

Art and Life in Times of War

June 17 - August 13, 2023

PRESS RELEASE



A joint project of
Württembergischer Kunstverein, Linienscharen and ifa-Galerie Stuttgart

Artists + Initiatives

Asortymentna Kimmnata / Assortment Room (Kateryna Aliinyk, Eugene Arlov / Diana Derii, Katya Buchatska, Danylo Halkyn, Nikita Kadan, Zhanna Kadyrova, Alona Karavai, Roman Khimei / Yarema Malashchuk, Lesia Khomenko, Yasia Khomenko, Sasha Kurmaz, Maria Leonenko, Yevgen Samborsky, Oleksii Sai, Oleksandr Surovtsov / Yulia Surovtsova, Leo Trotsenko, Ola Yeremieieva), **DIK Fagazine**, **Alevtina Kakhidze**, **Serhii Lymanskyi**, **Anton Shebetko**, **Bogdan Tomashevsky**, **Darya Tsymbalyuk**, **Anna Zvyagintseva** and others

The exhibition

The exhibition presents works, projects, and networks of Ukrainian artists who are currently in or outside Ukraine, or working between Ukraine and other places. The focus is on artistic practices that address the situations and contexts of war, displacement, and military conflict, as they have existed in Ukraine since 2014, through feminist, queer, and ecological positions, as well as through the creation of art spaces: concerns that are persistently turned toward life, and yet considered secondary in times of war. The works negotiate war in ways that are equally personal and political, indirect and direct. The reconsideration of the past, the confrontation with rapid processes of change in the present, and the imagination of a different future often intertwine.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine is one of the great crises of the present. In Ukraine, it is accompanied by multilayered, all-encompassing forms of violence and destruction: death, mass displacement, the destruction of buildings, infrastructures, the environment, and social, cultural, and economic livelihoods, but also rape and looting. It forces the Ukrainian population to fight a defensive war, to face a daily struggle for survival, and to flee. In this ongoing state of emergency, priorities seem to be clearly set: military concerns as well as the maintenance of the basics of existence are paramount. Art, feminism, ecological issues, questions of social diversity, and anti-discrimination structures seem to play hardly any role at all.

In fact, since the beginning of the Russian war of aggression in February 2022, artists in and outside of Ukraine have established new structures or modified existing ones that allow them to exchange ideas and engage in artistic activity despite the state of emergency, as this is one of the central foundations of existence for them, even and especially during the war. For example, various residency programs adapted to the current situation have been created in Ukraine. Even before 2022, Ukrainian artists had been addressing the military conflict and displacement in their country on the basis of feminist, queer, and/or ecological positions – a debate with an urgency they continue to emphasize, in addition to coming to terms with traumatic experiences. Numerous works have been newly created or modified as part of the exhibition.

The exhibition is based on a cooperation between the Kunstverein, the Stuttgart platform for contemporary drawing Linienscharen and the ifa-Galerie Stuttgart. In addition to the exhibition and various events at the Württembergischer Kunstverein, the cooperation project also included a workshop for young people at the ifa-Galerie.

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Works in the exhibition

Courtesy: The artists

Asortymentna Kimnata / Assortment Room

Founded in 2015 in Ivano-Frankivsk

Robocha Kimnata, 2022–2023

Wall newspaper with texts and artwork

With: Kateryna Aliinyk, Eugene Arlov / Diana Derii, Katya Buchatska, Danylo Halkyn, Nikita Kadan, Zhanna Kadyrova, Roman Khimei / Yarema Malashchuk, Lesia Khomenko, Yasia Khomenko, Sasha Kurmaz, Maria Leonenko, Yevgen Samborsky, Oleksii Sai, Oleksandr Surovtsov / Yulia Surovtsova, Leo Trotsenko, Ola Yeremieieva
Concept: Lesia Khomenko (Curator), Alona Karavai (Asortymentna Kimnata)
Produced for the first time in 2022 by the Museum Folkwang, Essen, as part of the exhibition *What is Depicted Here?*



Exhibition view WKV 2023 (Photo: Hans D. Christ)

The artist-run residency project Asortymentna Kimnata / The Assortment Room was founded by Alona Karavai as a retreat for artists in 2014, at the beginning of Russia's ongoing military attacks on Ukraine. It is located in Ivano-Frankivsk in western Ukraine. Since February 2022, artist and curator Lesia Khomenko has been supporting the project. The initiative has created a place for cultural workers who had to flee from embattled areas but want to stay in Ukraine. Another important concern of the initiative is the preservation of artworks from the endangered big cities. In the exhibition, the project is presented in the form of a wall newspaper containing excerpts from conversations that took place in the *Resentment Room* (Resentymentna Kimnata), named after a Telegram channel, and works created during the residency *The Working Room* (Robocha Kimnata). The paradoxes, dilemmas, contradictions and ambiguities that a war situation inevitably evokes are reflected in this wall work.

As part of the residency curated by Khomenko, the participating artists worked together for three months on new methods of understanding the current realities. The main task was to develop critical thinking in the face of the war with its grotesque temporal and spatial proximity and thus go beyond emotional reactions. For example, in weekly discussion sessions at the *Resentment Room*, the participants dealt with images of murdered people and the question of how the framework of normality will change in the future. For the artists it was of central importance to talk about the present – the experience of war – in terms of specific artistic strategies, not just of theoretical considerations. Among the problems they addressed was a critical analysis of how war

is viewed. These fundamental questions created distance and enabled the artists to transform themselves from fleeing targets into author-subjects.

DIK Fagazine

since 2005

<http://www.dikfagazine.com>

Ukrainian Issue, 2023

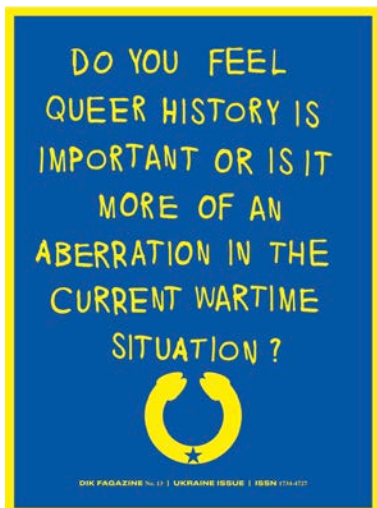
Magazine ed. by Karol Radziszewski, Anton Shebetko

With contributions by Anatoly Belov, Nikita Kadan, Mikhail Koptev, MÉLOVIN, Stas Naumenko, Anton Shebetko, Zhanna Simeiz and others

Degin: Martin Falck

Publisher: QUAI, Queer Archives Institute

In cooperation with Between Bridges, Berlin, Württembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart



DIK Fagazine is the first and, so far, the only art magazine from Central and Eastern Europe concentrated on homosexuality and masculinity. It combines queer archival research with contemporary art contributions. It was founded in 2005 by artist Karol Radziszewski and is currently designed by Martin Falck. The journal is based in Poland, published in English and distributed worldwide. The 13th issue of *DIK Fagazine* is dedicated to the queer history of Ukraine. It includes works by and conversations with Anatoly Belov, Nikita Kadan, Mikhail Koptev, MÉLOVIN, Stas Naumenko, Anton Shebetko, and Zhanna Simeiz, among others.

Alevtina Kakhidze

*1973 in Zhdanivka, lives in Muzych, Kyiv

All Times News from Stuttgart and Other Cities, 2023

With participants of a workshop

Video (in progress)

The exhibition presents results from a workshop conducted by artist Alevtina Kakhidze with Ukrainian young people at ifa-Galerie Stuttgart from June 17 to 18, 2023. "Write your

own news and become a reporter of your past, present and future. In a pop-up studio at ifa-Galerie Stuttgart you act as broadcaster and dreamer from your district. What is best, unusual currently going on there? Which part of the city reminds you of the past? And what could the future look like? Content is developed playfully and reflected artistically. Here can even fictitious wishes for the future become journalistic facts: A report about a wheat field where different plants can grow or about the opening of a new restaurant in Kiev where only dishes with invasive plants are on the menu.” (Alevtina Kakhidze)

Serhii Lymanskyi

Director of the Kreidova Flora nature reserve in eastern Ukraine

Untitled, 2023

Series of color photographs from the nature reserve Kreidova Flora



Anton Shebetko

*1990 Kyiv, lives in Amsterdam

<https://antonshebetko.com>

To Know Us Better, since 2022

Slide projection with 53 color photographs, 4:24', 19 texts (handouts)

The slide projection shows portraits of 53 queer Ukrainians who have fled their country since 2014, when Russian forces occupied Crimea and invaded the Donbas. The footage was shot in the Netherlands, Germany, Poland, and Spain. In the last few years before Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the situation for LGBTQI* had improved there noticeably: a process of self-empowerment that has been severely curtailed with the current war. The *To Know Us Better* project represents Anton Shebetko's belief that LGBTQI* will be able to "not only maintain but also accelerate the progress of recent years. The Ukraine of the future is a country where human rights, inclusion, respect, and belief in democratic values are not empty words." In addition to the photographic portraits, the presentation includes a selection of nineteen interviews Shebetko conducted with those depicted.



It's Not Your Problem, 2022
Neon sign



The red neon sign oscillates between two contradictory statements: “It’s your problem” / “It’s not your problem”. The artist writes: “Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine took place on February 24, 2022. During this time, more than 9,000 people died, not counting tens of thousands in the occupied territories. Overly 12 million people have been forced to flee their homes. In fact, the Russian-Ukrainian war began 8 years ago with the occupation of Crimea and the invasion of Donbas, which is often forgotten. Every war has irreversible social, economic and political consequences, which are felt not only in the countries directly involved in the wars.”

Selfportrait Ukraine, 2020

Series of seven color photographs of a performance

The photo series is based on a performance of the artist with a flag sewn from six stripes of fabric in the rainbow colors of the international LGBTQI* movement. The blue and yellow stripes, which also correspond to the Ukrainian national colors, are longer than the others. The work reflects the compatibility and incompatibility of different affiliations.



We Were Here, 2018

Series of 8 color photographs, varying material
Video, 2:34'

The photo series features veterans of the war in Donbas who belong to LGBTQI* communities. It is based on a 2018 project that included Viktor Pylypenko, who subsequently founded a union for LGBTQI* military personnel. Before Russia's full-scale invasion on Ukraine, the union had 130 members; today it already has 300, 100 of whom live their LGBTQI* identities openly. Most of them are currently participating in combat operations. In 2018, about 300,000 Ukrainians participated in the anti-terrorist operation in the east of the country. The number of LGBTQI* in this operation is unknown and outright negated by conservative and far-right forces. *We Were Here* draws attention to individuals whose militant commitment to Ukraine is ignored by the majority of their fellow citizens. Techniques of camouflage are necessary for them on two levels: not only as protection in combat, but also within a military and a society where LGBTQI* are still taboo, rejected, and attacked. They have developed queer forms of camouflage for the photo shooting. In addition to the photo series, the project also consists of a video that includes excerpts from interviews with eight LGBTQI* soldiers who neither show their faces nor, apart from Pylypenko, publish their names. Their statements, which appear as subtitles, reflect contradictory experiences and positions. They accompany the footage of an action in which bottles filled with colored liquids are thrown one after the other against a wall with a crash.





Bogdan Tomashevsky

*1986 in Uzhhorod, currently lives in Stuttgart

Comfort Zone, 2023

Installation with sofa, reinforcing bars, and photography

The starting point for this installation is the image of a bombed-out apartment building in Ukraine. It stands for the daily violent penetration of war into the sphere of the private, familiar, and protective. The architect and artist Bogdan Tomashevsky translated it in the form of an installation with a sofa pierced by reinforcing bars. The skeleton of a concrete building, which reappears only when it is destroyed, violates the comfort zone. It turns from the supporting element of the sheltering home into a weapon against the same.



Exhibition view WKV 2023 (Photo: Hans D. Christ)

Calendar, 2023

Installation with 17 white wooden pedestals, black felt folders with media reports, and a calendar sheet



Exhibition view WKV 2023 (Photo: Hans D. Christ)

The current Russian war of aggression on Ukraine has already lasted seventeen months. For each month Bogdan Tomashevsky has made a folder, each placed on a pedestal and containing several media reports on this war. The work is an archive and monument against forgetting and suppression. The calendar page accompanying the installation, which thwarts the usual chronology, points out that the roots of the current war in Ukraine lie in 2014, when Russian forces occupied Crimea and invaded the Donbas.

Untitled (Abduction), 2023

Installation with 44 used children's shirts of different colors, hangers, and LED light bulbs, and one photograph
 Photograph: Sasha Makoviy

The installation consists of 44 used children's shirts of different colors, hung one below the other in four rows, each illuminated from behind. The colorful luminous splendor of the installation from children's clothes is contrasted by the photograph opposite. It shows the back of a child with notes written on it. Ukrainian parents inscribe the backs of their children with contact details of relatives, in case they themselves die and their children survive.



Exhibition view WKV 2023 (Excerpt)

Phantom, 2023

Installation with concrete stair treads, metal strips on wall, a floor drawing, and a photograph



Exhibition view WKV 2023 (Photo: Hans D. Christ)

The installation is based on one of the countless photographs of destroyed schools in Ukraine. Bogdan Tomashevsky has transferred the photo of the ruin in an abstract way into an installation consisting of a massive concrete staircase landing. The outlines of the schoolroom are reproduced by metal elements on the wall. On the floor there is a drawing by the artist's son.

Darya Tsybalyuk

*in Ukraine, lives in UK

<https://daryatsymbalyuk.com>

Botanical Documentation of Existence, 2023

Video, 5:32'



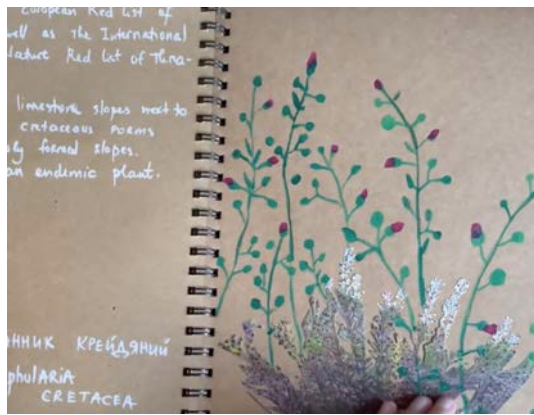
In her latest video, based on conversations with her mother, Darya Tsybalyuk reflects on the relationships between nature, urban space, everyday life, intimacy and war. Created before the destruction of the Kachowka Dam, it treats the motif of flowing water less as a threat than as a metaphor for life.

I Dream of Seeing the Steppe Again, since 2022

With Serhii Lymanskyi

Artistically designed plant book, 30 x 30 cm

Workshop, donation campaign



The multi-part project, which includes an artistically designed plant book and workshops, is based on photographs taken of the Kreidova Flora Nature Reserve in Donetsk by Serhii Lymanskyi, director of the reserve. The reserve is known for numerous rare and endangered plant species that grow in calcareous soils. Lymanskyi spent years protecting this place. Darya Tsybalyuk visited the area in 2019 and also engaged with Lymanskyi's photo archive. Against this background, a handwritten and collaged book of plants was created. Kreidova Flora has recently been on the front lines of the current war in Ukraine for months. As a result, Lymanskyi's house was completely destroyed. The workshop series, which is always linked to a fundraising campaign, was created out of solidarity with Lymanskyi. It addresses the complex situation in the Kreidova Flora and involves a collective process of drawing with the goal of dreaming together “about the Ukrainian steppe, which suffers from shelling and landmines, and which is home to many species currently under threat because of Russia’s war on Ukraine.”

Every Leaf is a Word, 2021

Series of 14 drawings, 15 x 21 cm, each

The Stories We Tell: Memory, Engagement(s), and Donbas, 2021

With Precious Chatterje-Doody, video essay, 4'

„As people and plants are transplanted from their homes and cultivate another life elsewhere, their new environments maintain [their] links to other times, places, and communities.“ (from the film script).



Drawing



Video still

Darya Tsymbalyuk works at the intersections of environmental and artistic research and on the basis of feminist and decolonial methods. Since 2015, she has been working on social, industrial, and environmental developments in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, also known as the Donbas, as part of a long-term project. In particular, she studies these regions for the consequences of and relationships between geology, fossil botany, mining and metal industries, extractivism, pollution, war, the industrial-military complex, and the massive displacement of people. In various works, she counters the destructive forces of science, industry, and war with alternative forms of knowledge and interaction between humans, other living beings, and so-called "inanimate nature." Oral history as well as the inscriptions of possible narratives of plants in plant fossils play a central role. Two major sources of her work are the stories of internally displaced people from Donbas about their relationships with plants, and the paleobotanical illustrations of Boleslav Ivanovich Sboromirsky for the 1938 publication of M. D. Zalessky and H. Th. Tchirkova on the fossil flora of the Donetsk Basin. While Zalessky and Tchirkova put their paleobotanical research at the service of the fossil industry, Tsymbalyuk reads Sboromirsky's drawings as humanly interpreted but nonetheless significant vegetal traces and narratives of a vanished world. Sboromirsky was presumably executed in 1937 during the Stalinist so-called Great Terror.

Untitled Paintings, 2017

Five from a series of thirteen paintings, 30 x 40 cm, each

In this series of paintings the artist processes the violent Russian invasion of Crimea and eastern Ukraine in 2014.



Anna Zvyagintseva

*1986 in Dnipro, lives in Kyiv and currently in Maastricht)
<http://annazvyagintseva.com>

The Same Hair, 2022

Digital print



The Same Hair explores the boundaries and connections between direct and indirect involvement, between one's own fate and that of others during a war.

Event (Gap), 2014–2015

Photo essay, series of photographs (choice)



The photographs show traces of situations of upheaval, protests and struggles, as well as places of remembrance and mourning in Kyiv after the revolution of 2013 and 2014. The gaze is in a sense split, as each photograph contains a vertical gap, a crack, a blind spot. These gaps separate within the images situations of emptiness and fullness, intactness and dissolution, uneventfulness and intervention, the everyday and the extraordinary, the past and the coming. The artist writes about this work: "As if the parts

of something that used to be a unity revolted against each other and discovered the void between them. The territory of struggle, history, and blood, on the one hand and the space of the everyday, unhistorical, on the other. There is a gap in between.”

Sculptures of My Father, 2013

Found objects (choice)



The small sculptures are variously formed candy papers and other packaging films. They were twisted into their respective shapes by the artist's father in an unconscious, casual way. Anna Zvyagintseva has collected the results of these rather thoughtless and unintentional actions, in which at the same time something personal, the imprints of an individual body are inscribed. A selection of them is presented in a showcase that emphasizes or rather establishes the high value of the objects.

Art and Life in Times of War

June 17 - August 13, 2023

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PRESS

Press tour

Thursday, June 15, 2023, 2 pm

Press materials

<https://www.wkv-stuttgart.de/presse>

Press newsletter

<https://www.wkv-stuttgart.de/presse/presseverteiler>

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SOCIAL MEDIA

www.wkv-stuttgart.de/newsletter

www.facebook.com/wuerttembergischer.kunstverein

www.instagram.com/wuerttembergischerkunstverein

DATES

Opening

Friday, June 16, 2023, 7 p.m.

Exhibition tour and artist talks

Saturday, June 17, 2023, starting at 1 p.m.

News of today, tomorrow, the day after tomorrow

Workshop with Alevtina Kakhidze

June 17-18, 2023

Location: Space, ifa-Galerie Stuttgart

In the framework of the project *Art and Life in Times of War*

Darya Tsymbalyuk, *Memory of Coal. Stories from the East of Ukraine*

LECTURE

Friday, July 7, 2023, 7 p.m.

Language: English

Free admission. A donation is requested for Serhii Lymanskyi, director of the Kreidova Flora Nature Reserve in Donetsk.

Darya Tsymbalyuk: I dream of seeing the steppe again

WORKSHOP

Saturday, July 8, 2023, 11 a.m.-6 p.m.

Language: English

Participants can join and leave the workshop at any time.

Participation free of charge. A donation is requested for Serhii Lymanskyi, Director of the Kreidova Flora Nature Reserve in Donetsk.

Other events

www.wkv-stuttgart.de

www.linien-scharen.de

www.ifa.de/kunst/ifa-galerie-stuttgart

GUIDES**Sunday Tours**

Sundays, 3 pm, free of charge

Guided tours in English

Saturday, June 24, 2023, 2 p.m.

Saturday, July 22, 2023, 2 p.m.

Saturday, August 12, 2023, 2 p.m.

Guided tours in Ukrainian

Friday, June 23, 2023, 4 p.m.

Friday, July 14, 2023, 4 p.m.

Guided tours by the curators

Wednesday, July 5, 2023, 7 p.m.

Sunday, August 13, 2023, 4:30 p.m.

ACCESS EXHIBITION**Opening hours**

Tue, Thu-Sun: 11 a.m.-6 p.m.; Wed: 11 a.m.-8 p.m.

Regular admission prices

5 Euro / 3 Euro reduced

Free admission

- for members of the WKV and other art associations affiliated with the ADKV (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Deutscher Kunstvereine)

- for pupils and students from Stuttgart

- individually possible at your own discretion

Free admission for all

Wednesdays

Building

Barrier-free access, wheelchair accessible toilet, changing table, WiFi, drinks

SUPPORTERS

Kulturamt der Stadt Stuttgart

Ministerium für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kunst des Landes Baden-Württemberg

Innovationsfonds Kunst Baden-Württemberg

Prolab, Stuttgart

