop and pilot a disruptive campaign on driving behaviour and road safety in the city of Thessaloniki. In partnership with NGOs, grass-roots initiatives and communities active in the fields of civic engagement, accessibility and pedestrian rights, along with the valuable input of the creative industry, we will experiment with 3 different awareness methods. The overall outcome, documented through a series of videos, will become the basis of a long-term online campaign for road safety with the hashtag #deardriver #fileodige.



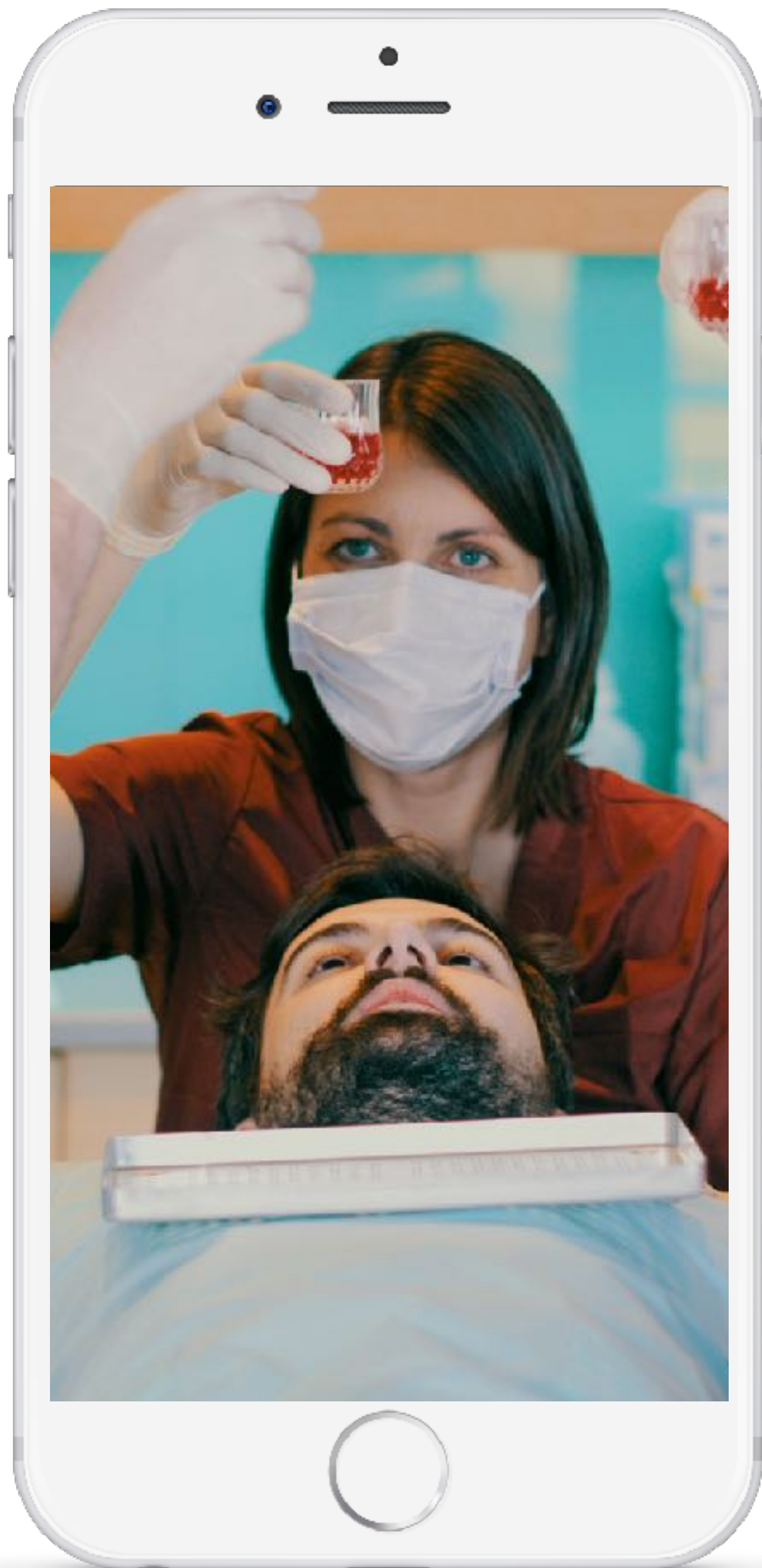
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DRASTIC CAMPAIGNS

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RAISING AWARENESS

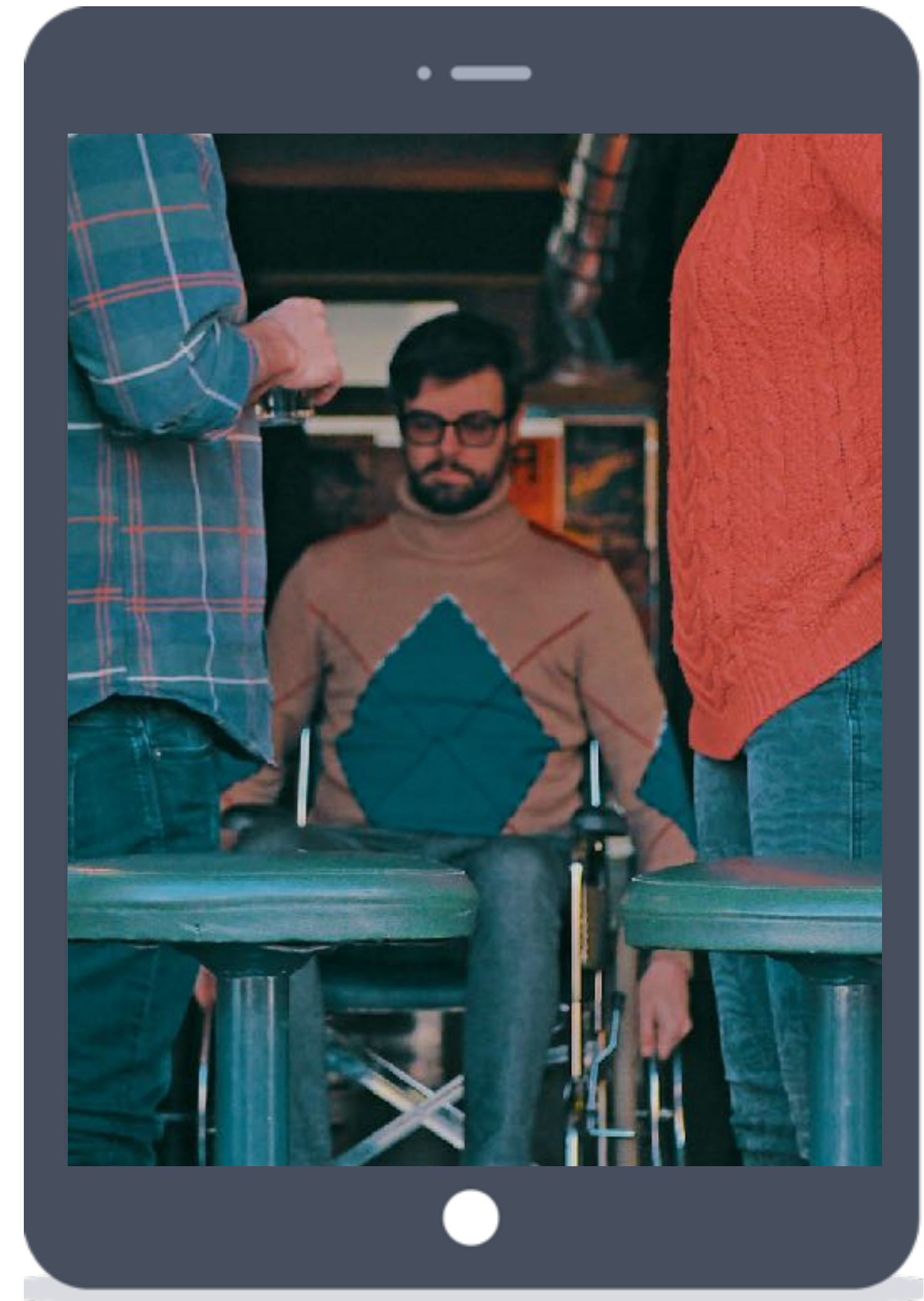
Method #1: shareable online videos

Aggressive driving is the norm in Greece. We drive against each other, not along each other. To address this issue, we will create a series of short online videos, which portray how socially unacceptable our driving behaviour looks like, if you apply it to other aspects of everyday life. A surgeon drinking shots before performing a surgery portraying how irresponsible drunk driving is; a runner bullying people who are out walking to go faster, illustrating how irrational aggressive driving is; and a couple blocking the entry of a bar turning other guests into hostages unable to leave, just like cars blocking pedestrian ramps turn hindered people into hostages in their own homes; In the end, the videos will ask the audience the question "Why drive like that when you would never act like that?", followed by a call to action to share stories of responsible driving on social media, with the campaign's hashtag #fileodige #deardriver.

RAISING AWARENESS

Method #2: alternative city-tour

Other than the lack of infrastructure, illegal parking is the number one reason why most Greek cities are inaccessible for hindered citizens. In order to raise awareness on the issue, we will create a staged city tour, in partnership with [Dot2Dot](#), a social enterprise providing alternative guided tours and [Alli Opsi](#), an NGO training people with spinal cord injury on how to become independent and navigate Greek cities on a wheelchair. The tour will be promoted as a normal free city tour. However it will be really designed in a way to address the lack of accessibility of the city's centre. With no previous warning, 2 wheelchair-bound members of Alli Opsi will join the tour, pretending to be participants. During the course of the tour, they will repeatedly face obstacles, both real and staged. In that way, apart from sightseeing, the other participants will have to witness, document and react to the disability of their city, caused widely by the occupation of pedestrian ramps by illegally parked vehicles.





RAISING AWARENESS

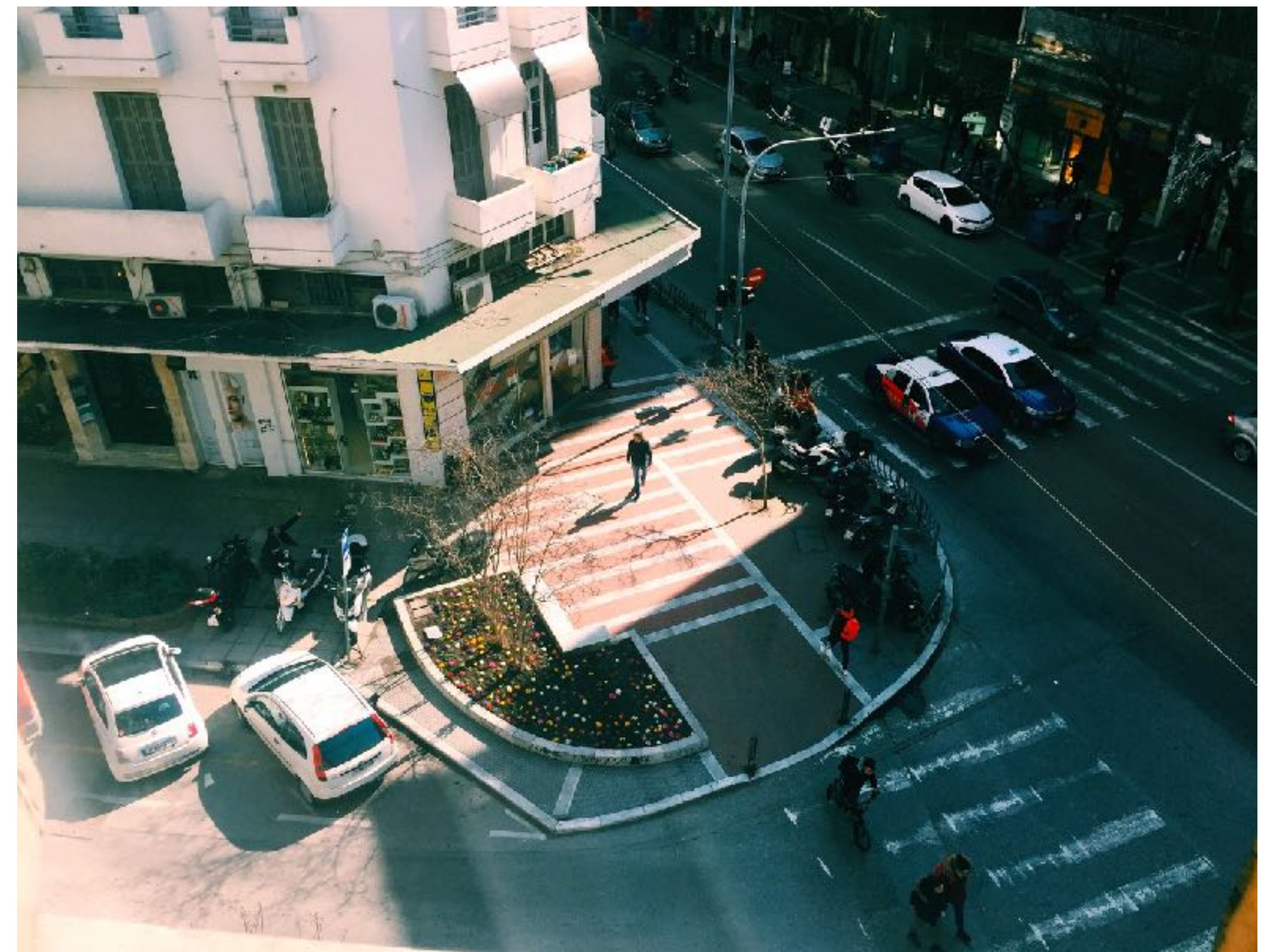
Method #3: virtual reality experience

During the COVID-19 era, an array of overwhelming restrictions brought new innovations to our lives, such as virtual touring through 360 virtual tours. Virtual tours are a way of creating experiences that give viewers the opportunity to follow a tour in which he/she cannot attend or meet a place he cannot visit and thus through the internet come into contact with a reality otherwise distant. . Under the new restrictive conditions, but aiming at the physical or virtual participation of more people in the alternative tour (see Method # 2), we will create a 20-minute 360 virtual experience. In it, the viewer will have the opportunity to look through the eyes of a person participating in the city tour, walking the streets of Thessaloniki along with Giotis Chrysovergis, an The final 360 video will allow more people to "experience" the effects of occupying pedestrian areas and will open a window into the daily lives of people who make up about 50% of the total population. (prosvasis.co)

RAISING AWARENESS

Social Media Campaign

The campaign wants to spread awareness where public space is abused the most: around and in-between the crowded taverns, nightclubs and squares of Thessaloniki's city centre. Its creative, experimental and experiential way of raising civic awareness however, aims to provide us with diverse and intense audiovisual content, which will become the basis of a drastic online communication strategy. The campaign will be filmed by professional filmmakers and will be edited into short videos with a powerful message that -along with a specific call to action- will be promoted through paid online advertising (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube) and a press release to local news outlets. The aim of our online campaign is to flood social media not simply with the problem of bad driving behaviour in Greece, which we all know, but with the available initiatives, offering education and proposing solutions, which we don't.



RAISING AWARENESS

Measuring Impact

The project's main outputs are 3 experiments on raising awareness techniques. New forms of storytelling, used to create awareness (virtual reality, online video, and alternative city-tours) are put to the test in order to find out which is capable of empowering the participants to create awareness to their potential audience the most. In order to measure the outcomes of each experiment, all 3 methods will be closely monitored. Our partners will take a questionnaire before and after the campaign, measuring whether their participation in the project stimulated empowerment and to what degree. The effects on their audience will also be evaluated, by the qualitative and quantitative monitoring of their immediate reactions, with the support of a trained professional researcher. How many people did not take their car back home after going into the VR installation and chose the offered alternative? How many people who watched the videos, uploaded and shared their own story? And how many people joining the city tours will be awakened by the experience? In this way we will not only be able to measure the impact of each technique, we will also be able to build our next campaigns on the basis of our findings.

ABOUT ME

Myrto Papadogeorgou

I live in Thessaloniki, a city I recently moved to, attracted by its livability potential. I have been working as an audiovisual producer and filmmaker for over 16 years, dedicating most of them on civic engagement, sustainability, and social innovation. Since my studies - BSc Communications & Society (Leicester University, UK), MA Documentary Filmmaking (University of Pompeu Fabra, ES), Diploma in Digital Filmmaking (NYU SCPS) - I have been looking for ways to generate social impact through new media formats. Believing with an absurd certainty that Greek cities can become sustainable, in 2012 I co-founded [City of Errors Productions](#) in Athens, initially a bottom-up initiative, which soon after turned into a social enterprise spreading civic awareness through new media formats, like the [Life in A City Full of Errors](#) cross-media platform.

In 2019 I created *Drastic*, a media company based in Thessaloniki and joined START-Create Cultural Change to develop Drastic Awareness Campaigns, a project utilising innovative forms of visual storytelling like VR, online video, 3D street art, and user-generated online content, to educate citizens in drastically engaging ways. My aim is to affect the way Greeks use and abuse public space through innovative new media campaigns that harness the potential of disruptive marketing in the name of social responsibility.



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