

essential goods

Ukrainian Photography Now

23 May — 06 June 2024

Pavilion of Culture

1P13, 1 Akademika Hlushkova Avenue, Kyiv, Ukraine

(павільон культури)

Introduction & Index

Reflecting the landscape of Ukrainian photography today, Essential Goods showcases work by a new generation of 24 artists. Roughly half of these artists are young men, currently prohibited from leaving the country under martial law.

Created between 2014 and 2024, their varied projects form a meandering path through the noise: from raves and graves, through bombings and blooming gardens, spanning serene landscapes and destroyed city districts.

Set across the Pavilion of Culture, functioning as a humanitarian aid warehouse since 2022, Essential Goods is an imprint of a moment, captured through an array of distinct lenses.

Winding past sakuras, borders and bullet holes, the exhibition turns up a series of subjective metaphors that speak to the generational experience. Recurring themes of love, loss and absence merge and overlap: a private diary charts daily cycles of normality, beauty and absurdity; a first love comes to life, then falls apart.

Where a number of the featured artists have changed creative course in recent years, others find resistance in the familiar, committing themselves to tried and tested subject matter. In both cases, photography offers a coping mechanism – a tool to understand a new reality, the self and world around us.

When the future is uncertain, a fundamental question arises: “what constitutes an essential good?”



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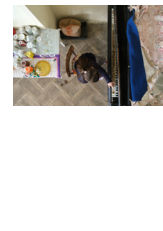
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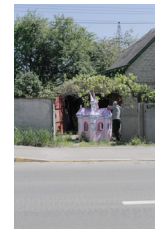
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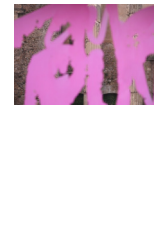
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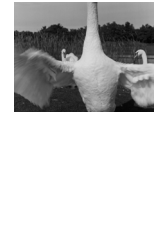
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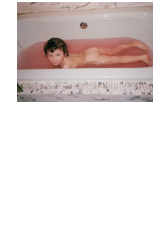
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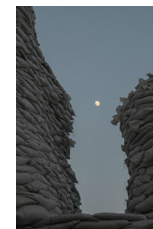
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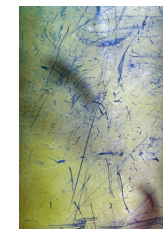
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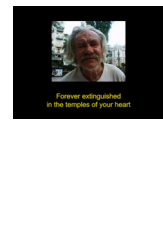
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I. 6



Biography

Vladyslav Andrievsky (1996, Kyiv) lives and works in Kyiv, where he first became interested in photography as a child. He still fondly remembers his mother's gift of a camera and a couple of rolls of film to take to summer camp in his youth. In 2014, Andrievsky was deeply affected by attending a course at the Photo School of Victor Marushchenko. In his projects, Andrievsky strives to capture the city's vibrant youth culture, in stark contrast to the bleak housing blocks.

I From the series *District*

District is a series which explores the intersection between romantic notions of youth and the faceless concrete outskirts of a big city. Intimate and at times almost voyeuristic, the works document Vladyslav's peers in Kyiv. Seeing this desolate landscape as a somewhat of a battleground for young dreamers Andrievsky captures this stark contrast, the fragility of youth set against a backdrop of greyness.

I. 1 *Prince of his own*, Kyiv, 2021

I. 2 *District View IV (Shadow)*, Kyiv, 2020

I. 3 *Corner*, Kyiv, 2021

I. 4 *Untitled (Tightrope walking)*, Kyiv, 2020

I. 5 *Tears of the Soul*, Kyiv, 2021

I. 6 *District View III (Rain)*, Kyiv, 2020

"A dream is the only thing that gives faith and hope."

Vic Bakin



Biography

Vic Bakin (1984) lives and works in Kyiv, after spending his childhood in the West of Ukraine. Bakin's artistic focus has always been on documenting Ukraine's youth, but most recently it has also shifted to the themes of war. Vic enjoys making objects and creating small prints, reminiscent of the vernaculars his father would print at home in small sizes to save on materials. Working in analog, he finds the processes of the dark room become a kind of meditation, a form of mental therapy. Rather than prescribing meaning to his works, Vic is interested in the subjective feelings of each viewer, inviting them to read between the lines.

I From the series *Epitome*, 2022

Epitome is a visual essay, a deeply personal journey of here and now, but also of there and then. Grown out of a necessity to find personal peace and balance in turmoil, the project became both a meditation and a contemplative search for meaning in a time of modern war. The series consists of pictures of war-torn places shot in 2022 in Ukraine, as well as images from a vast ten year archive. The palm-sized pictures were made in Bakin's makeshift darkroom in his Kyiv apartment. Uncertainty, unease and fragility, as well as beauty and tenderness, are the essence of this series. Bakin's first monograph will be published by Photo Void in 2024.

"A weathered pile of discarded chairs under the rain, photographed just days before the chaos. It is what it is, but it can also be a very temporary sculpture dedicated to our time: a symbol of chaos, suspended dreams, plans, and hopes."

II *Park Kyoto*, Kyiv, April 2023

07:37

4k color video

Stereo sound

Park Kyoto was shot in 2023, roughly a year after the start of Russia's full-scale invasion. The video shows mundane scenes of life in the city's park in April, when the sakura is in full bloom.

Volodymyr Benedychuk



Biography

Volodymyr Benedychuk (1993, Zhytomyr) is a visual and sound artist, an ethnographic researcher and a professional mountaineer based between Kyiv and Western Ukraine. A common thread across Benedychuk's creative work is his love for the Carpathian Mountains: he is also a founder of the Basny Rugs brand, which combines Carpathian weaving traditions with a modern visual language. Since the beginning of the full scale war, Benedychuk has also fought to protect Ukraine on the frontline.

I *Untitled*, 2024

Untitled, 2020

Benedychuk captures symbolic, mythologically charged images during his long backpacking expeditions to remote areas of Western Ukraine.



Biography

Lesha Berezovskiy (1991, Yenakijeve) grew up in the rough industrial city, though he was often sent to his grandparents home in the quiet, rural town of Novoaidar. While herding goats and enjoying the idyllic surroundings, he learned to appreciate time spent alone with his thoughts – characteristics recognisable in his work today. When Russia attacked Ukraine in 2014, Lesha fled to Kyiv and pursued a professional career in photography. Eager to further evolve and define his practice, he began an active exchange with both local and international photographers. With a semi-documentarian approach, Berezovskiy draws attention to the beauty of small and simple things. Naturally shy, Berezovskiy remains detached from his photographs. He explores the relationship between humans and nature. His interest in unkempt and unique surroundings is a reflection of his own introspective nature, as the artist seeks to understand and appreciate the raw beauty of the world around him.

I From the series *War Knocked On My door Again*

- I.1 *Olga*, Tymofiy, Ayna, Chapliivka, 2022
- I.2 *Donbas Palette*, Dobropillya, 2022
- I.3 *After the Flood*, Afanasiivka, 2023
- I.4 *Scrap*, Kyiv, 2022

II *Closing Borders*, Anapa, 2019

III *Grandma's Pride* from the series *Aidar*, Novoaidar, 2015

Naturally shy, Berezovskiy remains detached from his photographs. Through photography he explores the relationship between humans and nature, particularly the role of human artefacts in the environment. His interest in unkempt and unique surroundings is a reflection of his own introspective nature, as the artist seeks to understand and appreciate the raw beauty of the world around him.



Mishka Bochkaryov

Biography

Mishka Bochkaryov (1989, Starokostyantyniv) grew up during the fall of the Soviet Union, where the surrounding environment and its atmosphere of dissolution influenced his aesthetics. After photographing the industrial surroundings throughout his adolescence, and having attended a technical college, Bochkaryov unexpectedly became a chef. Throughout his culinary career, he even cooked for 3 Ukrainian presidents. Today, Bochkaryov devotes his full energies to photography and video, fascinated by the ability of street photography to capture the living anthropology of a place and its people. In 2019, Mishka founded UPI: the Ukrainian Photography Institute. A social institution with an ironically serious name, UPI attempts to create a milieu for conversation around photography and promote the idea of buying serial art, which is still uncommon in Ukraine.

- I *Sunset. Wildfires, Side*, 2021
- II *Some Hoof. After the Winter*, Kyiv, 2021
- III *Self-portrait in a Pig's ears. What Others Are Talking*, Kremenchuk, 2023

Igor Chekachkov



Biography

Igor Chekachkov (1989, Kharkiv) is now based in London. After working as a press photographer for over a decade, Chekachkov's practice has become increasingly experimental. Prior to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, his work was focused on intimacy, the boundaries between public and private spheres and the influence of digital algorithms on image making. Today, Chekachkov has shifted his focus towards Ukrainian identity, the emotional fallout of the war, and the notion of home.

I *Ulyana* from the series *Daily Lives of the Displaced*, 2022

Chekachkov began the *Daily Lives of the Displaced* series ten years ago, interested in the interactions between people sharing a common space. With the permission of friends and family, he would become an inconspicuous observer of their daily lives, capturing his subjects' stories over several years. On February 24th, 2022, Russia's invasion forced Chekachkov to flee from Kharkiv to Lviv. Since then, the series has continued in a new context. Visiting shelters, houses and apartments inhabited by displaced people, Igor documents them leaving behind the past and building their new lives from scratch in new places.

"Ulyana, six years old, plays an old piano in the dining room of the dorm. She moved from Sloviansk to Lviv with her mother and brother, where they now live in a dorm alongside other displaced people from eastern Ukraine. It was abandoned before the war but was quickly reconstructed for displaced people: it is now full, but the top floors are under construction to accommodate more people."

Nazar Furyk



Biography

Nazar Furyk (1995, Kolomyia) focuses on the combination of everyday objects and the natural environment, recording natural phenomena and their human interactions, as well as changes in urban space. Based in Kyiv, he now dedicates his time to the documentation of the brutal and destructive effects of war and their influence on people and space. Although trauma is not always visible, Furyk aims to show both the internal and external impact of the conflict and its destructive effects on the future.

I From the series *Landmark*, Kyiv area, 2022 – ongoing

Landmark is an ongoing series which began in 2022. The photographic study reflects the consequences of war by analysing the destruction of both natural spaces and civic architecture. Taken in the Kyiv area, images capture the passing of time and changes that have emerged since Russia's attack. The artist follows how the locals re-examine their changing surroundings, carefully and sometimes fearfully. As the brutality of war destroys people and the environment in its wake, Furyk returns to observe changes in places over an extended period of time. Capturing the synchronicity between the environment and people, Furyk shows the extent to which the war affects everyone and everything in Ukraine as well as the consequences for its future generations. The project is partly supported by IWM (Documenting Ukraine).

Ivan Grabko



Biography

Ivan Grabko (1993, Zaporizhzhia) lives and works in Kyiv. Professionally trained in easel and monumental painting, Grabko's practice spans painting, graphics, sculpture and photography. Conventionally, photography is not Grabko's primary medium, but a tool he uses to work with a subject, to develop a composition, or to reflect his immediate thoughts.

I *Untitled* from the series *Table of Memories*, Kyiv, 2024 Installation. The artist's personal belongings, photographs.

The *Table of Memories* features selected images taken from an archive started in 2019. Objects, moments and small ordinary details – gentle and, at times, funny things – which captured the artist's attention while travelling or in his everyday life. Some of them are lyrical about the present whilst others conjure nostalgia, highlighting the contrast between the past and the present.



Biography

Vitalii Halanzha (1991, Konotop) lives and works in Kyiv. He holds a MA in Political Science and is a graduate of the Viktor Marushchenko's Photo School. Immersed in the landscape, Halanzha's practice explores the interaction between human activities and the environment. His works have been exhibited in numerous galleries and festivals, such as Landskrona Foto, Les Rencontres d'Arles, Odessa Photo Days, Lodz Photo Festival and Photo London.

Vitalii Halanzha

I From the series *Around the Stump*, Kyiv, 2021 – 2024

Around the Stump is a series of six photographs that takes viewers on a walk around a tree stump, focusing their attention not on the movement but on the stump itself. Whether seen as an anonymous sculpture or as a fisherman's wooden log, the stump is a symbolic image for Ukrainians, immortalised in folklore as something impassive or motionless. Concentrating the viewer's attention on the object, the sequence appears to shift in a continuous and repetitive circle – similar to the photogrammetric process of showing the visual volume of a geometric shape.

II *Blue Mistflower*, Kyiv, 2021

III *Lychakiv Cemetery*, Lviv, 2022

George Ivanchenko



Biography

George Ivanchenko (2000, Borodyanka) has worked as a freelance photojournalist and documentary photographer since February 2022. From the early months of the invasion, he began shooting for the Associated Press and the European PressPhoto Agency, travelling along the front line from Borodyanka. For a year and a half, Ivanchenko gave up permanent housing to document the war. A turning point in his practice came after nearly a month in Bakhmut, where a Russian shell hit his car whilst he was working on a feature. Ivanchenko's Way of War project is a means to reflect on the situations he has encountered. Moving away from a strict documentary approach, this conceptual series draws on philosophy, seeking alternative methods to convey the emotions of Ukrainian citizens.

I From the series *13/UM*, Izyum, 2022 – ongoing

"Proletarskaya street (now London street). A Khrushchev-type building with three entrances, five floors. In the reoccupied Izyum, kind aunt Lena let me spend a few days in the apartment of an old woman who died at some point. In the apartment I found a letter with the following text: 'The name of the town Izyum is of turkish origin from the kazakh Ozen, 'river', kar. Dzän, 'river', tat. Üzän, 'lowland', bar. Üzön, 'stream', tel. Öizöm, 'lowland'.

Over the last two years, I visit this community of good people in Izyum now and then: spending the night with volunteers returning from the Donetsk region, or with fellow journalists on their way to Kharkiv. Every time, the locals surprise me with various strong drinks, food, or with local folk proverbs and exclamations, such as: 'I don't give a fuck about school, I grew up in Izyum and I am cool'.

I have a whole notebook of such phrases. I'm getting closer and closer to these people. We exchange holiday cards, congratulate each other on birthdays, have barbecues and I bring sweets to the kids on St. Nicholas Day."



Vadim Khudoliy

Biography

Vadim Khudoliy (1983, Simferopol) first moved to Kyiv to pursue a career in journalism in 2006. Since then, he has worked across various disciplines including visual art, photography and auteur cinema. In 2016, Khudoliy dedicated his first photography anthology to the annexation of Crimea and to the loss of his former home. In 2018, he started to collaborate with artist duo Yarema and Himey as a colour corrector, working on documentaries, features and short films. Since Russia's invasion in 2022, Khudoliy has participated in various auctions, exhibitions and projects in efforts to raise money for Ukraine.

I *Shadow on a Bright Day, Kyiv, 2019*

"Desire diverges from reality like a runaway. Consciousness flees into the realm of the unreal – perhaps, that is the origin of the artistic impulse. At that moment, I wanted to capture this motion."

II *Dumpling, Kyiv, 2023*

"Something sexy and tragic at the same time."

III *Feasts of Hunger, Carpathian Mountains, 2019*

My hunger, Anne, Anne, flee on your donkey.
If I have any taste, it's for hardly anything
but earth and stones.
Dinn! Dinn! Dinn! Dinn!
Let us eat air, rock, coal, iron.
Turn, my hungers.
Feed, hungers, in the meadow of sounds!
Suck the gaudy poison of the convolvuli;
Eat, the stones a poor man breaks,
the old masonry of churches, boulders,
children of floods, loaves lying in the grey valleys!
Hungers, it is bits of black air; the azure trumpeter;
it is my stomach that makes me suffer.
It is unhappiness. Leaves have appeared on earth!
I go looking for the sleepy flesh of fruit.
At the heart of the furrow I pick
Venus' looking-glass and the violet.
My hunger, Anne, Anne, flee on your donkey

Arthur Rimbaud

IV *Pilgrim, Carpathian Mountains, 2019*

"I met this little shepherd in the mountains during an expedition through the Carpathian mountain pastures. He wanted to appear more mature than he is. I could only imagine how he lives in the mountains and think about whether he sees beauty around him or whether it is completely ordinary for him during his hard daily work."

V *Horses, Ai-Petri Mountain, Crimea, 2012*

"Sentimental memory of Crimea. My last trip with my parents to my native place."

VI *War Child, near Borodyanka, 2023*

"As soon as the territories around Kyiv were liberated from occupation, we went on a charitable mission. At the crossroads near the village of Borodyanka we met these guys. As if nothing had happened, they rode scooters in the mud against the backdrop of burnt-out Russian trash. I asked one of them why he had such a scratched face, and he said: 'We are riding, and sometimes we fall'."



Biography

Yana Kononova (1977, Pirallahi, Azerbaijan) grew up on the Apsheron peninsula, a region of the Caspian Sea that is culturally shaped by oil and gas extraction and known for its mud volcanoes. Yana's family migrated to Ukraine during the First Nagorno-Karabakh War, but the significance of these landscapes – and her academic background in engineering and social sciences – are still present in her eco-critical investigations. Kononova's practice explores environments: using medium and large-format analog cameras, she creates images that imagine the multi-dimensional history of a place.

I From the series *Desperation of Landscape*, Zaporizhzhia's central urban beach, 2023

The series follows the consequences of the Russian targeting of Kakhovka Hydroelectric Power Station on June 6th 2023. The attack resulted in the destruction of the Kakhovka Reservoir dam and subsequent flooding of areas downstream of the Dnieper River. To examine the effects of diminished water levels in the Kakhovka Reservoir, Kononova travelled to Zaporizhzhya, a vast industrial centre upstream. Her landscapes, entangled between nature and technology, narrate a series of disasters, both planetary and technogenic. Symbols of the Soviet industrialisation project are interwoven with the current disaster. Desperation is no longer solely a human experience. Holiday makers on the beach emphasise the stark contrast between serene daily life and the unfolding catastrophe in the background. The motif of mirage employed here is conventionally associated with despair and fatality in the visual and literary tradition of romanticism.

"In today's world, essential goods for me are the things that help navigate the visual onslaught of unrelenting violence. While staying informed is crucial if you reside in a country engulfed by brutal warfare, the constant flow of news often serves to normalise violence. I seek respite in activities like taking long walks with my dog, feeling the wind and the natural elements on my skin, rethinking my life, and finding solace in learning and engaging with the international community at the New Center for Research and Practice. This organisation hosts seminars conducted outside or in-between existing institutional frameworks, led by brilliant researchers known for their intellectual courage and imagination."



Biography

Sasha Kurmaz (1986, Kyiv) is a multi-disciplinary artist who works with photography and video, as well as building collective experiences and public interventions. Kurmaz is interested in creating situations which invite audiences to collaborate. His practice is primarily focused on the social, political and global challenges which Ukrainian society has faced in recent years.

Sasha Kurmaz

I From the series *Tools of Resistance*, Kyiv, 2013 – 2014

The *Tools of Resistance* series depicts objects used by activists in confrontation with the police during demonstrations and civil unrest in Kyiv on the Maidan Nezalezhnosti, also known as the Revolution of Dignity.

II From the series *Wasted Youth*, Kyiv, 2019 – 2019

Wasted Youth is a long-term project for which Sasha Kurmaz turned to the form of a personal diary, which he uses to document life around him – his peers, various subcultural practices, or radical and mundane ways of being together here and now. The overarching theme of the series is the formation of youth identity in post-soviet space.



Biography

Daniil Kotliar (1999, Nikopol) now lives and works in Paris, but was first inspired to take up photography by time spent in Kyiv. Entirely self-taught, the photographer uses memories, folklore and collective practices as a catalyst for his work. Kotliar continues to pursue photography to capture personal histories and document the passing of time.

Daniil Kotliar

I *The day I Fell in Love, Kyiv, 2020*

"The image was captured during my first date with a girl I fell in love with. I was trying to take her portrait, and both of us were very nervous. At one point, we found ourselves by a lake full of swans, but the birds suddenly became aggressive and attacked us. Slowly backing away with the camera pressed against my stomach, I took this image without looking through the viewfinder."

II *A Blind Man, Paris, 2022*

"The self-portrait was taken at the beginning of the war, coinciding with my breakup with the girl I met when capturing the image. I was hopeless and lonely and decided to capture myself as it was all I had."

III *Malanka, Krasnoilsk, 2021*

"The image of a girl celebrating Malanka was taken ten hours after the beginning of the Carnival. It was around 7 am, when people had finally become more open to my presence. It's as if that ease can be felt in the photograph."



Biography

Stephan Lisowski (1996, Chernivtsi) began to work as both a fashion photographer and art director after graduating from a music college with a degree in conducting. Lisowski, a self taught photographer, has worked with creative partner Nadia Shapoval on their upcoming book since 2019. During their expeditions, while living in the homes of local residents, the duo captures daily life with admiration for the tenderness and kindness of their subjects.

Stephan Lisowski

I *Apples, Vzhnytsya, 2022*

II *Untitled, Borove Village, Volyn area, 2023*

III *Untitled, Borove Village, Volyn area, 2023*

From the work-in-progress book on Ukraine in collaboration with Nadiia Shapoval

IV *Bus Stop, Zavadiivka village, 2023*

V *Lady in Blue, Polonne, 2023*

VI *Georgines and "Iopatky", Kosiv, 2022*

"Looking back at the first day of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, all I took with me was a backpack with a laptop, a hard drive with the materials for our upcoming book, documents, and for some reason, a book by my favourite photographer – Jamie Hawkesworth. This was the set of essential goods I chose on the worst day of my life. I am surprised there were no originals of my work for magazines or brands, nor my entire photography portfolio to that date. At that moment, they meant nothing to me. Over the two years of the war, I felt unable to work as a fashion photographer. While this work remained the basis of my income, it does not represent me as an artist. I wait for better times, when the world of dreams and fantasies, or the model's precise movements and well-fitting trousers will again replace the whirlpool of my current thoughts. Today, I can think only about the real world and real people. About Ukraine, a place where – despite all the horrors – some moments of beauty and tenderness still catch my eye, and these moments shape my work today. These are my essential goods."

I.5



Biography

Kristina Podobed (1994, Odesa) started photographing in 2011, mainly documenting herself and her female friends. Bodies, nudity and sexuality depicted through Podobed's work push the boundaries between intimacy and vulgarity, while transmitting tenderness towards human physicality. Now based in Paris, Podobed lives with her son and husband, where she continues to create raw, honest and sometimes challenging imagery.

I From the series Son

- I.1 *Spiders*, Kyiv, 2021
- I.2 *Hands*, Odesa, 2018
- I.3 *Tihon in the Pink Bath*, Camaret-sur-mer, 2022
- I.4 *Tihon with Gun*, Camaret-sur-mer, 2022
- I.5 *Tihon in the Bath*, Bucharest, 2022
- I.6 *Sunscreen*, Camaret-sur-mer, 2022

The *Son* series delves into the life of Podobed's family since 2018, following her son's journey from childhood to adulthood. Although innately intertwined, through profound changes and intimate moments Podobed manages to capture the natural distance that emerges between mother and child. The project is not only a reflection of the past but also a method of preserving these unique moments forever. Catching all of life's minutia, the photographer works to immortalise her son's journey to adulthood.

"Essential goods to me at a time like this mean my family. They are my support and strength, a source of warmth and protection. My family represents not only the essentials for survival but also the essence of what truly matters in life – love, connection, and resilience."

I.2



Biography

Julie Poly (1986, Stakhaniv) lives and works in Berlin, where she relocated after the outbreak of full-scale war in Ukraine. Inspired by the trivial and the everyday, Poly merges her previous experiences in documentary and staged photography to interpret visual codes of the 'typical' Ukrainian quotidian. Her work portrays eroticism, fashion, as well as novel notions of beauty. Poly's exhibitions often serve as an extension of her photography, with projects returning to their origins: images from her *Ukrzaliznytsia* series, for instance, were displayed at the railway station, whilst her *Kosmolot* playing cards were shown at arcades. There, the works come into direct contact with the initial instigators – the common residents of Ukraine. Poly is also the publisher of Ukraine's first erotic art-zine,

I From the series *Ukrzaliznytsia*, 2017 – 2019

- I.1 *Compartment for Lovers*, Kremenchug - Vorokhta
- I.2 *Alyona, Kyiv* - Chernivtsi
- I.3 *Truskavets* - Lviv
- I.4 *Marina and the Boys*, Kyiv - Kharkiv

Ukrzaliznytsia is a series capturing the essence of travelling on Ukrainian trains, sharing its name with the Ukrainian state railway company. Inspired by her own experience of working as a train conductor, Poly created the work from 2017 to 2019. Inviting viewers into the action of a deceptively primitive iron train carriage, Poly merges certain passenger tropes – from soldiers and athletes to businesswomen – with her personal experiences to reproduce the unique atmosphere of a Ukrainian train journey. Capturing 12 mockumentary stories, the resulting project was published in an eponymous photo book which has sold out across Europe several times. With flying no longer an option, the railway has become Ukraine's main form of transport, bringing the project back into the zeitgeist once again.

"Essential goods? Context and subject."



Biography

Oleksandr (Sashko) Rudovskyi (2001, Kyiv) describes his start in photography as somewhat accidental, the result of receiving a camera as a gift. Throughout his evolving practice, he is driven by an interest in experimentation, beyond the restrictions of the medium. Having recently graduated from Kyiv Mohylan academy in the field of social work, Rudovskyi is yet to apply for a formal education in the arts. He lives and works in Kyiv, calling it the best place on Earth.

Sashko Rudovskyi

I *The Polaroids*, 2021 – ongoing

Polaroids are special and hold sentimental value, deeply connected to the place and the event where they were taken. Serving as a tie between the past and present, this ongoing series uses the medium to create “fake” memories. Rudovskyi dedicates all past and future polaroids to his dearest friend, Vlad.

II *From the series Oh You, the Devious World...*, 2022 – ongoing

II.1 *Grandfather's portrait*, Kyiv, 2023

II.2 *Untitled*, Kyiv, 2023

Oh you the devious world... is an ongoing series that began somewhat unconsciously during Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022. Although taken at a time when everything seemed meaningless and empty, it became an important means for Rudovskyi to maintain hope in the world. Capturing simple expressions of happiness, the photographs function as an affirmation of life and its manifestations. The title of this series comes from an ancient Ukrainian song that inspired Rudovskyi to write his own “prayer”. As well as informing this series, the poem influences the photographer's life to this day.

Oh you the devious world, I look at you with fear and hope.
 Allow me to see, as you allow me to be.
 Allow me not to lose my hopes in the darkest hour,
 As you allow the light to shine through the dark of night.
 Allow me to feel both joy and sadness, which you grant me.
 Allow me to remain human in spite of all.

Oleksandr (Sashko) Rudovskyi

II.3 *The album featuring the series Oh you, the Devious World...* Videowork from the artist's personal archive.

I.2



Biography

Anton Shebetko (1990, Kyiv) lives and works in Amsterdam. Holding a Bachelor of Arts degree from Gerrit Rietveld Academie, Shebetko's practice spans art, photography, curation and writing. He often works with themes of memory, identity loss and the multiplicity of history, as well as addressing issues facing the LGBTQ+ community in Ukraine. Throughout his research, Shebetko explores the role that photography and archival materials can play in revealing important stories: his book project – *A Very Brief and Subjective Queer History of Ukraine* – exemplifies his approach, telling Ukraine's forgotten queer history..

I From the series *It's Not the End of the World*

I.1 *Upside Down*, Bangkok, 2019

I.2 *Menergy*, Paris, 2018

It's Not the End of the World is a collection of analogue photographs, most of which were taken since Shebetko moved to the Netherlands. The images reflect the same subjects that present across all of Shebetko's projects: the performative, the social and the intimate. However, it is their spontaneous, unplanned nature which sets them apart. These pictures were only taken because Shebetko happened to have his camera with him.



Biography

Elena Subach (1980, Chervonohrad) lives and works in Lviv. It was only after she received a Master's degree in economics that Subach first turned to photography. Largely self-taught, Subach is best known for her amalgamations of photography and post production techniques such as collage to represent her worldview. More recently, Russia's full-scale invasion has turned the photographer's practice towards documentation: her aims is to record history as it unfolds in front of her eyes.

The act of seeing has long been associated with power and control over the subject being observed. The paradoxical relationship between being veiled and retaining one's will prompted Subach to explore modes of invisibility: which has become a matter of ethics and safety for Ukrainians. An almost iconoclastic ban on taking photographs in public spaces was implemented to prevent the leakage of strategically important data and quickly became part of the general consensus about how to respond. Despite this, the media is still full of lurid photographs of the ongoing war, raising questions about what should and shouldn't be shown. These discussions inspired Subach to adopt a more allusive approach in her recent projects.

I From the series *Chairs on the Border*, Slovak border crossing in Uzhgorod, 2022

"I didn't dare to interfere in their already fragile and ruined private space. Chairs with objects left on them: they seemed to me like islands among waves of people. Islands, that is, where one could stop and rest for a moment. And then all these people disappeared over the horizon, the unknown awaiting them. I have never seen so much love, as well as so much pain. Almost every man took pictures of his children and wife by phone as a memento of their farewell. I really want to believe that these will not be their last photos."

II *Angel* from the series *Hidden*, Lviv, 2022

Part of the Borys Voznytsky Lviv National Art Gallery's staff, Subach documented her colleagues, restorers and conservators as they prepared artworks for safekeeping. Due to safety concerns, the press refrained from disclosing details of emergency measures, pushing Subach away from conventional depictions of art pieces. Sculptures veiled in plastic, streets with piles of sandbags and paintings peeking out from packaging tape. Through Subach's intentional use of cropping and zoomed details, the works are often difficult to identify, while the use of direct flash has some associations with sensational reportage or crime scene photography, reminding us of the tragic context in which these images were made. Scared, curious and vulnerable, the artworks take on human qualities, shrouded and out of reach.

I.5



Biography

Daria Svertilova (1996, Odesa) graduated from Paris' École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs with a Masters degree in Photography & Video in 2023. Her work explores the connections between past and the present, primarily focusing on youth culture and the social and political contexts which surround it. Using photography as her tool, Svertilova aims to create a sincere yet subtle portrait of her generation. She currently lives and works between Paris and Kyiv.

I From the series *Irreversibly Altered*

In this series, Daria Svertilova is both a witness and an actor. Having left Kyiv before the full-scale invasion, she shot these pictures during return visits between 2022 and 2023, capturing an irreversibly altered reality.

I.1 *Untitled, Kyiv, 2023*

I.2 *Archangel Michael – protector of Kyiv, 2022*

I.3 *Mother's bouquet, Odesa, 2023*

"I photographed these flowers last spring in my family's apartment, which has been mostly empty since the full-scale war started. During her short stays at home my mother would often bring flowers, candles or other little things to keep our empty home cosy. I found this bouquet some time after she had left."

I.4 *Invisible museum, Kyiv, 2023*

I.5 *August in Hostomel, 2022*

I.6 *Sana in her Studio, Kyiv, 2022*

I. 6



Biography

Dima Tolkachov (1989, Mala Vyska) lives and works in Kyiv. The artist primarily uses photography as a material for building conceptual typologies. He also experiments with digital collages, objects, and videos. In his practice, Tolkachov aims to find laconic, yet eloquent visual metaphors that can encourage viewers to reflect upon things that might otherwise be overlooked. Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, he has focused on exploring the less obvious symptoms of the war.

I From the series *Familiarity Breeds Comfort*

- I. 1 *Dove*, Irpin, 2022
- I. 2 *Lily*, Irpin, 2022
- I. 3 *The Mouse King*, Irpin, 2022
- I. 4 *Owl*, Irpin, 2023
- I. 5 *Claw*, Irpin, 2022
- I. 6 *Angels*, Kyiv, 2022

“Sandbags, burnt cars and destroyed buildings are eerie marks of a never-known-before reality. When exploring the war-affected cityscapes, I found myself seeking recognisable motifs – like the silhouettes of animals, plants or fairy tale characters – at every turn: things I’ve been familiar with since childhood. Children are familiarised with the dangers of life through fictional horrors. Imaginary threats train them not to be afraid of the real world. However, the nastiest villains from nightmarish tales are not as scary as the tiniest holes pierced by Russian shell fragments.”

II From the series *Faces*, Irpin, 2022 – 2023

“Our prehistoric ancestors had to recognise threats instantly: those who mastered detecting predators’ eyes in the thick grass survived. Along with their genes, we inherited the ability to see faces in random objects, which is known as pareidolia. We readily perceive three spots as a face, and even recognise particular emotions in these abstract forms.

“After the North of Ukraine was liberated in April 2022, I went to Irpin, which was heavily bombed during the battle for Kyiv. I noticed that some of the holes caused by bomb explosions looked like faces. They seemed to express human feelings – fear, anger, pain – carved on the surfaces of the war-torn city.”

“Recent years have crushed the sense of the future into an unrecognisable mess. The capacity to plan your life has drastically diminished, since no one can be sure what will happen tomorrow. A predictable future used to feel like a basic need but quickly turned into a luxury. However, it is as essential for the mind as bread and water for the body.”



Biography

Vasylyna Vrublevska (1982, Chornobyl) moved to Kyiv after the infamous nuclear disaster. Now based between Kyiv and Paris, she first began working with documentary photography in 2002 – as a means to study childhood and the influence of a person's surroundings on their development. Alongside both commercial and personal work as a photographer, Vrublevska has worked with cultural institutions as a lecturer and researcher, with a particular interest in the resurgence of religious events in Western Ukraine: traditions that had previously been persecuted in the Soviet era. Since 2022, the artist has been dedicated to the project of documenting events in Ukraine. In the latest series, Vrublevska experiments with the notion of what photography can be, deliberately overexposing and damaging film to create painterly textured surfaces.

I *Letter to N°4346, Kyiv, spring 2024*

II *Letter N°4347, Kyiv, spring 2024*

“The project spans a series of hand-written letters about the events and experiences I’ve faced for the last two years. Some of these letters are personalised and addressed to specific people.”

I



Forever extinguished
in the temples of your heart

Biography

the-present.eu is an ongoing research blog by European artist Jorge Regula published under Creative Commons license.

I *Pirate Citizen Radio*, Kyiv, 2024 Video installation

"As part of a research into vibrations as a journalistic tool – and the self-made hypothesis that vibrations are closer to someone's reality than information is – I decided to explore the musical response to war in Ukraine from the perspective of civilians.

Under martial law, men in Ukraine are first drafted into regular military service and can later be mobilised to fight on the frontline by the government. Since February 2022, this law has prohibited men between the ages of 18 and 60 from leaving the country, unless they obtain an exemption.

Inspired by what Hakim Bey defined as immediatism, or the idea of flow in Tao, *Pirate Citizen Radio* was shot entirely along the line of a self-made dogma, which sought to avoid pre-determinism. The film includes only direct and first encounters with a situation or a person, with as few cuts as possible, shooting everything on a 'dumb-phone' to avoid economical and political constraints. There is no post production or grading in the final piece."

Partners

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Graphic design: Faye and Gina

Digital design & consulting: Bureau Antoine Roux & David Broner

Web development: Tristan Bagot

Tech support: BkBox Ukraine

Lighting: Patriot

Printing: Photovision.ua

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Translations & proofreading: Larisa Taulevych

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