

Invasion

28. 4. – 22. 5. 2022

Monday through Friday 2 to 6 PM, Saturdays and Sundays 11 AM to 6 PM

Kobka 17, Smíchov Riverbank

Curators: Oksana Maslova (Odesa, Ukraine), Sandra Baborovska (Prague City Gallery)

Cooperating institutions: Prague City Gallery in the framework of the “Art for the City” program and the Czech Center Kyiv.

The *Invasion* exhibition presents the war through the eyes of contemporary Ukrainian artists – Danylo Movchan from Lviv, Igor Gusev and Alexander Naselenko from Odesa. All of them are now in Ukraine and their works were created during the last weeks of the raging war.

“Despite the depressing reality of war, Ukrainian artists didn’t give up their work. Each of them has to find his or her own way to cope with the situation – some of them prefer deep introspection, others pure irony. I’d like to thank Oksana Maslova for finding the energy to cooperate in this project, in this extremely difficult situation that renders usual possibilities of cooperation with Ukrainian artists quite limited. We deeply value the fact that we can witness their authentic responses to war events that keep shocking the whole planet. Ukrainian people are dying in an absurd conflict, and we’re staring in disbelief that something like that can ever happen in the 21st century. All testimonies of what the Ukrainians must endure in this conflict are extremely important, and those conveyed by art projects can often be even more emotive than direct reports from the battlefields,” adds Magdalena Juříková, CEO of the Prague City Gallery.

This project was initiated by the Prague City Gallery and Czech Centres. Czech Centre Kyiv has created a residence program for Ukrainian artists just at the beginning of the invasion. ***“Czech Centre Kyiv provides support to new coming Ukrainian artists, reflects, and evolves their individual professional skills. Outcomes of the residencies, namely new pieces of art and curators’ projects, mirror the new reality both of Ukrainian artists and Ukraine as such,”*** says Radka Rubilina, Czech Center Kyiv Director.

“It’s a great pleasure for me to grant patronage over the exhibition with which the Prague City Gallery responds to the current situation, as part of the program ‘Art for the City’. The ‘Invasion’ exhibition gives voice to the Ukrainian artists who have remained in the center of the war, and their works tell us the story of the Ukrainian reality of the past few weeks,” says Hana Třeštíková, Councillor for Culture and Tourism.

The main feature of the exhibition is the artwork by **Danylo Movchan** (born in 1979 in Lviv), depicting human bodies and war-torn human stories on paper stained by watercolors. They look like a view through the lens of a thermal imager – so fragile, and so imperfect. Danylo Movchan has extensive experience in icon painting, which clearly reflects in the works. He participated in more than 90 international exhibitions and projects, and his works can be seen in churches and private collections in Ukraine, Poland, Italy, Germany, France, Canada, Finland and the USA. The current exhibition will feature his works from the "Days of Invasion" series.

"The war in Ukraine. Anxiety, pain, sorrow, despair, lament, waiting... No colors on earth can express this tragedy. There is no way to describe pain in the whole body. Living in a state of war brought great uneasiness to my world. I started looking for ways to share it with people. To survive my own story and these events. Pictures began to form in my head, affected by those images of war. Icon drawing has taken the backseat... I have no peace in mind to go on with the sacred works," says **Danylo Movchan** on his series.

The works of **Igor Gusev** (born in 1970 in Odesa) radiate the subtle irony and absurdity. In his collages inspired by the biggest current threats, Mr. Gusev questions established stereotypes in art. He follows up on punk traditions, adding elements of dadaism. He's a frequent participant and organizer of international events, performances and exhibitions, and also a founder of galleries. His works have been exhibited since the 1990s in galleries of Ukraine, Germany and the USA. The exhibition at Kobka 17 presents his works from the series "World War Three".

"The war is like a failed selfie to me. Like you're on the picture, and you're not, at the same time. A worse version of you. You want to get rid of it quickly, erase it, forget it. But no matter how hard you try, it is impossible! Until recently, the whole world was so beautiful and harmonious, and now all we got is the worse version of it," says **Igor Gusev** with his typical irony.

The works of **Alexander Naselenko** (born in 1992 in Odesa) were created just a few days before the full-scale Russian invasion into Ukraine. The main goal of the series "Unfinished Studies of the Ukrainian South" is a visual study of anthropological, historical and environmental aspects of the southern part of the country, especially around the Dniester estuary, the author's old neighborhood. Mysticism, permanent state of anticipation, landscape with prevailing steppes, social tension – this eclecticism is the author's creative method. Alexander Naselenko is a Ukrainian photographer who grew up in Bilhorod-Dnistrovskyi (Odessa region). He shoots portraits, artistic documentary photography, geometrical and nocturnal scenes. He has collaborated with popular Ukrainian artists and bands Jamala, Sunsay or Onuka, and

also other representatives of modern Ukrainian culture.

"Everyone is doing everything to end the war as soon as possible. The art has never saved peace and never will. On the other hand, art can soothe the soul and return it to this peaceful feeling again and again, to pave the way for something new we've never had before. Right here and now, Ukrainian art makes money for the purchase of ammunition and medicines for our defenders. It is a big goal,"
says **Alexander Naselenko**.

During the exhibition, contemporary Ukrainian culture will be presented in the broad context. Side events will include readings of modern Ukrainian poetry with music, Ukrainian movies, performances, readings of contemporary Ukrainian books and texts, etc.

Admission is free of charge or with a voluntary contribution. During the project, donations will be collected to support women and children suffering from Russian military aggression. Proceeds will be donated to the Charitable Foundation "M Corporation".

Under the auspices:

MgA. Hana Třeštíková, Councilor for Culture, Exhibitions and Tourism of the City of Prague

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