Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Dún Laoghaire
Faculty of Film, Art and Creative Technologies

# Art as Resistance: The Role of Contemporary Art in Political and Social Change in Ukraine

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Submitted to the Faculty of Film, Art and Creative Technologies in Candidacy for the
BA [Hons] in Art 2026

12/02/2026

**Declaration of Originality**

This thesis is submitted by the undersigned to the Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Dún Laoghaire in partial fulfilment of the examination for the BA [Honours] in Art. It is entirely the author's own work except where noted and has not been submitted already for an award from this or any other educational institution.

Signed: 

Grammarly was used throughout this thesis to assist with spelling, grammar and rephrasing.

**Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my gratitude to my family for their support of my interest in art, especially to my older brother, who raised me with an insatiable curiosity for Ukrainian history as well as debating and provocative topics, and to my mom and my boyfriend, who are supporting me throughout my studies at IADT.
I am extremely grateful to all Ukrainian artists mentioned in my thesis for the art they are creating for Ukraine and its people. Still, specifically, I would like to thank Yevhen Gladenko, who agreed to an interview with me at a very early stage of my thesis, thus helping me to form ground ideas.

**Abstract**

This thesis examines modern Ukrainian art as a kind of cultural pushback, molded by the shocks of politics, fighting, and people getting uprooted ever since that Revolution of Dignity back in 2013 to 2014. Instead of seeing art just as an echo of all the political mess, my work puts creative efforts right in the thick of battles over what we remember, who we are, and how history gets told. Pulling from ideas about cultural recall and various media forms; the analysis breaks down ways artists build up witness accounts, hold onto lived moments, fight against things getting wiped out amid this endless strife.

Take the examples from Yevhen Gladenko's big wall tributes that honour the fallen, or Hamlet Zinkivskyi's simple street pieces that nudge folks to think, merged with Alevtina Kakhidze's personal sketches of life in wartime, and you see the thesis laying out varied tactics for standing firm. Grand-scale remembering: calls to moral conscience; deeply private records of one's own story. Then it digs into how shows abroad, community-driven collections, networks of folks scattered worldwide spread Ukrainian works around the globe, turning hometown pains into talks that cross borders, though not without snags in how things get shown or understood.

In the end, I argue contemporary Ukrainian art acts like a linked web for churning out memories, stretching through city streets, individual tales, flows across the world; it claims culture as the main battleground, not some side effect. Those creative acts don't merely record the war, they mold its future echoes in our minds.

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## Introduction

Since 2014, and with intensity, after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Ukrainian art has gone through a change. Ukrainian art no longer limits itself to questions of looks, forms, or national representation, but now serves as a space for resistance for testimony, and making memory. I have seen the artists respond to the violence the occupation and the war, by documenting the events and by shaping the shared meanings, identities, stories when the culture is under threat. In this situation, the art does more than reflect. The art serves as an act. The art becomes a response to attempts to erase information and rewrite history.
I write about art as a form of resistance in the broader context of political and social change. I argue that artistic practices in Ukraine since the Revolution of Dignity have become ways to preserve memory, to show identity, and to express values while the conflict continues. I do not see art as secondary to political or military processes. I see art as part of the fight over meaning, history, and representation in the local area and around the world. The war still goes on. My research places art at the centre of that fight.

I see the Revolution of Dignity (2013–2014) as the starting point of this study. The Revolution of Dignity (also known as the Maidan) broke the cultural pattern in Ukraine. I felt the change. The Maidan was more than a protest against a government decision. The Maidan changed how people think about citizenship, dignity and collective responsibility. Cultural expressions, such as music, poetry, visual art and performative gestures, helped shape consciousness.

After the Revolution of Dignity Russia annexed Crimea and war started in Ukraine. The war created a period of instability, displacement and repression. The events challenged Ukraine's integrity and the foundations of the world order, after the Cold War. For society the events showed how weak political promises were. It made clear the need, for cultural identity. During the period artists focused on loss, displacement, memory and silence. Artists responded to the destruction of places and symbols by creating ways to remember. Artists painted murals. Artists kept archives. Artists organised projects. The murals, the archives the participatory projects fought erasure and propaganda. Art served as a way to preserve voices that were otherwise left out or silenced.

The full-scale invasion of 2022 made the situation worse. The invasion destroyed the infrastructure, displaced the artists, and forced many of them into exile. The aggressor openly denied the existence of identity. The current Ukrainian art scene operates as a deliberate military operation. I observed the murals that covered the destroyed structures of buildings. I accessed the diaries and drawings online. I experienced exhibitions held in bomb shelters and in foreign locations. The archives documented what life became like during the time of bombardment. The military practices demonstrate that warfare exists beyond traditional combat with weapons. War engages in battles to determine which events will be remembered and which will be forgotten while competing for space in historical records. Art becomes a way to survive. Art also becomes a way to defy.

The research investigates modern Ukrainian art by using cultural memory studies, participatory art theory, and media theory. The research draws on the work of Jan Assmann, Astrid Erll, Susan Sontag to examine how artists create memory through their artistic work and share it with others.
Government-run ways of remembering the works focus on everyday experience, personal testimony and collective participation. The works challenge the ways history is shown. The works put lives, gestures and intimate stories at the front. The works use those as carriers of meaning.

The research follows three chapters. Chapter One sets the political background. Chapter One follows the path of resistance, from the Revolution of Dignity through the annexation of Crimea and the full-scale invasion. Chapter One shows how each crisis created the conditions for the art to become a form of resistance. Chapter One places the production within the processes of identity building, the political break, and social change.

Chapter Two looks at case studies of artists. The Ukrainian artists show ways of resistance and making memory. Yevhen Gladenko makes murals that turn city walls into places of memory. The memorial murals embed remembrance in city life. Hamlet Zinkivskyi creates inscriptions and images that serve as acts of resistance. The minimalist inscriptions and images use restraint and simplicity to make viewers think about duty and watchfulness. The Pylorama use participatory and archival methods. The participatory and archival methods highlight testimony, shared authorship and the movement of memory. I observe how the practices demonstrate

how art responds to war. The practices also share a commitment to keep experience from becoming abstract or being forgotten.

Chapter Three expands the scope of analysis, to demonstrate how current Ukrainian art scene operates in the manner of a deliberate military operation. It also examines how global exhibitions, media, Ukrainian communities abroad, and online platforms shape how people see and understand art in different countries. International recognition gives art visibility and support. At the time, it raises questions about how Ukrainian art's presented, how it is framed, and about unequal power relations in major art institutions around the world. This chapter argues that Ukrainian art does not sit quietly in discourse. Ukrainian art steps in. Takes part in debates about ideas, trauma, and cultural resistance. Diaspora communities and digital archives play a part in the process. Diaspora communities and digital archives help the memory and testimony travel across borders. I have seen diaspora communities and digital archives keep stories alive for people away.

Overall, this thesis argues that contemporary Ukrainian art works as a system of resistance that operates across local, national and global contexts. Contemporary Ukrainian art does not show suffering or destruction. Instead, Ukrainian art builds frameworks that help society understand itself during and after conflict. I examine practices as memory, participation and political engagement. This research adds to discussions on the role of art in times of crisis. In doing so, it affirms that culture is not a peripheral casualty of war, but one of its most contested and vital terrains.

## Chapter 1: Historical and Political Context

### 1.1. The Revolution of Dignity and Its Cultural Effects

The Revolution of Dignity (Revoliutsiia Hidnosti) was a mass protest movement in Ukraine between November 2013 and February 2014, triggered by the government's decision to suspend signing the Association Agreement with the European Union. The protests developed into a national movement, with people fighting against an authoritarian government while demanding action against corruption and state violence.

The protests took place at Independence Square (Maidan Nezalezhnosti) in Kyiv, which served as both a physical meeting spot and a symbolic area for public activism. The Revolution of Dignity was not only a major political change in Ukraine's history, but it was also a time of big cultural and value change. It created new ways for people to work together, made room for civic solidarity, and laid the starting point for future cultural and artistic forms of resistance.

Marcie Shore, an American historian, says that the Maidan was a time when "the political became existential." For thousands of Ukrainians, going to the protests wasn't just a way to show their political views; it was also a personal choice that had to do with their sense of self and identity. Shore says, "All of them had to make a choice at some point. This was 'choosing' in the strongest, existentialist sense described by Jean-Paul Sartre" (Shore, 2017, p. XIV). This decision showed that the person was responsible for the country's future in both a political and personal way. Shore documents that for many participants, the Revolution of Dignity was not perceived as a "romantic impulse." One eyewitness admitted: "When I went to the revolution on the Maidan, whether I went to Kiev or here in Lviv, there was no euphoria and no desire. I didn't shout anything… I was simply silent. I always understood it as hard, unpleasant, draining, but necessary work. Simply work." (Shore, 2017, p. 35). This understanding imbued the events with the character of a civic coming-of-age ritual: each generation must undergo its own revolution to form political agency.


Fig. 1. One of the mass protests during Revolution of Dignity, 2013

Serhiy Plokhy provides a detailed description of how the peaceful student protests developed into a national uprising. As he writes:

“On the night of November 30, riot police brutally attacked the students camping on the Maidan. That was the one thing Ukrainian society was not prepared to tolerate. The next day, more than half a million Kyivans, some of them parents and relatives of the students beaten by the police, poured into downtown Kyiv, turning the Maidan and its environs into a space of freedom from the corrupt government and its police forces. What had begun as a demand to join Europe turned into the Revolution of Dignity, which brought
together varied political forces, from liberals in mainstream parties to radicals and nationalists.” (Plokhy, 2015, p. 344).

This passage shows how quickly the Maidan turned from a pro-European protest into a much bigger battle for independence and dignity that brought together people from all walks of Ukrainian life.

One of the main cultural consequences of the Maidan was the formation of a new model of public space. Shore notes the phenomenon of self-organization: "The spontaneous self-organization impressed even those on the other side" (Shore, 2017, p. 67). People brought food, clothing, firewood, and helped strangers, turning the central squares of Kyiv and other cities are being turned into a laboratory of civic

solidarity. This horizontal structure of resistance became an important lesson for society: hopes were no longer pinned on a "good tsar," as during the Orange Revolution, but were built on the experience of collective action.
Meanwhile, the Orange Revolution was a series of mass protests in Ukraine in late 2004 following widespread allegations of electoral fraud during the presidential election. The movement sparked peaceful demonstrations that mobilised the public to fight for democratic change, free elections, and the rule of law. The Orange Revolution achieved its goal of election result verification, but it focused its efforts on institutional and leadership-based targets. The movement needed political leaders to function because it lacked permanent citizen organizations which would later become a key issue in Ukrainian political discussions.
In terms of political culture, the Revolution of Dignity signalled the final rejection of the Soviet legacy of authoritarianism. The dispersal of students on the night of November 30, 2013 marked the point of no return: it was then that the protest ceased to be "pro-European" and transformed into a nationwide movement against arbitrariness and violence.

The cultural dimension of the Maidan also manifested itself in its symbolism. Hundreds of slogans, songs, graffiti, and artistic gestures became part of the resistance. According to Shore, students and young people were particularly sensitive to the symbols of Europe—from EU flags to songs about freedom—but gradually these signs acquired a broader meaning. The Maidan evolved into something beyond a protest against a specific political decision, but a struggle for the values of dignity, freedom, and justice.

Fig. 2. Protesters fighting government forces on Independence Square, 18 February 2014

These values were also reflected in art, which became an integral part of the Maidan. Musicians, poets, and artists created new images of protest: the square stage transformed into an arena for cultural mobilisation. This experience cemented the role of art as a means of social resistance, which later became especially significant during the years of the full- scale invasion.

It took place in these years that a new view of the Ukrainian nation as a political community came about. This view was based more on the values of citizenship and mutual accountability for the country's future rather than on ethnicity. This was a big change: national identity became universal and open to everyone. Thus, the Revolution of Dignity marked a pivotal moment in the maturation of Ukrainian society. This event encompassed cultural, political, and existential dimensions. It transformed how individuals thought about citizenship, art's place in society, and even the fundamental basis of national
identity. This experience established the basis for later forms of artistic defiance during war and global information warfare.

### 1.2. The Annexation of Crimea and the Outbreak of War (2014–2021)

Russia's annexation of Crimea in the spring of 2014 was one of the most dramatic events in the post-Soviet history of Eastern Europe. It not only changed Ukraine's territorial borders, but also launched a long-term transformation of the peninsula, accompanied by the exodus of a large part of the population, a shift in the ethnocultural balance, and increased political repression.

Andrew Wilson notes that the seizure of Crimea was not only an act of force but also a challenge to the entire international security system: "Russia's annexation of Crimea and its undermining of Ukrainian sovereignty was a direct challenge to the entire post-Cold War security order" (Wilson, 2014, p. vii). This move by the Kremlin demonstrated that the previous architecture of international guarantees had ceased to work, and the balance between Russia and the West had collapsed.

The Crimean referendum, organised in March 2014, became one of the most striking examples of legitimising annexation through procedural manipulation. As Andrew Wilson notes, “The Crimean Soviet initially scheduled a referendum for May 25, but brought it forward to March 16. It then claimed that 96.7 per cent voted for union with Russia had a turnout of 83.1 per cent. Russia was used to such dictator majorities, but this one wasn’t even ethnically plausible – 24 per cent of the population were Ukrainian and 13 percent Crimean Tatar” (Wilson, 2014, p. 113). This quote shows how dubious the voting results were: figures close to a “dictatorial majority” did not reflect the real ethnic and political picture of the peninsula. The voting process itself took place under military occupation, making free expression of will impossible. As a result, the “referendum” became not an expression of the people’s will, but a tool for consolidating Russia’s control over the region.


Fig. 3. A group of armed soldiers in uniform without insignia standing near a government building in Simferopol. A homemade poster with the inscription "Crimea is Russia" is installed nearby, 2014

Snyder also stresses that the annexation of Crimea had a strong symbolic meaning. In Russia, it was not seen as an act of aggression, but as a holy "return" that was part of a thousand-year-old myth. ‘Vladimir Putin made the annexation of Crimea sound like a mystical personal change, a joyful journey into eternity. Putin said that Crimea had to be part of Russia because Volodymyr/Valdemar, the leader of ancient Rus, had been baptised there a thousand years earlier’ (Snyder, 2018, p. 116). This interpretation turned the political act regarding annexation into a ritual of historical sequence, with the peninsula being recognised as a symbol of Russia's "eternal connection" to the origins of Christian Rus'. As a result, propaganda tried to give the seizure both legal and metaphysical reasons, which made people in Russia more likely to support the Kremlin.

After Crimea was taken over, there was almost no room for independent journalism and open debate. The Russian government took control of the information space by shutting down or putting local media under its control. The "referendum" itself was "an electoral farce... [with] an official turnout... of 123%" (Snyder, 2018, p. 80), so there could be no other explanations of what happened. This system helped Moscow strengthen its grip on power not just through military force, but also by controlling the truth. This took away the residents of the peninsula's right to free speech and access to independent

information.

The exodus from Crimea had both humanitarian and cultural effects. The space for free public life was destroyed when independent media went away and the right to protest was limited. Crimean Tatars, whose historical homeland is the peninsula, were a small group that was systematically oppressed. At the same time, Ukraine had to deal with the problem of integrating people who had to leave Crimea and coming to terms with the fact that they had lost something.

So, the annexation of Crimea wasn't just one event; it was a process that had effects that built up over seven years. It stood for the end of the international order and the start of an "exodus" that changed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people. For Russia, this was proof of its imperial goals and an attempt to change history. For Ukraine, it was a hard but important lesson that played a role in developing a new national identity and strengthening ties with the West.

Paradoxically, Russia’s annexation of Crimea accelerated Ukraine’s orientation toward the West. This violation of sovereignty and international law galvanised Ukrainian society, which increasingly viewed European integration as a means to safeguard political independence, democratic governance, and cultural identity.

### 1.3. The Full-Scale Invasion of 2022 and the Evolution of Cultural Resistance

When Russia fully invaded Ukraine in February 2022, Ukrainian art quickly became a part of the fight for culture, memory, identity, and land. Charlotte Higgins says that "Putin's invasion was meant to destroy Ukraine's feeling of identity and history. But the artists in the country are using their work as weapons to fight back in a strong way" (Higgins, 2022).


Fig. 4. A poster of a documentary movie “Rule of Two Walls” by David Gutnik, 2023

For many artists, the war became a personal challenge and a reason to make new kinds of visual protest. In the first few months of the occupation, cultural workers all over Ukraine acted quickly: exhibitions became places of memory, installations became acts of symbolic defence, and graffiti on ruins became statements of the nation's "unconquered" soul. In an article about the movie *Rule of Two Walls*, director David Gutnik says, "This is a war of shells, missiles, and drones... But it is

also a war of who gets to write the history, a war of memory, and a war of identity" (Gutnik, cited in Higgins, 2024).

The "art of survival" has become one of the most important strategies. Ukrainian artists keep working even when they are being bombed and shelled. The movie shows artists who stay in their cities even though they are being destroyed to keep things stable. These artistic practices are more than a simple record of war; they serve as active resistance and a metaphorical defence against cultural annihilation.

The documentary *Rule of Two Walls* is one of the best examples of artistic defiance. It doesn't show soldiers; it shows people who are fighting to keep their identity through art. Radhivan Simonpillai says, "The movie is about Ukrainians on the front lines, but not the soldiers. It's about the artists who are standing firm on their homeland against the ash and rubble. They are painters and singers who put on shows and exhibits, even though the gunfire and shelling that comes with the art is always there. They are fighting to create and protect culture, and they are doing so by expanding their Ukrainian identity in response to Vladimir Putin's repeated claims that they have none" (Simonpillai, 2024). This part shows that making art during war is not only a way to record destruction, but also a way to protect national identity in response to the aggressor's attempt to take away Ukrainians' right to exist as a culture.

The evolution of cultural resistance in 2022–2024 reveals that art has become a strategic front: artists are changing cities into exhibition halls of struggle, transforming destruction into a visual discourse of resistance; they are preserving memory through performance, installation, street art, and documentary film. These practices shed light on the fact that war is not only the violence of arms, but also an attempt to destroy the historical and cultural self of a people.

## Chapter 2: Case Study of Ukrainian Artists

### 2.1. Yevhen Gladenko: Memorial Murals

In modern-day Ukraine, the most striking examples of public culture and public art are the numerous murals and memorials that pay tribute to the fallen soldiers of the current Russo-Ukrainian War, including large-scale works by Yevhen Gladenko. Operating in the public realm, Gladenko's artworks serve that public life by embedding memory in the commemoration of the fallen. His occupation of urban surfaces promotes an understanding of the commemoration of the fallen as an essential and indispensable element of urban living.

Erll argues that memory must be anchored in social media forms to persist and states that “cultural memory is based on communication through media. Shared versions of the past are invariably generated by means of ‘medial externalisation’” (Erll, 2008, p. 389). Gladenko's works serve as examples of medial externalisation and communicate the personal loss and collective trauma of the nation. The walls of the city serve a purpose here as media, and the memories they carry will no longer be forgotten.

Fig. 5. A mural dedicated to the memory of Maksym "Box" Burdus, a fighter of the Azov Regiment and Ukrainian kickboxing champion who died defending his country, Be a Warrior – Live Forever, 2024

*Be a Warrior — Live Forever* is one of Gladenko's most notable work and most famous of all murals. The latter covers one of the walls of a multi-storey residential building. The painting shows a full-length Ukrainian soldier in a combat uniform, standing in an impressive vertical position. Next to the soldier in full combat uniform — bulletproof, with a soldier's gear and shimmering tactical gloves, a helmet with a gun on the strap and bulletproof vest, which is hanging in a relaxed way on the strap, and on the other side of the shoulder, is standing a landscape with a wide horizon on the side of the painting. The soldier, whose face is covered with a bandage, reflects a calm character.

The large scale of the monument helps portray longing and meaning. From below, the viewer is made to look upwards and feels a sense of monumentality, a perspective often linked to the ideologies of valour, dominance, and heroics. In this case, the visibility of the soldier sacrifices the individuality of his character and instead makes him a monument for the symbolic nation's defence.

Erll discusses how the past is not merely documented through representation, but how it is also redefined, stating that "it is the double dynamics of the premediation of remediation, of the medial preformation and reshaping of events, which links each representation of the past with the history of media memories" (Erll, 2008, 395). This is to say that, to some extent, the public memory of Gladenko's murals reshapes the event of death in war. In a time when closure feels absent, via the scale and visual dominance, the void of loss is compressed and condensed into a heroic narrative that renders meaning concrete and unchangeable.

At the same time, this tactic brings forth a crucial paradox. Including fallen soldiers standing tall in uniform and with military gear runs the risk of idealising and potentially romanticising the death of a soldier. The absence of injury, tiredness, or disarray creates a more favourable image of sacrifice, rather than a negative one. Although intended as acts of commemoration, such artistry may also sustain a visual cultural narrative that frames military death as noble and predestined. This contradiction illuminates the moral and ethical complexity of public mourning in wartime.

Fig. 6. A car drives past murals of fallen Ukrainian soldiers of the Gonor unit of the First Separate Battalion's "Da Vinci Wolves" in Kyiv, 2024

The same phenomenon is present in Gladenko's large mural memorialising fallen soldiers of the "Da Vinci Wolves" battalion, which is located strategically along one of the most travelled highways and a railway line. The design is a horizontal line of standing soldiers side by side. Each of them is depicted standing tall in military camouflage and holding a weapon, with a name and call sign written underneath. Each portrait individually outlines distinct facial and bodily features and expressions, which may differ from one soldier to the next. Some may be wearing a sombre expression, while others may be calm or faintly smile, yet the portrayal of the soldiers captures the overall likeness, and the uniformity of the stance and posture of each soldier represents the soldiers as a single unified entity.

The backdrop of the murals is bright palettes of orange, yellow, and blue, suggesting periods of a sunrise or sunset and heightening the emotional engagement even further. Blues and yellows of the sky in the murals contrast and compete with the grey of the industrial surroundings of asphalt, concrete, and metal. The murals are painted on static figures of people who, alongside passing cars and trains, are set in place 'forever' and 'bear witness' to the movement of this place in the murmur of the ever-changing contemporary world.

The murals have become today's contemporary 'lieux de mémoire' in the sense that, as Pierre Nora argues, "lieux de mémoire are created because there are no longer milieux de mémoire"(Nora, 1989). At a time when lived, collective memory is interrupted and replaced with war and displacement, Gladenko's murals become constructed memory. By memory, he means in the everyday movement of the city; rather, memory is not in official public monuments. Instead, through his murals, he created memorable public memory on a monumental scale, allowing the city to become a big, living archive of memories of loss and resilience.

## 2.2. Hamlet Zinkivskyi: Minimalism and Silent Resistance

In contrast to the monumental methods of Yevhen Gladenko, the method of cultural resistance by Hamlet Zinkivskyi is considerably different. Prominence, large form, and heroic pictures are the main characteristics of Gladenko's methods, whereas Zinkivskyi uses more text, diminutive imagery, and more control. Zinkivskyi's murals are not meant to capture the attention of the audience visually, but are meant to slow down every day routine and stimulate moral consideration. In the war-shattered everyday space of Kharkiv, the murals are more important and relevant, especially with Russia's full-scale invasion since 2022.

Fig. 7. Mural "I Think I've Found Myself. I Hope I Don't Lose It..." in Kharkiv, 2018

Zinkivskyi's works, created before 2022, focused on the themes of fragility, self-doubt, and the search for meaning on an existential level. The murals, including *I Think I've Found Myself. I Hope I Don't Lose It…*, presented an introspective declaration and blurred the boundary between public and private thought. However, after the war started, his works pivoted from self-reflection to the theme of collective vigilance. The city, marked by the destruction of the shelling, the broken facades, and the interrupted everyday life, became an important part of the visual language.

Fig. 8. Mural “I See Everything”, 2023 in Kharkiv

Zinkivskyi's mural *I See Everything* features a Ukrainian soldier’s simplified black-and white-portrait, set against a completely black background. The soldier's features are illustrated in a rough, sketch-like fashion, using white lines, capturing his uniform's key outlines and details including a helmet, scarf, radio, plate carrier, and a few minor facial features. The dominant characteristic of the soldier are his eyes, sternly gazing over at the audience and immediately taking up an eye contact with them. It is unclear whether the words at the top leave room for interpretation or are in fact a statement, but I See Everything is an example of an imperative sentence regardless, and is a phrase the audience is likely to remember, whether or not they appreciate the artistry behind the mural.

Without conflict, wounds, and violence, these features represent the mural's vision, and, therefore, purpose. It evokes an ethical encounter, between the observer and the mural. *I See Everything's* construction is a paradox of reassurance, warning, and accusation. The soldier, artist, and mural walk the line of awareness and

accountability, with the majority of the responsibility resting upon the viewer, as the mural is a construction of two voices in sync, while the viewer remains unheard.

Susan Sontag believes that the ethical power of an image does not rely on shock, and certain images instead produce "a challenging kind of beauty to exist in terribilità" (Sontag, 2003, p. 46). Even if Sontag's analysis pertains to the realm of photographic art, the same argument can be beneficially extrapolated to other representational practices like murals as in the case of Zinkivskyi. In *I See Everything*, the lack of spectacle increases the ethical tension.


Fig. 9. Mural “Time Hears Us” in Kharkiv, 2022

The same mechanism is at work in the textual mural *Time Hears Us*, located on a war-torn building. The wall bears war scars on its surface: broken walls, bricks, and demolished flats. The words, painted in large, uneven letters that evoke a hand-drawing lettering rather than type, are a striking contrast to the large wall. They are

fragile, just like the wall that supports them. Language, in this case, does not cover destruction with a narrative; rather, it stands and communicates with it.

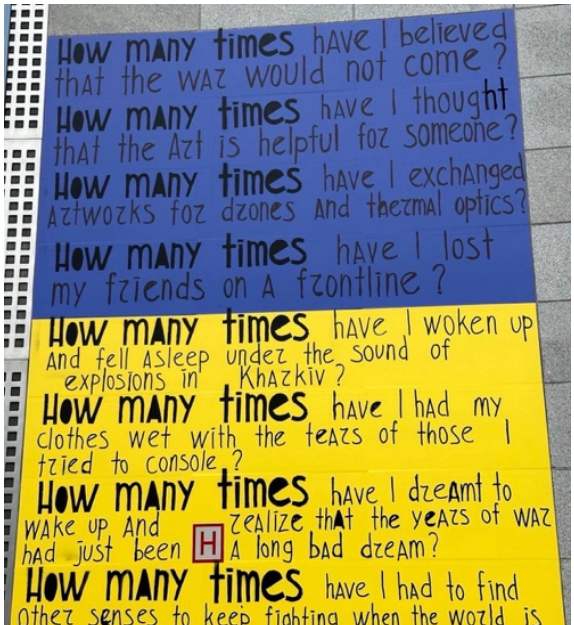
Images have the capacity to transform lived destruction into a mediated representation, reorganising chaotic reality into something perceivable and interpretable. Although Sontag writes specifically about photography, her observation that images "…objectify: they turn an event or a person into something that can be possessed" (Sontag, 2003) can be extended to other forms of visual representation. In the case of the mural, the damaged wall and its inscription do not simply remain fragments of a lived event but become a readable image, allowing distant viewers to encounter the reality of destruction without directly experiencing it.

Following this logic, Zinkivskyi's mural demonstrates how text and ruin operate together as a mnemonic structure. The damaged building is no longer perceived solely as a fragment of destruction; through inscription it acquires narrative function. The wall becomes a witness, carrying temporal depth and transforming material damage into a site of remembrance that testifies simultaneously to loss and resilience


Fig. 10. Mural "Hell's Hospitality" and Hamlet Zinkivsky smoking beside it, Kharkiv, 2024

Zinkivskyi's ironic tone becomes more pronounced in *Hell's Hospitality*. The mural depicts several black-stencilled silhouettes of bottles, containers, and Molotov cocktails. The composition resembles printmaking or military propaganda rather than traditional easel painting. The name that accompanies the image of Molotovs as shields of the forced defenders remains paradoxically rational, pointing to the absurdity and the dire need for sedentary and passive civil resistance during invasion.

While this mural speaks to the public, it should not be considered a kind of participatory art, it is a public ethical address. It is a reminder of it and of the attention that each of us must pay to collective responsibility, sustained solidarity, and constant preparedness, engaging the viewers in the act of cognition rather than the act of fabrication or material creation.

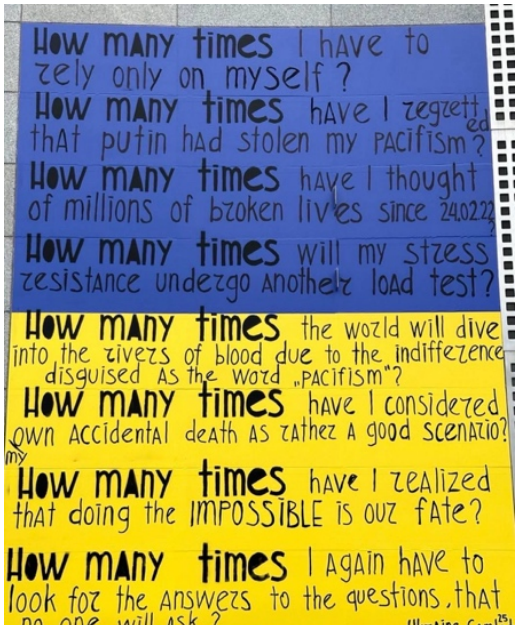



Fig. 11, 12, 13. "24.02.2022 — How Many Times" in Brussels, 2025

Zinkivskyi stepped in on February 24, 2022, and his piece How Many Times acts like a targeted textual statement, shoving minimalist approaches right into the heart of diplomatic buildings and official halls. He stuck it on the front of the European External Action Service over in Brussels; that setup twists a structure meant for impartiality, clear dealings, office jargon, into a canvas bearing witness. Up top, the huge date pins down the moment, locks in when everything shattered. Then the words "How many times" drop straight down, turning those windows into something like a remembrance wall. But not for an event that's wrapped up, no. This thing pushes on persistence. The repeating bits mirror how shock loops back, endless, pulling folks who look at it into some moral involvement with all those open-ended queries, just dangling there without replies.

Panels scrawled by hand, lined up in the shades of Ukraine's flag: blue above, yellow below, they throw a sharp difference against the sleek official vibe, pitting raw exposure against that polished front. In the blue part higher up, it captures how old assumptions crumbled; people thought conflict wouldn't strike. They trusted in what art could do. Creations got repurposed for warfare. Everything swung from artistic freedom to sheer staying alive. Down in the yellow section, attention shifts to lived-through ordeals: nights without rest, sorrow, weariness, routine carrying on amid blasts. With this setup the artwork balances big shared pasts against personal recollections; it stresses hanging in there, skips the flashy show.

### 2.3. Alevtina Kakhidze: War Diary and Biographical Memory

In contrast to Gladenko and Zinkivskyi, whose works operate within open urban public space, Alevtina Kakhidze's work became widely accessible in digital environments, confronting the war through tenderness, testimony, and repetition.. From the first days of the Russia full-scale invasion, Kakhidze has been creating her war diary, a series of drawings that combine handwritten text and simple drawings and seek to document the intense, psychological experience of the war. More than this, psychological impact the war.

The work has a minimalistic touch, with small-scale drafts and a basic selection of materials, as if they were sketches rather than genuine pieces of art. This apparent nicety has a meaning to it. Kakhidze does not seek the visibility of something monumental; rather, she opts for the presence of immediacy, tenderness, and sincerity. Her drawings do not capture martial actions or acts of war; rather, they depict internal struggles: the genuine fear of war, the exhaustion, the moral exhaustion and discomfort, the overwhelmed anger, the tragic irony of it.

Jan Assmann differentiates between types of memory when he states, "collective memory operates using two modes; the mode of 'foundational memory' and that of 'biographical memory'" (Assmann, 2011, p. 36). Kakhidze's War Diary lies solely on the biographical memory. The drawings do not attempt to render a historical narration with authority; instead, they aim to document the experience and the emotional dimension involved in it, and so in that way personal testimony is transformed into a cultural testimony that can be communicated to others.

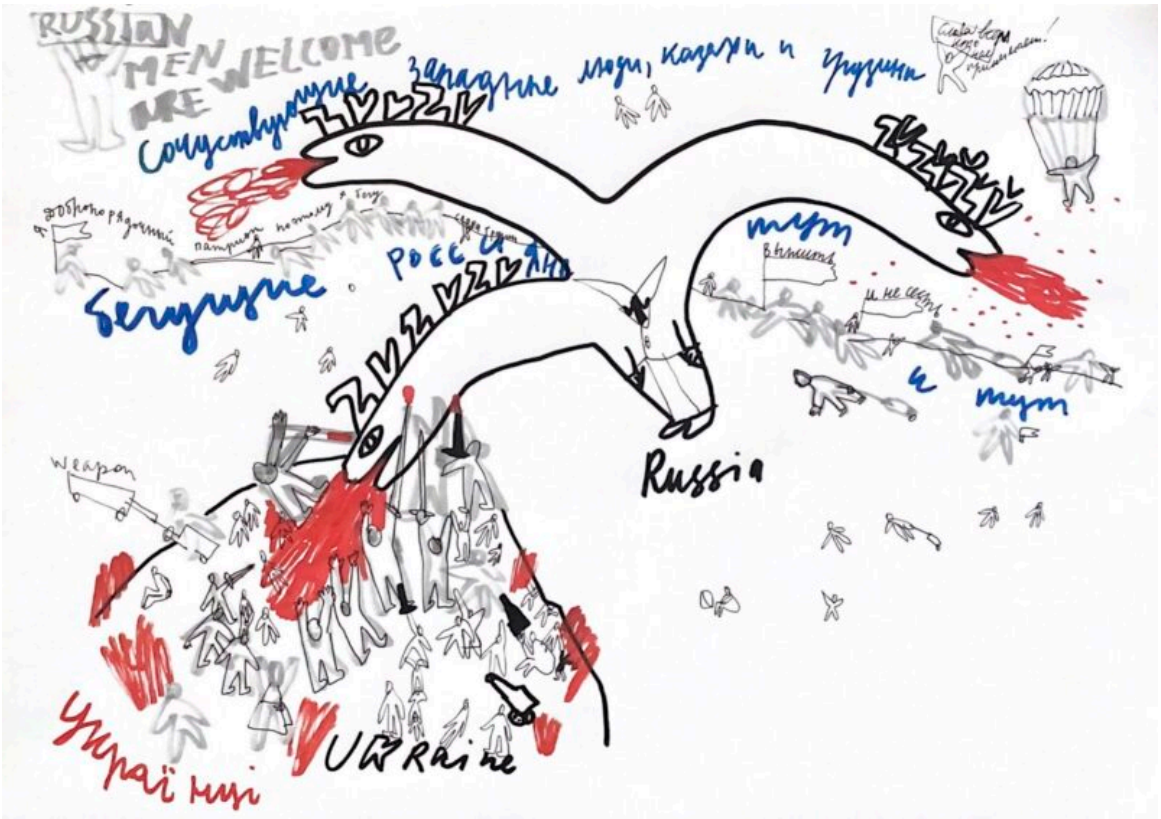


Fig. 14. “The Dragon” by Alevtina Kakhidze, 2022

The drawings are uneven in their execution, with mismatched black outlines, disproportionate elements, and handwritten annotations. One illustration features a huge 'Russia' dragon, dominating the tableau as it spews red flames; fire that extends in a scattered way throughout the whole page. 'Ukraine' and 'Refugees,' small, and seemingly defenceless, are the only groups of the runner. The palette, featuring a washed-out, slightly muted colour scheme, and is forgiving on the eyes, is speckled with bright red; additionally, it gives the raging flames a true warming characteristic and gives the whole scene quite a sense of movement and violence. The child-like style is an interesting paradox to the emotional weight carried in the illustration. Instead of lightening the emotional blow, holding the multiple challenges it presents with the powerful burden.

Fig. 15. “Unnamed” by Alevtina Kakhidze, 2022

Another sketch shows a lone figure, a man in a white coat and red tie, and he is, again, sketched with a lot of restraint and with his head down. Below the symmetry of this figure is a caption that states, “I, too, think that war is a waste when you don’t have skirmishes on your side.” While on some war-related cartoons this quote is simply humorous, here it is a true image of war, providing a necessary posture of the statement: the loss of war experience vs. a war and a disenchanted duel. The image is composed in such a way that the viewer is drawn to the caption, to the point that it is a sort of reading violation.

Assmann states that “cultural memory is not biologically transmitted, it must be kept alive through the succession of generations… through the storage, retrieval and communication of meaning” (Assmann, 2011, p. 72). On my impression, for Kakhidze the ritual of drawing on a piece of paper countless times is a daily practice, a way to cope and survive mentally, and to keep the memory alive. The collection of

drawings acts as the construction of an emotional archive, the provides an emotional base and refuses abstraction and desensitization.

Unlike other forms of photography and journalism, Kakhidze's work is not and does not aim to be objective. Rather, it employs subjectivity (still as an experience and form of testimony). The diary format bipolarity, of contradictions, irony and vulnerability and the expression capture the experience of life in a time of war. By valuing the personal, War Diary challenges and shifts the dominant, mainstream narrative of war and conflict, highlighting voyeurism and the difficulty of emotional truth.

Kakhidze uses gentle, repetitive forms and drawings to show how acts and practices of intimacy in war and conflict draw on the life of the people, preserving emotional and cultural aspects of life in war and conflict, drawing on memory practices. The drawings capture the lives of people during war in an emotional, abstract and even naïve way.

## Chapter 3: Global Discourse and Perception

### 3.1. International Exhibitions and Transnational Institutional Frameworks

The earlier chapters zeroed in on Ukrainian artists tackling war and political violence with pieces tied right to local spots. Now this one stretches things out further: think about how today's Ukrainian art spreads across the world. What shifts in it during that journey, via shows, news stories, networks from folks abroad, counts just as heavily as the art on its own. Those national lines? They don't hold this stuff anymore. Instead, the work drifts into cross-border setups like big global biennials, museums, curator-led efforts and artist stays; toss in cultural funds, online spots, groups pieced together by scattered communities. All these don't simply show the pieces, they twist how people read them: memory slots into place. Trauma settles, or gets shuffled around in worldwide political talk, hinging on the curators calling shots, the funders behind it, the eyes taking it in.

This chapter suggests that the global visibility of Ukrainian art transforms its meaning. International exhibitions and media along with infrastructures of the diaspora of Ukraine serve as filters that transform local experiences of war into globally acceptable frameworks of resistance, postcolonial and democratic struggles. This chapter discusses the circulation of memory, the relocation of the memory of Ukraine through the use of international biennial art exhibitions, memory projects motivated by media and the archive of Pylorama and digital networks of the diaspora of Ukraine.

Even though those artistic practices from Chapter 2 sprang right out of particular local spots, you know, like city vibes or someone's own backstory; now their documented bits and media versions drift into these huge worldwide setups. Over the past ten years Ukrainian contemporary art pops up way more often in those big international biennials, key shows, curator-led efforts, artist stays. Photos from the scene, old files, books put out there, the way curators shape it all: these push the stuff beyond borders. Platforms like that don't just show off Ukrainian art, they slot it into place, explain it to folks abroad, and tie it into wider talks on stuff like shaking off colonial pasts, dealing with deep hurts, global power plays.

Inga Lāce and Ieva Astahovska characterize international exhibitions as ‘mediators that incorporate the culture of so-called marginal regions into global

circulation' (Astahovska, 2021, p. 22). For Ukraine, which is historically located between Eastern Europe, the post-Soviet region, and the Global South, such mediation has been especially important. International exhibitions have enabled Ukrainian artists to move away from simplistic national markers and engage with more complex transnational conversations around memory, violence, and identity.


Fig. 16. Official poster of the 1st Riga International Biennale of Contemporary Art (RIBOCA), 2018

One of the most important landmarks in this process became the 1st Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art (RIBOCA) in 2018. RIBOCA's organizational team has been regarded as one of the most ambitious in the region's art scene. RIBOCA positioned the Baltics and post-Soviet space as contemporary sites of interest rather than cultural periphery. RIBOCA's official poster, which included provocative text-based imagery questioning the institutional authority, best summed up this ambition. Meanwhile, those same critiques highlighted persistent imbalances in how things get shown at RIBOCA. Take curator Katerina Gregos; she called the Baltic area a "terra incognita and periphery with a very interesting history" (Astahovska, 2021, p. 23), which nods to its rich past but still frames it as something fresh for Western eyes to uncover. That kind of setup reveals curatorial power

working more through spin than outright rejection. Sure, artworks make the cut, but their ideas end up slotted into familiar Western thought patterns all the same. And in that setup, art from post-Soviet scenes might get filtered mainly through stories of change, pain, or border strife: instead of the homegrown ways they make sense on their own terms. Curators act not just as go-betweens but as interpreters too, setting the rules for how pieces click on a world stage. So visibility comes tied to this quiet grip on knowledge. Getting folded into bigger conversations demands fitting into known slots like postcolonial vibes or strife, and that ends up molding views of Ukrainian art far from its roots.

Before traveling abroad, from the late 1980s to the early 1990s, the Resolute Edge Group, a collective of Ukrainian artists, made an impact in the region. The group is recognized for bringing Ukrainian contemporary art to the world for the first time during the late Soviet and early post–Soviet eras. Members of the Resolute Edge Group contributed to important international events, including The End of the Century in Reykjavik (1990), Young Artists from Kyiv in Helsinki (1990), and End of the Century Art in Davos, World Economic Forum (1991). These exhibitions created the first transnational networks that connected Ukrainian artists to the rest of Europe and the world.

Marina Sviblova explains the group's international impact, noting that many of their works about the Chornobyl disaster "are apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic… phantasmagoric and hauntingly beautiful" (Martynyuk, 2021, p. 88). While this view of art is positive, the reception overshadowed the Ukrainian suffering by offering this projection to the West's post-Soviet gaze.


Fig. 17. Gallery stuff cleaning around Sergey Bratkov's "Long Live The Bad Things of Today, for Tomorrow Will Be Good" (2010) from Kyiv Biennale, 2012

One of the main institutional advances occurred at the 2012 Kyiv Biennale, curated by David Elliott and titled The Best of Times, The Worst of Times. For the first time, rather than treating Ukrainian art as an external phenomenon, the exhibition viewed Kyiv as an international cultural centre. Elliott described the exhibition as an exploration of the "lasting post-Soviet condition" (Martynyuk, 2021, p. 92). Within the Biennale, Serhii Bratkov's installation, ironically titled *Long Live The Bad Things of Today, For Tomorrow Will Be Good* (2010), exemplified this approach. The installation offered social and political critique and exposed illusions of the post-Soviet, critiquing decay and disillusionment. Each work underscored the post-Soviet context through global critiques in Bratkov, illustrating how art can supplant a voice of internal critique.

Recent European current art conversations have drawn attention to issues of visibility and public presence. In Ukrainian contemporary art, such visibility, by contrast, is unstable and uneven, situating artists in the liminal space between recognition and marginalisation. This dynamic creates ongoing tensions that affect artistic strategies, circulation and reception.

### 3.2. Memory, Mediation, and Cultural Transmission

Alongside exhibitions, contemporary Ukrainian art circulates in a dense media environment that shapes image creation and consumption regarding wars, memories, and testimonials. As Hoskins and O'Loughlin say, "media increasingly play a role in war practices so that the conduct of war cannot be understood without media's role in war" (Hoskins and O'Loughlin, 2010, p. 114). So, artistic practices that deal with memory and the archive are, in part, determined by the media environment.

The Pylorama project (Donbas Studies 2020–2022) embodies one of the multi-year, artist-led, collaborative memory constructions in Eastern Ukraine. Unlike traditional models, Pylorama served as a travelling archive, created by members of the community instead of institutional curators. Organisers invited community members to lend, for temporary display and collective engagement at workshops and exhibitions, handwritten letters, family pictures, small household items, children's drawings, audio cassettes, and other papers.

Instead of keeping memory as a static object transformed into a monument, Pylorama viewed memory as a process. Objects were not only displayed, but were also narrated, discussed, and were subject to reinterpretations of meaning. Participants became co-archivists as they wove and interlaced their own stories and experiences with the narratives of the objects. In these practices, Assmann says "…a matter of cultural mnemotechnics, that is, the storage, retrieval, and communication of meaning. These mnemotechnics guarantee continuity and identity, the latter clearly being a product of memory." (Assmann, 2011, 72).

The circumstances of the moment in time also shaped how the work was done in the project. Memory could be digitally documented. For example, a photo taken during a workshop in Kyiv could be an illustration at a workshop in Berlin or could be shared in a post on social media. One of the key people in the project, Bohdana Kosmina, described a mobile archive during the DAAD (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst / German Academic Exchange Service) program Encounters with Ukrainian Artists in Berlin (2022). DAAD is one of the well-known German institutions that enable intercultural and interdisciplinary exchange in the fields of

academia and art. Memory work, in particular, was one of the new practices of work that Ukrainian cultural practitioners were able to adapt in a transnational context during the residency in Germany.

This same line of thinking was developed in the activities of the Ukraine MOCA programme, especially in the case of Pylorama in the module “Post-War Memory Culture in Ukraine” (2023). These activities included reading letters together, performing drawing and voice recording, and recording raid sirens, which transformed the memory performances into ritual practices. This was particularly apparent in the participatory practices of the events.

Contrasting dominant media representations of war which are centred on spectacle, speed, and decontextualization. For example, Hoskins and O’Loughlin call contemporary conflict an “archive of uncertainty” (Hoskins and O’Loughlin, 2010, p. 26) as images circulate and lose narrative, becoming vacuums. Pylorama directly opposes this logic by decelerating witnessing, entrenching and bodily memory through presence, attentive listening, and communion.

Fig. 18. The Ukrainian pavilion at the 60th Venice Biennale featuring a group exhibition "Net Making", 2024

The global mobility of Pylorama's performance at the 60th Venice Biennale (2024) Ukrainian Pavilion *Net Making* exemplifies how basic local mnemonic practices disrupt cross-border memory and representation. Images of the pavilion depict simple installations: handwritten essays, drawings, listening stations, and embedded archival materials within and around the entered exhibition space. These minimalist reproductions resisted the impulse of visual spectacle depicted in media images of war.

### 3.3. The Role of the Diaspora, Mobility, and Digital Archives

In recent decades, especially since the beginning of the war in Ukraine in 2022, the distribution of contemporary Ukrainian art around the world has been increasingly influenced by the digital and institutional infrastructures developed by the Ukrainian diaspora. These communities serve not only as cultural networks, but as Ukrainian art mediation, circulation, and contextualization networks in the world. Diaspora networks, unlike traditional art institutions, do not substitute these systems but operate alongside them, addressing the obstacles to visibility, speed, and emotional proximity that the larger institutions create.

Ukrainian diaspora organizations have been instrumental in the preservation of historical memory and countering historical amnesia since the 1990s. With the advent of the Internet, this role has also been transferred to cyberspace. As Satzewich states, Ukrainian diaspora activists intentionally changed their digital tactics toward the construction of online platforms that could disseminate information about Ukraine and Ukrainian culture rather than engaging in reactive discussions. Early platforms such as Infoukes and Brama.com became fundamental digital spaces for the sharing of cultural, political, and community oriented content.


Fig. 19. Homepage of Brama.com, a major Ukrainian diaspora portal established in the 1990s to disseminate cultural, political, and community news internationally, 2025

Brama.com ranked as one of those first online spots trying to craft some sort of virtual homeland for Ukrainians spread out everywhere, giving folks in the diaspora chances to connect on cultural and political levels; all while clinging to shared identity and those lingering memories. Satzewich pointed out how "Ukrainians do seem to be in the process of building a virtual diaspora community" (2002, p. 143), and that rings true here. By sharing Ukrainian art through notices about shows, records of events, chats with creators, and copies of pieces anyone could see no matter where they lived, the site broke through borders in a real way. Artists who made work tied to specific places or locations found this digital setup acting almost like an extra gallery; images and write-ups zipped around the world, hitting eyes that might never catch the actual stuff up close. So the platform set up early habits in the digital world, nudging modern Ukrainian art into bigger global spotlights.

Satzewich describes cross-cultural networks as community cultural institutions, that, along side, community-based political advocacy, provides support for artistic development and preservation of culture through the development of creative art, theatre, literature, and music, and the development of memories that preserve community identity through community collective. That, in turn, builds and preserves the collective memory of the community, connecting the previous and diasporic practices in art and literature, and cultural expression.

Once the Russian invasion of Ukraine began in February 2022, talented Ukrainians in all fields, including the arts, began to flee the country. The following year, 2022, networks of Ukrainians in the diaspora began to provide valuable assistance to these displaced Ukrainian artists. They began in Europe and quickly expanded to North America and Australia. They began assisting these Ukrainians in exile to continue their work via online exhibitions, remote fundraising, and emergency virtual residencies. Cultural and Arts organizations, and informal collectives of the Ukrainian diaspora in Germany, Poland, Canada, Ireland, and the UK rapidly began to provide assistance to the Ukrainian artists in exile, assisting them to continue their artistry through workshops, digital archives, and presentation of their work in exhibitions. These grassroots organizations began to operate and respond to the artists needs more quickly than the established cultural institutions.

With the help of digital technologies, the diaspora also provides alternative digital witnessing. They allow the testimony of war to take the form of intimate artistic expression rather than the dehumanising, voyeuristic presentation of mainstream media. Instead of using shocking, rapid-fire images to grasp the viewers' attention, these digital platforms allow the circulation of art. They promote and prioritise the emotional context and nuance that war imagery lacks.

Following Jan Assmann's theory of cultural mnemotechnics, one can see how diaspora networks possess the attributes of "storage, retrieval and communication of meaning", i.e., the entities and benefits of memory transportable over distance and time (Assmann, 2011, p. 72). Community-dominated and digitally available memory archives are examples of memory phenomenon allowing preservation, transfer, and evolution, rather than loss through the accelerated turnover of news images.

Everyday artistic practices of war diaries and family archives, participatory memory, and so on, can sustain visibility through the networks.

The nature of diaspora engagement also contributes meaningfully to the global perception of contemporary Ukrainian art. While the methods have evolved from the Cold War period, the overarching structure of activity remains the same. Politically motivated cultural and civic engagement of the diaspora since the second half of the 20th century, documented by Satzewich, culminates today in contemporary political advocacy through digital campaigns, multilingual diaspora engagement, and cultural diplomacy emphasising Ukrainian art.


Fig. 20. Ukrainian diaspora in the world, estimated before the start of Full-Scale Invasion in 2022

Given the capacity to foster support from various locations, generations, and ideologies, the diasporal networks have the ability to build support from different locations, generations, and ideologies. For decades, diaspora communities have attempted to address internal disunity and fragmentation through the formation of umbrella organisations and collective communication platforms and networks. Satzewich outlines this as a “continuing desire… to achieve some level of co-ethnic inter-organisational and international solidarity” (Satzewich , 2002, p. 109). Digital networks and platforms increased this activity by enabling real-time communication

and engagement with artists in Ukraine and foreign curators, institutions, and audiences.

These processes show how diasporic networks serve as unofficial cultural mediation. They determine not only the geographical locations of presentation of Ukrainian art, but the perspective, or critical lens, through which it is interpreted — highlighting and prioritising resistance, memory, trauma, and survival, instead of merely collapsing the works into a geopolitical frame.

Diasporic groups handle the archiving and translation of different artistic works, plus they add some background details, all to help spread and make sense of modern Ukrainian art instead of twisting its core. Those setups in the diaspora don't act like forces remaking what the art means, no, they work more as supportive webs keeping ties alive between creators and viewers no matter the miles between them. Tied into a wider worldwide setup for remembering things. Through such frameworks, stories from culture move around and stick around beyond national lines. Tools like spreading stuff online or chatting across cultures, even stepping in to bridge gaps, let those art forms rooted in the raw realities of conflict and uprooting slip into bigger international scenes. And the tricky moral sides stay untouched. So Ukrainian communities scattered abroad help keep today's Ukrainian art going as this active kind of shared recall inside the flow of media around the globe; not boiling it down to lone pictures.

## Conclusion

The current thesis was formed through documenting contemporary Ukrainian art as a form of cultural resistance shaped through a political rupture, war, and displacement. This thesis also explains through explaining the historical events, artistic practices, and transnational networks of the memory and identity of contemporary Ukrainian art. This thesis also highlights how contemporary Ukrainian art narrates, interprets, and represents conflicts through meaning, presence, and visibility.

Thesis was discussed on the developments of contemporary Ukrainian art history immediately after the Revolution of Dignity, in the period before the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The Maidan protests and the following Russian invasion shaped the cultural self-awareness of Ukraine in a more civic and self-aware direction, and were politically transformative. The annexation of Crimea and the war in the eastern Ukraine escalated the culture of resistance, which reached an extreme during the 2022 full-scale invasion when the Ukrainian cultural identity was under direct attack. The need for art, to be a means of survival, documentation and memory in the absence of traditional institutions of the age, was paramount.

Building on the foundation set in Chapter One, Chapter Two examined some contemporary art practices through the lenses of strategies of resistance and strategies of remembrance. This chapter considers the works of Yevhen Gladenko, Hamlet Zinkivskyi and Alevtina Kakhidze to exemplify the varying degrees and methods of memory construction. Gladenko’s massive urban murals embedded in the city’s fabric render the walls of the city memory repositories. Zinkivskyi avoids saying things straight out: that kind of holding back pushes viewers to figure out meanings on their own. Then there's Kakhidze's war diary; it works in another way altogether. You see an intimate, autobiographical account emerging, one that, with all its repetition and raw self-revealing, fights back against the deadening effect those big, controlling stories often create. Abstraction ends up challenged, and the personal side bursts right in.

These examples show that contemporary Ukrainian art has neither a single, cohesive aesthetic, nor a single, cohesive politics. Rather, it has a diversity of forms

– astounding, textual, and diary-like – that all respond differently to war. It is a desire to retain and protect the human part of experience from being lost that binds them together. In a great debt to Jan Assmann, Astrid Erll, and others, the chapter referred to cultural memory, and to the notion of memory as a lived process, active, rather than merely restrospective, performed, and mediated/repeated. The assimilation of many memories to a single experience is aided by art.

The question of the extent of circulation in exhibitions, in media, and in the digital networks of the diaspora, and the international dissemination of Ukrainian art, is where the third chapter continued from the second. The international art world has also entered into the discourse that circulates around Ukrainian art, particularly in the context of biennales and other institutional settings. The chapter showed that such attention, for any array of reasons, is not unproblematic.

Exhibitions connect global and local contexts, but they situate Ukrainian art in postcolonialism, trauma, and geopolitics, which, while gaining exposure, alters the contexts and messages, and represents and reinterprets more than what is desired.

The conversations around participatory and archival practices within Pylorama is a transnational mobilization of memory integrated with the lived realities. Pylorama navigates the personal belongings, narrative, and ritualized participation to resist the media values of immediacy and spectacle. People and memory are in a form of a ‘mobile archive’, memory that is transposed or infinitely recontextualized, and in line with more recent discussions surrounding memory that is dynamic and technologically mediated, often within more recent frameworks.

Chapter Three's final segment reviewed how Ukraine's contemporary art practitioners utilise the diaspora's digital networks and contemporary art. From the 1990s, Ukraine's contemporary art practitioners, produced cultural memory, cultural counter-misinformation, and produced contemporary art. As of February 2022, the art and culture networks in the diaspora became major support and sponsors of Ukraine contemporary art in exile, providing digital art and culture, and counter-misinformation. Ukraine diaspora art and culture networks not only sustain Ukraine contemporary art, but also and mainly shape how Ukraine contemporary art is

received worldwide, validating artistic testimony, ethical and historical critique, and engagement.

Across the three chapters, the main point is developed: contemporary Ukrainian art rests on a complex ecology of memory, social, regional, and universal. This is due to exhausted and fragmented memory, artistic practice, circulation, and socialization through transnational networks. Ukrainian artists do not provide one narrative of the war, but rather a variety, and sometimes contradicting, narrative forms of war remembrance. This is not a weakness but a positive element, evidenced by the fragmented realities of war and displacement.

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