

# The Art Industry in Ukraine During the War

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*The authors of the article are the team of the gallery Portal 11.*

*Portal 11 is an art gallery in the centre of Kyiv, Ukraine and a space for true connoisseurs of fine arts. The mission of the gallery is to exhibit contemporary Ukrainian artworks that will eventually become classics. Gallery projects attract a broad audience and are highlighted in the press.*

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The article examines the current state of the Ukrainian contemporary art market in the aftermath of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the occupation of a portion of the country's territory. We look at how the war affects various agents of the art world in the short term and how they respond to the crisis. As the crisis is still ongoing, this is an interim study; the information was collected up until mid-April 2022. We believe that putting the data together now will be critical for a better understanding and analysis of what will transpire afterwards. As we can see, the war has turned into the most heinous embodiment of violence against Ukrainian culture. Employees of the Kyiv-based art gallery *Portal 11* gathered the materials for this article. The majority of the materials were gathered during a written survey of artists with whom the gallery has worked since its foundation. We also included materials obtained privately from collectors. Many facts are covered for the first time in our article because they only just occurred during this specific period.

The Ukrainian art market has actively sought to integrate itself into the global art market. Every year an increasing number of artists and galleries from Ukraine participate in various art events, exhibitions, and auctions. Digital technologies, social networks, and globalisation have opened up many opportunities for Ukrainian art. Many Ukrainian artists and art dealers have found success in foreign markets.

The war is an unprecedented event, having a profound impact on the Ukrainian art community. It has no parallels in Ukrainian history and possibly in European history since World War II. The fates of most Ukrainian artists, collectors, galleries, and artworks were irrevocably altered on February 24, 2022, when the first Russian bombs exploded. We have unwittingly become participants and witnesses to a massive cultural disaster, as well as a shift in all processes related to the art market in Ukraine. Artists and the art industry as a whole are now actively working on various ways to help the country. One of the most essential messages in this article is that the Ukrainian art sector requires assistance as well.

## Artists

A survey of artists, with whom we have collaborated since the gallery's establishment, allowed us to record important facts, including their emotional states. First of all, we were interested in the places where our respondents were when the war started and where they are after 3–4 weeks. Other questions included the following: Where are your works now? What is happening with your workshop now? Can you continue to work and create art under these conditions? Do you already have ideas and plans for a creative future and what are they? Have you cancelled any projects because of the war and which ones? Do you know the fate of your works that are in private collections around the world, especially in Ukraine? Any forms of answers were accepted. Subsequently, they were organised according to their content.

Under ideal conditions, we would wait for a response from the 67 artists with whom we have interacted since the opening of the gallery. But we are glad that more than half of them responded to us in these extreme conditions. We believe the findings from the sample of 34 artists can represent the situations of all Ukrainian artists and the entire country. The gender ratio of participants reflects the population of Ukraine. The respondents turned out to be artists from all parts of our country (from the west, east, and centre of Ukraine), including an artist from Crimea (who once experienced a similar situation of being attacked by the Russian Federation and forced to move), an artist from Mariupol (who miraculously escaped with her family from this city), and more from Poltava, Kyiv, Lviv, and other cities respectively. They got in touch, took the time, and shared their experience, for which we are very grateful. We also received a response from an artist-veteran of the ATO (Anti-Terrorist Operation on the territory of Donetsk and Lugansk regions since 2014), who is now at the forefront.

Statistics show that on February 24, 2022, all but one of the artists encountered the sounds of the first rocket strikes at home. Subsequently, 30% remained in the same place at the time of the



Fig 1. Artist Oleksii Koval in Ljubljana where he was on 24 February 2022.  
(Credit: Oleksii Koval).

survey, 48% became internally displaced, and 21% went abroad. Artists from western Ukraine, further from the borders with the Russian Federation, stayed at home, and most of the inhabitants of the eastern, northern, and southern parts became refugees. Egor and Nikita Zigura, two well-known sculptors working in tandem, are experiencing difficulties. They worked together before the war but were separated as a result of it. Egor is currently in Europe while Nikita is in Ukraine. We wonder what kind of dynamics their work will take on in the future.

Artists of each gender were impacted differently by the war. Since the start of the war and the introduction of martial law, many female artists have left Ukraine. They lost access to their works and studios, but found themselves safe and supported in the West. Male artists do not have the opportunity to leave Ukraine before the end of martial law. Although some of them have retained access to their workshops and artworks, they do not have the opportunity to be safe and work at full capacity.

Regarding the location of the artists' works, results show that 84% of works remained on the territory of Ukraine, 54% of them at home and in studios. Only 15% had some work outside their homeland. They are preserved from being destroyed by war by international projects as well as by being in private foreign collections. Astian Rey, for example, was one of the artists whose work was stuck at exhibition sites: 'It just so happened that a week before the conflict began, I presented a personal exhibition, *Form. Symbol. Time*, at Kyiv's

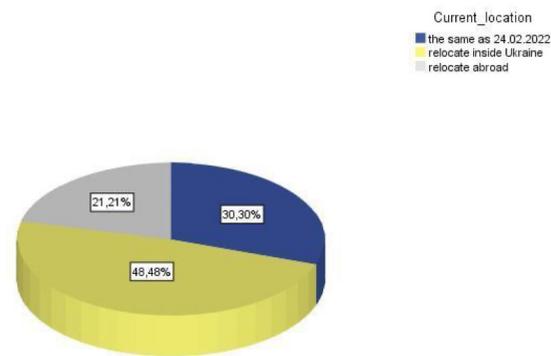


Fig 2. Where the artists were at the time of the survey, about 1 month after 24 February 2022. (IBM SPSS Statistics 23 Output).

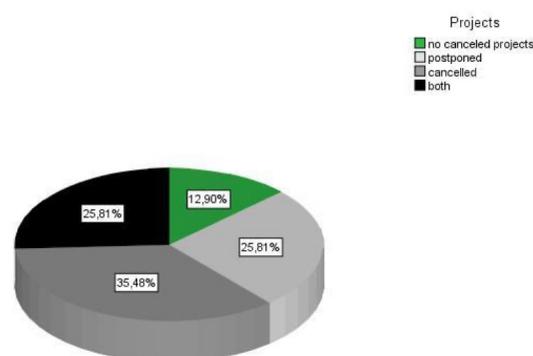


Fig 3. Infographics of losses of exhibitions and other projects by artists. (IBM SPSS Statistics 23 Output).

city gallery *Lavra*. In addition, I participated in an Italian project at the Institute of Contemporary Art on the subject of Dante Alighieri. The majority of my work remains in these institutions. However, a portion of them remained in the workshop.<sup>1</sup> Artists cannot always track their paintings in private collections. It is possible that they were resold. While people run from war, leaving all of their belongings behind, it becomes even more difficult. Therefore, only 27% of artists knew that their works were safe, while 4.5% were only aware of the destiny of a portion of their work. Others surveyed did not have any information.

Maxim Mazur offered perhaps the most emotional and humane answer to the question about his work's location: 'there is nothing more important than human lives. I didn't think about the fate of my works in the collections'. His exhibition was to be mounted in our gallery on February 24, 2022, and an opening was planned for the next day.<sup>2</sup> Vsevolod Kovtun also told us: 'the last purchased work was for a private collection, I do not know the fate of it and other works sold. And I will not try to find out about them, so as not to provoke an excessive sense of guilt in people who may not have been able to save art during hostilities. The main thing is that these

1 Mariana Chikalo, 'Opening of a new project by artist and sculptor Astian Rey' (Lucky Ukraine, 17 February 2022) <<https://www.luckyukraine.in.ua/vidkruttya-vustavku-astian-rey/>> accessed 15 March 2022.

2 'Exhibition by Maksym Mazur "Transliteracija"' (*Portal 11 Gallery*, 21 February 2022) <<https://portal11.com.ua/en/exhibition-by-maksym-mazur-transliteracija/>> accessed 16 March 2022.



Fig 4. 'From the Italian Diary' exhibition opening at Villa Longoni near Milan. (Credit: Valerio Lombardo).

people are saving their lives now—because human life is much more valuable than my work'. We have also learnt from other sources that the exhibition of the famous street artist Gamlet, *3652019 + 2/3*, is stuck in the Kyiv art platform *M17*.<sup>3</sup> He presented the exhibition on February 18, 2022. During the war, he took a proactive stance and is raising funds on social networks to help the Armed Forces of Ukraine and civilians.<sup>4</sup> After the recent exhibition in the gallery *Portal 11* of the artist Victoria Adkozalova,<sup>5</sup> one of the bought paintings, *Pink Flamingo*, remained in our framing workshop; the new owner will collect it after the war.

For an artist, a gallery is a stage, and an exhibition is a performance. This is a crucial aspect of life for a successful artist, so we couldn't ignore it. More than 87% suffered from the disruption of plans due to the war. Of these, a quarter needed to deal with both postponed and cancelled plans. As most of the galleries and museums in the country have paused their exhibitions, and the delivery of works abroad is problematic, only 12% of artists have not cancelled any projects. As far we are aware, some projects are still going as planned, and most of them are located abroad. Ivan Turetsky's paintings were stored in Europe after a museum project in Italy and an exhibition in Switzerland in 2021. In April, two exhibitions became possible: one in *Fabrica del Vapore* in Milan<sup>6</sup> and the other in *Villa Longoni* near Milan. One exhibition was planned ahead of time, while the other occurred as a result of a rising interest in Ukrainian art.

The studios of 75% of respondents were intact at the time of our study. Most of the answers contained the hope that everything was fine with the workshop because it was difficult to find out

3 A Gavrilyuk, 'From February 18 to March 17 in the Center for Contemporary Art M17 is an exhibition of Gamlet Zinkivskiy "3652019 + 2/3" (*M17 Contemporary Art Center*, 2022) <<https://m17.kiev.ua/exhibition/3652019-gamlet-zinkivskiy/>> accessed 1 April 2022.

4 Gamlet Zinkivskiy, 'Gamlet remains in Kharkiv. In the spring he will paint new street works in the European city of Kharkiv. The good will win' (*Instagram*, 1 March 2022) <<https://www.instagram.com/gamletzinkivskiy/>> accessed 1 April 2022.

5 'Exhibition by Viktoriia Adkozalova "Shadows of unforgotten ancestors"' (*Portal 11 Gallery*, 24 January 2022) <<https://portal11.com.ua/en/exhibition-by-viktoriia-adkozalova-shadows-of-unforgotten-ancestors/>> accessed 16 March 2022.

6 'The museum exhibition "From the Italian diary" of Ivan Turetsky's paintings is open till the 15 of April in Milan' (*Portal 11 Gallery*, 6 April 2022) <<https://portal11.com.ua/en/the-museum-exhibition-from-the-italian-diary-of-ivan-turetsky-s-paintings-is-open-till-the-15-of-april-in-milan/>> accessed 15 April 2022.

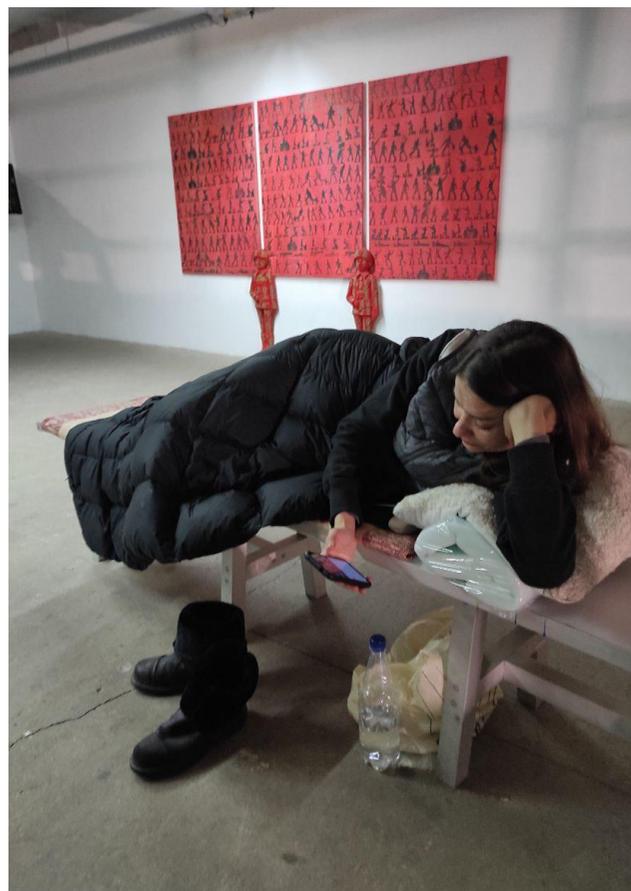


Fig 5. 'HOW ARE YOU' project in Kharkiv's Yermilov art centre. (Credit: Natalia Ivanova) <<https://yermilovcentre.org/announcements/256/>>.

about its condition. We hope that, even if it is impossible to find out about the state of the workshop at the moment, after the war they will be reunited with their owners unscathed. In fact, 20% of respondents remain unaware of the state of their workspaces. And 3% reformatted these premises out of necessity into, for example, a shelter for friends, acquaintances, relatives, and those who needed it. Olga Zarembo wrote: 'the room where my workshop is located is used as a shelter and for other wartime needs'. Oleksandr Prytula shared his unique experience: 'the workshop is in working condition, but since sculpting requires a lot of money (materials, moulding, 3D printing, casting, etc.), I spend little time there...My workshop is now entirely my computer'.

As many artists do not have access to their workshops, their regular tools and materials have to change. Those who worked with large scale oil paintings are now switching to smaller sizes and watercolours or pencil and chalk. Sculptors cannot continue their work with stone, wood, and metal. Olga Zarembo, an artist from Kyiv, replied to our survey: 'my notebooks, pencils and watercolours go with me. These materials take up as little space as possible'. Artists who are familiar with new technologies embraced digital art completely. Many artists have told us that they are now working with NFT art to support Ukraine with the funds raised from the token sales. Anna Moskaletz said: 'I make digital works for sale at NFT auctions to transfer 100% of the profit to the needs of the Armed Forces'.

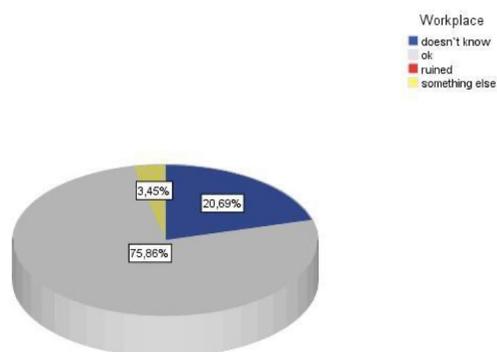


Fig 6. What happened to the artists' workshops, 1 month after 24 February 2022. (IBM SPSS Statistics 23 Output).

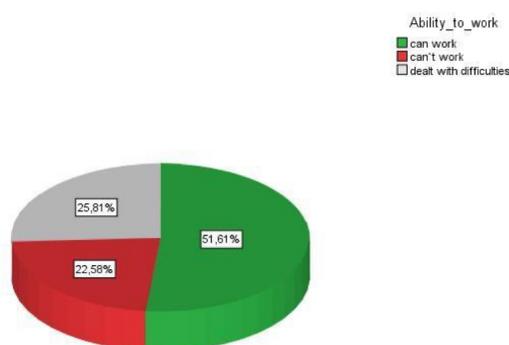


Fig 7. Infographics about the readiness/ability of artists to create art, 1 month after 24 February 2022. (IBM SPSS Statistics 23 Output).

## Creativity

Art is a social phenomenon; it is always affected by and reflects the state of the society. The experience of war transforms art; it gives rise to new styles, new techniques, and movements. Resentment, rage, despair, depression, and, on the other hand, unity and solidarity are all powerful emotions that artists experience and express in their work. Although a quarter of the respondents experienced difficulties in their creative processes, more than half of the survey participants were able to continue creative activities in one form or another. 22% cannot even hold a pencil in their hands and are waiting for victory, peacetime, and a sufficient sense of security. Mariko Gelman admitted that it is extremely difficult for her to work: 'I am creating a graphic series #summer2050 about the sanctions and the turn of Russia to the Paleolithic. I can't paint. Maybe, because right now everything is ruined in my homeland—people, connections, adequacy. That is why it is very hard for me to live and create vividly'. She still tries to do something useful, 'donating my artworks for the needs of the Ukrainian army, volunteering, and not falling into despair, now I take part in exhibitions and events in support of Ukraine. For example, we worked together with *Urban Sketchers Prague* on a painting session on the island of Kampa in Prague, and then sold our work, transferring all the money to the *Člověk v tísni* Foundation, which cares for displaced Ukrainians in the Czech Republic. A similar event is currently being held by the Czech gallery *Holešovická Šachta*, where I have donated three of my works'.<sup>7</sup> A lot

7 'Benefit exhibition in support of Ukraine'. (*Holešovická Šachta Digital*

of artists have retained the ability to create. They record events and create supportive patriotic art. Those who have adjusted take part in humanitarian missions and assist in battle on their front lines. They are also in a difficult situation, but they help to collect money and even deliver food under siege.

In terms of plans and ideas for the future, only 77% of the artists are thinking about creative projects and their implementation. Because of a substantial emotional shock as well as an inability to meet fundamental human needs, such as security, 23% confessed they are unable to think about their artistic career. What are these plans about? Everyone in the survey, without exception, mentions the war and the reflection on personal experiences during this challenging time. Natalia Antypina, a ceramic artist, responded: 'Ideas for art are very difficult to produce because constant stress keeps you from concentrating. There are ideas to help rebuild Ukraine, I think I can take part, and fill it with art and important meanings. So that future generations will never forget this tragedy and the heroic struggle of the Ukrainians'. Artists are now focused on helping the country in whatever manner they can, with the great majority of concepts centred on promoting Ukraine's brand.

In the post-war period, a boom in patriotic motives is foreseen. Artists always show the most acute problems, raise the most daring questions, experiment with the most contradictory forms, and discover the most unexpected facts. Collective shock trauma is afflicting our people. Independent artists and other creative organisations have already begun to respond. Current events undoubtedly drive artists to create patriotic art, with the most visible trend being a widespread fascination with national Ukrainian symbolism. The yellow and blue colours of the Ukrainian flag, the national flower, the sunflower, the Ukrainian Coat of Arms in the shape of a trident, the characteristics of national clothing, and so on, are frequently used to encourage the national spirit. Anna Moskaletz wrote in an answer to our survey: 'since my art was imbued with Ukrainian motives before the war, I will continue to work in the same direction. Now my series with national scarves is more relevant than ever. Although, I think that after my experience the narratives will still change a bit and become even deeper because through the prism of acquired emotions and atrophy of fears it is quite natural'. We must, however, emphasise that before the war we noticed that demand for contemporary art pieces with traditional national symbols was lower than the desire for modern art pieces with a more global style in the art market. We expect this to change in Ukraine as a result of the current surge of patriotism, although the pieces in the current trend may be less popular in the international art market. It is appropriate at this point to quote Oleksandr Prytula, one of the artists who replied to our questionnaire: 'every day, new ideas emerge. Politics and topics concerning global issues only appeared on rare occasions in my work. That's why it's important for me to keep it balanced now, so that everything said through creativity is first and foremost honest, not because Ukrainian symbols are hyping now. Obviously, soon, I plan to create sculptures and graphics inspired by events that take place literally outside the window. I will try to keep everything in the style that was inherent in my work before. It's critical, in my opinion!'

Because art images have the undeniable force and potential to convey a powerful message in a concise form, art has become increasingly effective for ideological purposes. People are brought

Gallery, 15 March 2022) <<https://www.holesovickasachta.cz/beneficni-vystava-na-pomoc-ukrajine-%f0%9f%87%ba%f0%9f%87%a6/>> accessed 16 March 2022.



Fig 8. Oleksandr Prytula 'Blinded madman', 3D graphics, sculpting.  
<<https://www.instagram.com/p/CamH4jft38i/>>.

together by artistic imagery. A lot of art images serving this purpose can be found on the streets, on billboards, and on social media. Contemporary Ukrainian patriotic art images are actively used now as illustrations for news reports. There are partnerships between the top magazines in the world and Ukrainian artists. Visual artists working in the field of documentary photography are highly significant, because they chronicle the horrific moments of this conflict for the rest of the world to see. Documentary photography exhibitions from Ukraine are being held all over the world. On March 28th, renowned American magazine *Time* published two covers, one titled 'The Resilience of Ukraine' and the other 'The Agony of Ukraine'. A photograph by Ukrainian artist Maxim Dondyuk depicts the country's suffering in the face of the Russian invasion on one of the covers. In the photograph, a Ukrainian soldier is seen assisting a mother and her child in evacuating the Kyiv suburb of Irpin, which Russian forces were attempting to occupy as part of their besiegement of the capital.<sup>8</sup>

War-inspired street art is already emerging. In Odesa, the artist Igor Matroskin draws cats. These cats represent the Ukrainian Army and ordinary people with patriotic symbols.<sup>9</sup>

Text art is also actively used as words become a symbol of support; they empower people. Graffiti and posters where the text appropriates symbolic value and is turned into popular art can be seen all over Ukraine. This type of art can also be attributed to propaganda art. The phrase 'Russian warship go fuck yourself' was communicated by a Ukrainian soldier, defender of the Zmiynyi (Snake) Island of Ukraine, Marine Roman Grybov, and became

8 Simon Schuster, 'A Ukrainian Photographer Documents the Invasion of His Country' *Time* (New York, 17 March 2022) <<https://time.com/6158001/ukraine-invasion-in-photos-kyiv-russia/>> accessed 14 April 2022.

9 'Patriotic graffiti with cats appeared in Odesa (photo)' (*Ukrainian Information Service*, 17 March 2022) <<https://usonline.com/v-odesse-pojavilis-patrioticheskie-graffiti-s-kotami-foto/>> accessed 20 April 2022.



Fig 9. Igor Matroskin's street art in Odesa. The inscription means: 'I believe in the Armed Forces of Ukraine'.  
<[https://www.instagram.com/p/CbiUK3\\_AX4o/](https://www.instagram.com/p/CbiUK3_AX4o/)>.

one of the most important slogans of this war.<sup>10</sup> Artists are actively using the phrase, as do companies for marketing purposes. It is used now as a symbol, written on the streets, in tabloids, on t-shirts, on cars, and even in the official design of bank cards. The popularity of these words inevitably led to the rise of the problem of copyright protection and royalty. When the soldier returned to Ukraine from captivity, he filed for an EU trademark application as the phrase had become viral and its value had grown to be of national importance.<sup>11</sup> The Ukrainian national postal operator *Ukrposhta* has announced a competition for artists to design a collectable postage stamp for the slogan discussed above.<sup>12</sup> The winning image became the sketch by the artist from Crimea, Boris Grokh. As soon as the sale began, there was a queue kilometres long in front of the central branch of *Ukrposhta* in Kyiv. People stood in it for five hours for the brand, which has already become a legend. On April 22, Ukrainian postage stamps, on which a Russian warship sets off in a direction known to all, signed by the author of the legendary phrase and General Director of *Ukrposhta*, were sold at the Prozorro charity online auction for 5 million UAH (≈165 thousand USD). This is 200 times more than the starting price.<sup>13</sup>

10 Katie Campione, 'Go Fuck Yourself: Ukrainian Soldiers Celebrated as Viral Heroes for Last Words to Russian Warship' (*TheWrap*, 25 February 2022) <<https://www.thewrap.com/go-fuck-yourself-ukrainian-soldiers-memes-tributes/>> accessed 18 April 2022.

11 Tim Lince, 'Ukrainian Snake Island soldier seeks trademark for the iconic phrase, as major brand challenges grow in Russia' (*WTR*, 17 March 2022) <<https://www.worldtrademarkreview.com/ukrainian-snake-island-soldier-seeks-trademark-iconic-phrase-major-brand-dilemma-grows-in-russia>> accessed 13 April 2022.

12 Dmitri Ponomarenko, 'Ukrposhta has started the national selection of illustrations for a postage stamp on the theme "Russian warship, go to x@y"' (*Ukrainian News*, 1 March 2022) <<https://ukranews.com/news/837981-ukrposhta-nachala-natsionalnyj-otbor-illyustratsij-dlya-pochtovoj-marki-na-temu-russkij-voennye>> accessed 20 April 2022.

13 Tatiana Nechet, 'Postage stamps «Russian warship, go ...!» and envelopes with special cancellation signed by the author of the legendary phrase were sold at auction for UAH 5 million. – 200 times more expensive than the starting price' (*ITC UA*, 22 April 2022) <<https://itc.com.ua/>>.



Fig 10. 'HOW ARE YOU' project in Kharkiv's Yermilov art centre. (Credit: Roman Pyatkovka) <<https://yermilovcentre.org/announcements/256/>>.

This is an example of how artists are being used for ideological and marketing purposes.

We can see how art performances around the world bring attention to the conflict in Ukraine. On the 25 March in Warsaw, approximately four thousand people laid down on the ground and covered themselves with bags and coats in solidarity with Ukraine, to show how Ukrainian cities look now with the dead bodies of Ukrainian civilians who cannot be buried under fire.<sup>14</sup> This action, under the title 'Stop promising, start acting!', was organised to force the US president to provide everything to close the sky above Ukraine.<sup>15</sup> Later these actions were reproduced in many cities all over the world.

An art installation was created by the French artist JR in Lviv. A 45-metre-long photograph of a 5-year-old Ukrainian refugee Valeriia was held up by more than 100 people on March 14. This performance draws attention to the terrifying number of Ukrainian children who have been slain since Russia's invasion began, and the thousands who have fled in search of safety. The 'Resilience' cover of *Time* magazine features an aerial view of this performance.<sup>16</sup>

As a contemporary art gallery in Kyiv, we are fascinated by artists' ideas. We are prepared to organise exhibitions of front-line photographs, heroic sculptures, paintings, and other installations that depict the experience. Although art with a political agenda is frequently seen as inferior, we are aware of numerous instances in art history where artwork was used first as propaganda and afterwards acclaimed as a masterpiece. In wartime, the significance of symbols cannot be overstated.

ua/news/pochtovy-marki-russkij-voennyj-korabl-idi-i-konverty-so-speczpogasheniem-s-podpisyami-avtora-legendarnoj-frazy-prodali-na-aukczione-za-5-mln-grn-v-200-raz-dorozhe-startovoj-cze/> accessed 25 April 2022.

14 'A four-thousand-strong demonstration in Warsaw – thousands of bodies on the ground' (*Fundacja im. Kazimierza Pulaskiego*, 2022) <<https://pulaski.pl/en/a-four-thousand-strong-demonstration-in-warsaw-thousands-of-bodies-on-the-ground/>> accessed 15 April 2022.

15 Emmanuel Wanjala, 'Stop promising, start acting! Ukrainians to protest for NATO to act on Russia' (*The STAR*, 2022) <<https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2022-03-25-stop-promising-start-acting-ukrainians-to-protest-for-nato-to-act-on-russia/>> accessed 15 April 2022.

16 Tara Law, 'The Story Behind *Time*'s 'Resilience of Ukraine' Cover' (*Time* (New York), 17 March 2022) <<https://time.com/6158007/ukraine-resilience-time-cover/>> accessed 10 April 2022.



Fig 11. The temporary storage of artworks by Portal 11 gallery. (Credit: Igor Globa).

## Art galleries

### Kyiv

Kyiv, Ukraine's undeniable cultural capital, is home to a plethora of museums and art galleries of remarkable cultural and historical significance. Treasuries of national art saved here represent Ukraine's rich culture from antiquity to the present day. In the early days of the war in Kyiv, citizens were actively evacuated. Many employees of galleries and museums were forced to flee the city or were trapped in the outskirts. According to our conversations with colleagues from other galleries, practically all Kyiv galleries are now focusing their efforts on assisting in the evacuation of contemporary art pieces, as well as various humanitarian missions in Ukraine and abroad. Art galleries in Ukraine are often located in semi-basement converted premises with a separate entrance. Since the galleries are equipped with heating and other amenities, some gallery owners in Kyiv and other cities have turned their premises into shelters. Gallerists are planning several exhibition projects abroad but cannot hold exhibitions in their galleries in Kyiv until the ongoing hostilities have ended.

On the day war broke out, an exhibition by the artist Maxim Mazur was scheduled to be mounted in the Kyiv-based gallery *Portal 11*. The catalogue was ready, there were big plans for the opening the next day. With the first rocket blasts in Kyiv, it was obvious that our gallery's exhibiting activity would be interrupted. Shock was the initial reaction. Then came the time to reflect on the situation and make decisions. All gallery employees were notified that all projects were being stopped until the situation was clear. Our gallery had plenty of plans for the coming months, several projects in our space, participation in the Luxembourg Art Fair, and an exhibition of our artists in Italy in April 2022. We always plan projects for at least a year ahead in the schedule of our gallery. Since the gallery is located in the historical centre of Kyiv and is close to the government quarter, we found ourselves in a place of a potential attack by Russian troops. Access to the Gallery has been blocked for security reasons. There was the question of the safety of the works that were brought to the gallery the day before for the installation of the exhibition. Also, there was the question of the safety of the gallery's collection and works commissioned by the gallery, but not completed by the artists. On the day the war began, we had to organise the conservation and preservation of an unfinished large-scale tapestry that we were preparing for the autumn exhibition. After two months of the war, we were able to organise the continuation of the tapestry work.



Fig 12. Kharkiv Municipal Gallery during the war. (Credit: Maryna Koneva) <[https://www.instagram.com/p/Cb7s\\_fpNw\\_J/](https://www.instagram.com/p/Cb7s_fpNw_J/)>.

We, as a gallery, have also organised temporary storage of the works of the artist Alexei Koval. In addition, a private collection of contemporary art from Kharkiv was brought to us for safe storage.

During the war, we managed to complete the creation of an audio guide in the Ukrainian language for the Pantheon in Rome. The audio guide is already published on the museum's website, and now the Pantheon is speaking Ukrainian.

War crimes in Bucha, near Kyiv, were broadcast all over the world. A huge gallery space was opened there half a year before the conflict. Fortunately, it was out of the way of the battle, and the gallery building was unharmed. The gallery's future is unknown, as the city was severely devastated and will take a long time to recover.

Some gallery owners fled to other countries during the war. Some gallerists were already abroad, where they held exhibition projects. For example, the *Voloshin Gallery* owners were in the USA with an exhibition project of the gallery and the run of their pop-up exhibition there was extended.<sup>17</sup>

## East

Kharkiv is a region located in the East of the country on the border with the Russian Federation. Kharkiv itself is known as a clean, beautiful, cultural city, full of students and youth, with many educational opportunities. The creative artistic life of the city is as highly developed as in the capital. According to our calculations, before the war, about 22 exhibition spaces were operating in this area, including state museums with unique collections, as well as about 20 art schools, 3 specialised colleges, and an art academy.

The Kharkiv Art Museum announced on its social networks that the team managed to evacuate the permanent exhibition at the beginning of the war. They also shared photos of empty walls.<sup>18</sup>

17 Brett Sokol, 'In Miami, a Ukrainian Art Show Becomes Unintentionally Timely' *The New York Times* (New York, 28 February 2022) <<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/28/arts/design/miami-ukrainian-art-show.html>> accessed 18 March 2022.

18 Anna Chernenko, 'We save paintings by Russian artists from their own people - a representative of the Kharkiv Art Museum' (*Hromadske radio*, 12 March 2022) <<https://hromadske.radio/publications/my-riatuemo-kartyny-rosiys-kykh-khudozhnykiv-vid-ikh-n-oho-zh-narodu-predstavnytsia-kharkivs-koho-khudozhn-oho-muzeiu>> accessed 20 April 2022.



Fig 13. 'HOW ARE YOU' project in Kharkiv's Yermilov art centre. (Credit: Margarita Rubanenko) <<https://yermilovcentre.org/announcements/256/>>.

Tatyana Rud, an employee of the Kharkiv Literary Museum, spoke on *Hromadske* radio about the movement and evacuation of art objects: 'The topic of evacuating the museum collection has been discussed since 2014. At the same time, we compiled lists of the most valuable museum items in the collection... In the summer of 2021, the museums of Ukraine received a questionnaire from the Ministry of Culture about readiness for the evacuation of cultural property in the event of an armed conflict... The Ministry of Culture has an idea of how ready museums are for the evacuation of what they need'.<sup>19</sup>

The Kharkiv Municipal Gallery, which actively promoted artists, including participation in foreign art fairs, showed their premises during the war on their social media. The gallery was hit by a shell; there is damage but the building survived. Friends of the gallery helped to close the broken windows and protect the premises from possible further destruction. The gallery team now works remotely.

Kharkiv's Yermilov art centre has become a safe place for local artists, as it is located in the basement of the university. Hiding from shelling in this makeshift shelter, the activists created the 'HOW ARE YOU' project. Konstantin Zorkin writes: 'the project 'HOW ARE YOU' is a total installation consisting of various constructions for sleeping, cooking, washing and entertainment. This is a performance where artists constantly work in the environment which they created and in the company of other artists. This is an adaptation of the exhibition space with the remnants of the last exhibition for life and creative needs. This project shows a new form of relationship between the space and the artist, the art institution and the art community, which may be the final for the great historical cycle of Kharkiv art. We were there together, we built a house out of what we could find, we worked and rested, we were synchronously scared of explosions and calmed each other down. And everything we did was real art'.<sup>20</sup>

The city also contains the art studio *Aza Nizi Maza*. They have a very recognizable style of art, but it is nonetheless clear that the students are given maximum freedom of expression. Now the studio

19 'The Ministry of Culture has not given any orders to Ukrainian museums to act in emergencies or evacuate the collection' (*Hromadske radio*, 22 February 2022) <<https://hromadske.radio/news/2022/02/22/minkul-t-ne-dav-ukrains-kym-muzeiam-niiakykh-rozporiadzhenshchodo-diy-u-ekstrenykh-sytuatsiiakh-chy-evakuatsii-kolektsii>> accessed 20 March 2022.

20 Kostyantyn Zorkin, 'HOW ARE YOU' (*Yermilov Centre*, 2022) <<https://yermilovcentre.org/announcements/256/>> accessed 10 April 2022.



Fig 14. The artwork from Aza Nizi Maza's poster diary – 'WHAT I SEE'.  
The inscription means: 'Heart beats – Ukraine beats'.  
<<https://www.facebook.com/AzaNiziMazaStudio/>>.

conducts classes in the Kharkiv metro where people are hiding from airstrikes. For everyone, this is akin to art therapy. Their work reflects the reality and experiences of every Ukrainian.<sup>21</sup>

Mariupol is the city that probably has suffered most from the war. According to reports, there was not a single intact building remaining in the area.<sup>22</sup> One of the destroyed buildings was the Academic Drama Theatre, which was hit by an air bomb. According to inaccurate data, 300 people died in the basement of the theatre.<sup>23</sup> At the time of writing, the Azovstal plant, where about a thousand residents have been hiding for 2 months, is being attacked by the Russian army. The plant is held as the last fortress. Local residents who escaped along the green corridors are an exception. Most were forcibly deported to Russia. We were very lucky to contact an artist who managed to escape from Mariupol and is in a relatively safe city now. About the past cultural life of the city, Violetta Terlyha recalls: 'the galleries that I know are the popular *Kuindzhi Gallery* and the *Tu!* platform, but I don't know the fate of either of them, since it was completely impossible to move from area to area in the city and track the situation'. In total, according to our calculations, there were about 10 spaces dedicated to contemporary art in Mariupol.

21 'In the Kharkiv metro, the art studio has started classes with children who live there because of the war' (*Suspilne Media*, 29 March 2022) <[https://suspilne.media/223005-u-metro-harkova-hudozna-studia-rozpocala-zanatta-z-ditmi-aki-tam-zivut-через-vijnu/](https://suspilne.media/223005-u-metro-harkova-hudozna-studia-rozpocala-zanatta-z-ditmi-aki-tam-zivut-cherез-vijnu/)> accessed 10 April 2022.

22 Oksana Kovalenko and Yevhen Spirin, "The Russians are destroying everything. There are no intact houses". Mykola Khanatov the head of the Popasna Military Administration about life in the almost completely destroyed city' (*Babel*, 21 April 2022) <<https://babel.ua/en/texts/77898-the-russians-are-destroying-everything-there-are-no-intact-houses-mykola-khanatov-the-head-of-the-popasna-military-administration-about-life-in-the-almost-completely-destroyed-city>> accessed 11 April 2022.

23 Hugo Bachega and Orysia Khimiak, 'Mariupol theatre: 'We knew something terrible would happen' (*BBC News*, 17 March 2022) <<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60776929>> accessed 11 April 2022.

The *Kuindzhi Gallery* was destroyed. It kept the originals of works by Ivan Aivazovsky, Tatiana Yablonskaya, Mykhailo Deregus, and other world-famous Ukrainian artists. The fate of these paintings is still unknown. But according to the head of the National Union of Artists of Ukraine, at the time of the shelling, there were no original paintings by Arkhip Kuindzhi. There were only copies by A. Yalansky and O. Olkhov.<sup>24</sup>

The *Tu!* platform is an urban space created in 2015 to fight against the war. Their motto has been relevant to our country ever since. They took a quote from the correspondence of Freud and Einstein: 'everything that works for culture works against war'. In the period up to 2022, they held lectures, creative performances, and exhibitions. In the new setting, the *Tu!* platform promotes its Emergency Assistance Fund. They raised about \$30,000 and transferred that money to help families in Mariupol. Thanks to the activities of the platform, more than 200 residents of Mariupol received assistance. The Foundation helps not only financially, but also with evacuation and volunteer support.<sup>25</sup>

We have received news not only about everyday looting by the Russian army of the Ukrainian population but also of exhibition spaces. Russian troops are robbing the archival and cultural funds of museums that did not have time to evacuate. They take the exhibits to Donetsk for evaluation and will take the most valuable exhibits to Russia.<sup>26</sup>

## West

Since the war started, one of the authors of this article has moved to Lutsk. Life in the city is as normal as it could be in these circumstances. It is a beautiful historical city and is home to The Korsaks' Museum of Contemporary Ukrainian Art. The cultural and entertainment centre where the museum is located was transformed into a temporary shelter for up to 500 refugees and organises a one-day course 'Tactical Medicine and Combat Training'.<sup>27</sup> The museum created the Art Battalion, an art marathon that will last until Ukraine's victory. They invite musicians, artists, poets, philosophers, and writers and organise daily concerts, literary meetings, performances, and classes, which are free of charge for anyone who wants a distraction and to enjoy the therapeutic properties of art.<sup>28</sup>

The Lutsk gallery of the National Union of Artists of Ukraine stopped its exhibition activity but stayed open. Volunteers are making camouflage nets for the Ukrainian army. There is also an art therapy class and the paintings of those who attend are hung on the walls of the gallery.

24 Sarah Cascone, 'A Mariupol Museum Dedicated to One of Ukraine's Most Important Realist Painters Has Reportedly Been Destroyed by Russian Airstrikes' (*Artnet News*, 23 March 2022) <<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/russian-airstrike-destroys-mariupols-kuindzhi-art-museum-2088890>> accessed 16 April 2022.

25 'Emergency Fund' (*Tu!*, 28 March 2022) <<https://tu.org.ua/news/fond-ekstrenoi-dopomohy/>> accessed 16 April 2022.

26 Vera Perun, 'In Mariupol Russians rob museums, exhibits taken to Donetsk for an assessment', - Andryushchenko' (*LB*, 26 April 2022) <[https://lb.ua/culture/2022/04/26/514762\\_mariupoli\\_rosiyani\\_grabuyut\\_muzei.html](https://lb.ua/culture/2022/04/26/514762_mariupoli_rosiyani_grabuyut_muzei.html)> accessed 29 March 2022.

27 'Refugee Assistance Center in Adrenaline City' (*MSUMK*, 2022) <<https://msumk.com/en/tsentr-dopomogy-bizhentsyam-pratsyuye-v-adrenalin-siti/>> accessed 20 March 2022.

28 'Art Battalion' in MSUMK!' (*MSUMK*, 2022) <<https://msumk.com/en/art-bataljon-u-msumk/>> accessed 25 March 2022.

In Ivano-Frankivsk, the art space Assortment Room has stepped up its efforts to preserve Ukrainian art. In times of peace, they planned to hold many residencies. Now they are evacuating private collections and helping artists. The up-to-date information is that they have received 30 requests, implemented 10 of those and could move works by 17 artists to bunkers. These total around 400 artworks.<sup>29</sup>

Lviv galleries did not stop their exhibition activities after the outbreak of the war, and further adjusted their efforts to humanitarian projects. With the beginning of the war, only one gallery stopped working in Lviv (the *Veles* gallery, since its owner temporarily went abroad).

### Art collectors

Information about private collections was gathered through collectors with whom the gallery collaborated, as well as from open publications on social networks. The majority of the collectors requested anonymity. The situation with private collections is currently in flux and is solely dependent on the success of the Ukrainian armed forces.

The unexpectedness of the Russian invasion of Ukraine predetermined the fate of many private collections. Most of the collections of contemporary art at the time of the beginning of the war were in Ukraine in their places of permanent storage. None of the collectors we interviewed believed in the possibility of a full-scale Russian invasion. The only exceptions, where the art objects were moved in advance, were those in the collections of the diplomats. Following the announcement of the US citizens' evacuation, the procedure of exporting the valuable property of all foreign citizens began. Some foreign citizens evacuated their private collections partially, they tried to quickly sell some items by offering them to Ukrainian auctions and other private collectors. To our knowledge, these attempts were not successful.

The majority of contemporary art collections are located in the largest Ukrainian cities including Lviv, Kharkiv, Odesa, and Dnipro, with Kyiv taking the lead. Private houses are typically clustered around large cities in the suburbs where collectors frequently reside and store their collections. The general situation at the moment is that there is no mass departure of collectors from their homes in the western region of Ukraine, and they do not see at this stage the need to evacuate collections. We should note that in conditions when hostilities are rapidly approaching and evacuation is not planned, art objects are usually not taken along as first priority. Human instincts are triggered to take what is necessary for survival in the coming hours and days. These are clothes, food, medicines and fuel. It is only possible to bring small works of art with you in such circumstances. For collectors who lived in the suburbs of Kyiv and Kharkiv, the time to get ready for evacuation was sometimes calculated in several minutes.

In the Kyiv region, most of the collections have not been evacuated, since Russian troops already reached the northern suburbs of the city on 24 February 2022, the first day of the invasion. In the first days, there were individual manifestations of panic among the



Fig 15. Evacuation of the collection of Boris Grinev from Kharkiv.  
<[https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=4823419781046832&id=100001365722862](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=4823419781046832&id=100001365722862)>.

population, and leaving the city was hampered by huge traffic jams. One of the clients of the gallery, who lives in the suburbs of Kyiv, said that the workers of his estate put his collection in the basement. For some time, they were monitoring the house, but as soon as the battle broke out in the village, they abandoned the house. After the liberation of the suburbs of Kyiv, it was possible to find out the fate of his collection. Most of the items survived; only a few paintings were damaged. The Russian soldiers who settled in the house were not interested in art, since the house also kept a large collection of wines, which they completely drank and plundered. Another collector left his home near Kyiv and now has a Russian tank in his yard; he has yet to return and has no knowledge of what has been going on inside the house. We only know of a handful of cases when collections of contemporary art were partially evacuated from Kyiv when the war broke out. The collection of a private museum belonging to Igor Ponamarchuk's family was partially evacuated. He has both antique and contemporary paintings in his collection. When the war started, he was able to transport a portion of the collection from Kyiv to Lviv in the west of Ukraine.

The situation is especially difficult in Kharkiv and its environs, as the city was subjected to massive shelling by heavy artillery and airstrikes. Collections were not taken out of this city and the situation will be clear only after the end of the war. At the moment, we know that several collections of contemporary art are intact. One of them contains a painting by Ivan Turetskyy, purchased from the gallery *Portal 11* at the exhibition. We discovered its fate through the research for this article. According to a publication by Boris Grinev, a well-known Kharkiv collector, his collection of contemporary art was evacuated with the help of volunteers and territorial defence. One of the volunteers, Anton Khrustalov, later died because he was shot by the Russian occupants.

Given the intensity of hostilities, the Kharkiv, Kyiv, Sumy, and Chernihiv collections are in the greatest danger. Border areas are suffering the most at this time. Regarding Odesa and Dnipro

<sup>29</sup> Olga Klim and Ilona Zakharuk, "Assortment Room' helps to evacuate works of art from different cities of Ukraine" (*Suspilne Media*, 2 March 2022) <<https://suspilne.media/213108-asortimentna-kinnata-dopomagae-evakuuvati-tvori-mistectva-z-riznih-mist-ukraini/>> accessed 29 April 2022.

collections, we can say that they were in relative safety up to this moment, but the situation changed as, after 2 months of the war, rocket attacks on Odesa and Dnipro intensified. All art objects located in Mariupol shared the fate of the city. Part destroyed, part looted and taken to Russia. Regarding Western Ukrainian collections, we can say that they are in relative safety at the moment, but the situation may change.

Art objects located in the suburbs of Kyiv and Kharkiv may have been lost or significantly damaged since these territories were occupied for a long period and were a zone of active hostilities. The widespread looting and vandalism by Russian forces is a major issue. Hundreds of instances of looting and cruelty committed by the occupying troops have been documented on social media. It can even be assumed that some of the art stolen by Russian soldiers in Ukraine will later appear on sale in Russia. Therefore, it is critical to compile a list of stolen works of art from private collections in order to track them down in Russia. It is already clear that after the war, many pieces of contemporary art will require restoration. It will be possible to assess the total damage to private and museum collections of contemporary art only after the end of the war.

## Auction Houses

Ukrainian art is sold through both international auction houses and several Ukrainian-based auction houses.

*Goldens* auction house (in the past *Golden Section*) is one of the leading auction houses in Ukraine. It has not held any auctions in Ukraine after the full-scale Russian invasion. In collaboration with the Swiss international auction house *Koller* they have organised a charity auction of Ukrainian modern art titled 'Have a heart', taking place on the platform of the Swiss partner. *Koller* claims that all of the proceeds will go to the artists who created the works.<sup>30</sup> *Goldens* has also organised an NFT project to support artists, illustrators, and designers, as well as get money for donations to support the Armed Forces and purchase humanitarian aid. The auction team has announced an open call for everyone to create designs for beads that are transformed into tokens. A collection of NFTs called *Namysto* (which refers to a piece of traditional necklace jewellery) is published and promoted by the *Goldens* on the NFT marketplace *OpenSea*. Percentages of the proceeds go to artists and charities.<sup>31</sup>

The Kyiv-based auction house *Dukat* specialises in Ukrainian books, Ukrainian art of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, national unofficial art of the 1950s–1990s, and contemporary art. Their plans had to be postponed because of the war. Recently *Dukat* has announced a charity auction of a painting called *Flowers Grew around the Fourth Block* from a series of works by artist Maria Primachenko, dedicated to the Chernobyl tragedy. The painting was presented by the art collector Igor Ponamarchuk, from his family collection. All proceeds will be given to the Serhiy Prytula Charitable Foundation.<sup>32</sup>

From 5 to 17 April, the auction house *Arsani* was planning to hold a pre-auction exhibition 'Classical and Modern Art' within the walls of the National Museum of Taras Shevchenko in Kyiv. The auction was

supposed to take place online on 16 April.<sup>33</sup> Although the situation in Kyiv was becoming more stable in April, the war was not over yet and these plans were postponed or cancelled. As *Arsani* is based both in Kyiv and in Kharkiv, we do not have information about the condition of the auction house exhibition space in Kharkiv, where fighting is going on at the moment.

During the pandemic and lockdown, an initiative to support artists by the gallerists and collectors Marat Gelman and Yevhen Karas became very popular. This is a group on Facebook named *Сіль-Соль* (*Salt-Salt*), an accessible marketplace of contemporary visual art directly from artists in the low-price range. It attracts many young artists and a large audience of buyers due to its affordability and low barriers to entry. This initiative continues working now, and although there might be some delivery delays, artists continue posting their works and receiving demand for them. *Salt-Salt* has also successfully organised a charity sale of 82 artworks and transferred 200 000 UAH (≈7000 USD) to the fund helping the arm 'Come Back Alive'.<sup>34</sup>

The painting *My Hut, My Truth* by Maria Primachenko was sold for €110,000 at the Benefit for Ukraine's People & Culture charity auction in Italy. The starting price was €1000. Among other lots, there was a work by Ukrainian artist Alina Zamanova and works by foreign artists. All proceeds will be sent to help Ukrainian culture; to the Museum Fund of Ukraine, the Maria Primachenko Family Fund, '100% of Life' and others.<sup>35</sup>

The Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art (UIMA), located in Chicago, together with the online marketplace Artsy has organised an online auction, 'Impact: Artists in Support of Refugees from Ukraine', on April 14, featuring submissions from Ukrainian and non-Ukrainian artists. It aims to raise cultural awareness, fund Ukrainian artists, and provide support relief for refugees fleeing Ukraine. Artsy is donating a portion of the Buyer's Premium to the organisation in the USA, which provides aid to people affected by the war in Ukraine and gives support to displaced families. Donations collected by UIMA will be distributed to non-profit organisations among which is the Ukrainian Emergency Art Fund.<sup>36</sup>

## Export

Ukraine had a reasonably liberal system for exporting contemporary art objects before the war. Ukraine has no tariffs on the export of works of art less than 50 years old. Special export permits are not required, although the customs authorities require a document confirming that the item is not older than 50 years. This document is issued by art museums in each regional centre and is not difficult to obtain. The delivery of art objects was carried out by many world postal services, as well as local organisations and private contractors.

Since the beginning of the war, major global companies have suspended delivery of art objects on the territory of Ukraine.

30 'HAVE A HEART' (*Koller International Auctions*, 19 April 2022) <<https://www.kollerauktionen.ch/en/ibid-archive.htm>> accessed 22 May 2022.

31 'Namysto' (*OpenSea*) <<https://opensea.io/collection/namysto>> accessed 22 May 2022.

32 'Charity auction 'Primachenko flowers for ZSU' (*Dukat*, 2022) <<http://www.dukat-art.com/en>> accessed 29 April 2022.

33 'Arsani Auction House' <<https://arsani.art/en.html>> accessed 30 March 2022.

34 'Saltandpepper' (*Facebook*, 2022) <<https://www.facebook.com/groups/saltandpepper.art>> accessed 10 April 2022.

35 Victoria Alekseenko, 'A painting by Maria Primachenko was sold at a charity auction in Italy for €110,000' (*DI*, 23 April 2022) <<https://d1.ua/na-blagotvoritelnom-auksione-v-italii-za-e110-tysyach-prodali-kartynu-marii-primachenko>> accessed 28 April 2022.

36 'Impact: Artists in Support of Refugees from Ukraine' (*Artsy*, 2022) <[https://www.artsy.net/auction/impact-artists-in-support-of-refugees-from-ukraine?sort=sale\\_position](https://www.artsy.net/auction/impact-artists-in-support-of-refugees-from-ukraine?sort=sale_position)> accessed 14 April 2022.

Many purchased items will not be delivered outside of Ukraine for an indefinite period. Victoria Adkozalova, one of the artists who responded to our survey wrote: 'I gave one of the works bought by a collector from the USA on February 23 to the DHL branch, and, unfortunately, it could not leave the country and stayed in Kyiv'.

The problem also arose from the rapid evacuation of private collections that were under the threat of destruction in regions with active hostilities and bordering them. Under these conditions, local companies and private contractors were the fastest to adapt and were able to establish new land routes for the export of art to Europe. Since airmail is not working during the war and sea transportation is blocked, only land routes along government-controlled highways are used. But not everyone can use the services of such logistics structures, as this requires personal contacts and a history of relationships. It also retained the ability to send works of art abroad with the help of the national operator *Ukrposhta*. But this service has significant restrictions on the dimensions of the sent items.

Naturally, in such conditions, there is practically no possibility of full-fledged insurance of art objects. Any sending of items from the occupied territories is not possible. The removal of art objects from the zone of occupation is associated with a great risk for life. Although we are aware of several examples of the private evacuation of work from besieged or occupied cities, those are exceptions.

### Preservation and destruction of street art

The war destroys Ukrainian cities, streets, and houses with shells. Among the affected buildings are universities, theatres, museums, and even residential buildings and hospitals. Our cultural heritage and art are at risk of being destroyed. Street art suffers first because it decorates the exterior and is not protected from vandalism. The murals were not ready for mines, bullets, and aerial bombs. Just like civilians. Some of the works of famous Kharkiv street artist Gamlet Zinkivskyi will no longer be seen. Since 2014, he has completed at least four projects in Mariupol but this city has now been reduced to rubble.<sup>37</sup> Fortunately, most of the artist's works have survived in his hometown of Kharkiv and we hope they will not be destroyed in future battles in the east of Ukraine.<sup>38</sup>

Sculptures located in open spaces are at an increased risk of destruction since they cannot even be moved to the basements of houses. There are many cases of the production of reinforcing structures for outdoor sculptures that could be at greatest risk. These were mostly made by activists who understand the importance of saving cultural heritage. The cultural and educational project 'Ukrainian Modernism', dedicated to researching, preserving, and promoting modern architecture and monumental art in Ukraine created an initiative to protect the stained-glass windows of the pearl of Kyiv modernism at the funicular. They raised funds to strengthen all 12 stained glass windows from enemy shelling as they are very vulnerable to shock waves and debris.<sup>39</sup>

37 'Gamlet Zinkovsky's new work in Mariupol' (*Izolyatsia*, 16 December 2015). <<https://izolyatsia.org/ru/project/zmina/new-work-hamlet-zinkovsky/>> accessed 14 March 2022.

38 Gamlet Zinkovsky, 'Map of Murals' (*Kharkiv*) <<https://find-way.com.ua/ru/oblasti/kharkovskaya/kharkov/gamlet-zin-kovskij-karta-muralov-khar-kov>> accessed 14 April 2022.

39 Ukrainian modernism, 'Let's protect the stained-glass windows of the Kyiv funicular from enemy shelling!' (*Instagram*, 22 March 2022) <<https://www.instagram.com/p/Cbaq-OSNLVI/>> accessed 22 March 2022.

At the beginning of the war, a portal was created where volunteers leave photographs of cultural objects damaged by shelling. This is called the cultural loss map.<sup>40</sup> It is important because in the future, according to the initiator's plan, it will be a single reference book for invoicing the Russian Federation for reparations at the end of the war.

### NFT art

The art industry is actively helping Ukraine; it organises projects where all proceeds go to the charities. Several of these projects are based on the sale of NFT art.

A project by the Holy Water tech company united 500 Ukrainian artists who created artworks for their charity NFT collection, presented in a virtual exhibition. On 1 April 2022, they donated to Ukraine's official crypto wallet more than 61 thousand US dollars.<sup>41</sup> A project named 'Museum of War' by the Ukrainian blockchain community and the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine also partnered with Ukrainian artists. This project's goal is to preserve memories of current events, provide information to the digital community, and collect funds to help Ukraine. It is selling NFTs where each token is a combination of news information and an illustration by Ukrainian artists. The money raised will be used to support the Ukrainian army and civilians.<sup>42</sup>

The Ukrainian team *FFFACE.ME* has created a collection of three non-fungible tokens in support of Ukraine. 'At a time like this, there is a very strong creative impulse. We are aware that today the task of the creative class is not only to support Ukraine financially but also to form a cultural image of the country, which will not only be remembered but will become fashionable. This is how the concept of the *Ukrainian Power Artifacts* NFT collection came about. In it, each of the lots is literally the object of force in which we put our strength, formed during the bombing, evacuation and psychological tests. Buyers of each of these artefacts will receive this momentum and become stronger, just as the buyer of the original art object receives a part of the author's soul', says the team *FFFACE.ME*.<sup>43</sup> All proceeds from the sale of this collection will be sent to support the Armed Forces.

### The Ukrainian Emergency Art Fund

The non-governmental organisation Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), in partnership with independent Kyiv-based media agency *Zaborona*, *The Naked Room* art gallery, and the National Art and Culture Museum Complex *Mystetskyi Arsenal* established the Ukrainian Emergency Art Fund. It is a very important initiative in dealing with the consequences of the Russian invasion and helping the Ukrainian art community. The fund facilitates support and administers donations offered by international artistic and charity organisations, as well as from private donors. First, it provides vital

40 'Map of cultural loss' (*Ukraine Cultural Fund*, 2022) <<https://uaculture.org/culture-loss/>> accessed 27 April 2022.

41 'Buy NFTs to Save Ukraine and Stop War' (*Holy Water Tech*, 2022) <<https://holywater.tech/>> accessed 27 March 2022.

42 'THE NFT-MUSEUM of the war of Putin's Russia against Ukraine' (*META History Museum of War*, 2022) <<https://metahistory.gallery>> accessed 27 March 2022.

43 'FFFACE.ME has created a collection of three NFTs in support of Ukraine' (*Vogue UA*, 15 March 2022) <<https://vogue.ua/article/culture/art/ffface-me-stvorili-kolekciyu-iz-troh-nft-na-pidtrimku-ukrajini.html>> accessed 27 March 2022.

financial aid for artists and cultural workers who remain in Ukraine and urgently need support to ensure a basic standard of living and security. They intend to support the continuity of research of curators, theoreticians, researchers, and other cultural workers. Then it aims to globally promote contemporary Ukrainian culture as a powerful instrument for the protection of the values of democracy and freedom in the world.<sup>44</sup>

## Conclusions

As our study makes clear, the art industry in Ukraine is now focused on ways to support the country. At this moment there is no emphasis on the economy of the art industry while all agents in the Ukrainian art market have to also think about their future.

There are initiatives to help individual Ukrainian artists. Many galleries abroad have organised open calls for Ukrainian artists, they relocate them and exhibit their works in their spaces and at Art Fairs. This benefits artists and foreign galleries, while there is an increasing interest in Ukrainian art and culture. For some artists, during the war, there was an opportunity to express themselves outside of Ukraine, because there has been more interest in the topic of Ukraine in particular and our country in general. This creates new opportunities after the war.

Most projects happening now are created in collaboration with international partners. As the Ukrainian art industry consists of a fairly closed society, social ties and trust are required for international projects. In our own experience, such projects are more likely to happen when the parties have already been personally acquainted with each other. Since the two years before the war were overshadowed by the pandemic crisis, participation in international projects such as the art fairs was almost impossible, and therefore international connections between galleries and other art agents became weaker. Because strong connections are essential now, many projects cannot be implemented quickly and efficiently.

Domestic primary agents of the art market, the private galleries, struggle now. Most galleries had to stop their exhibitions. When people are worried about their future, customers' ability to buy art shrinks and the domestic demand for art is predicted to decrease. At the same time, the ability to participate in international events is limited because of travel restrictions. The initiative of the Ukrainian Emergency Art Fund is very important at this moment, but we expect that private galleries will be one of the most affected parties as a result of the war, and some of them will cease to exist. In some cities, they are simply destroyed and their collections are destroyed. Many galleries will also lose their sources of income from sales at exhibitions and art fairs.

The situation with regard to the collection of Ukrainian art is likely to change. Ukrainian art will become more interesting and accessible to Western collectors. At the same time, the economic situation will narrow the ability of the domestic collector to buy art and this will negatively affect the domestic art market.

There is a problem that Ukrainian art is often sold under the title of Russian art, i.e., in Russian art departments in auction houses. This needs to be changed now, and Ukrainian art has to be identified as a separate segment. Ukrainian art cannot be sold in the auctions under the name or in the section 'Russian art', as this violates the

definition of an independent and sovereign country. Ukrainian artists are often mislabelled as Russian, especially Ukrainian born artists during the time of the USSR, for example Kazimir Malevich. Malevich called himself a Ukrainian in his diaries.<sup>45</sup> But, as part of the imperial policy, Russia has always tried to appropriate the Ukrainian cultural heritage. During the war, we see another example of Russia's barbaric attitude towards Ukrainian art and its institutions. We expect that one of the consequences of the war will be the complete emergence of Ukrainian art from the shadow of Russian art and its recognition as national and original. There will also be a process of revision of Ukrainian art and its complete rethinking as an important part of contemporary European art.

The war is a powerful cultural phenomenon that will radically change the direction of the art market and contemporary Ukrainian art in general. Depending on the results of the war, the art market can expect either a long stagnation or a rapid renaissance and the emergence of new works and art projects. We believe in victory.

44 'Ukrainian Emergency Art Fund' <<https://ueaf.moca.org.ua/>> accessed 25 March 2022.

45 Tetyana Filevska, *Kazymyr Malevych: The Kyiv Period, 1928–1930* (Rodovid Press/kmb 2016).