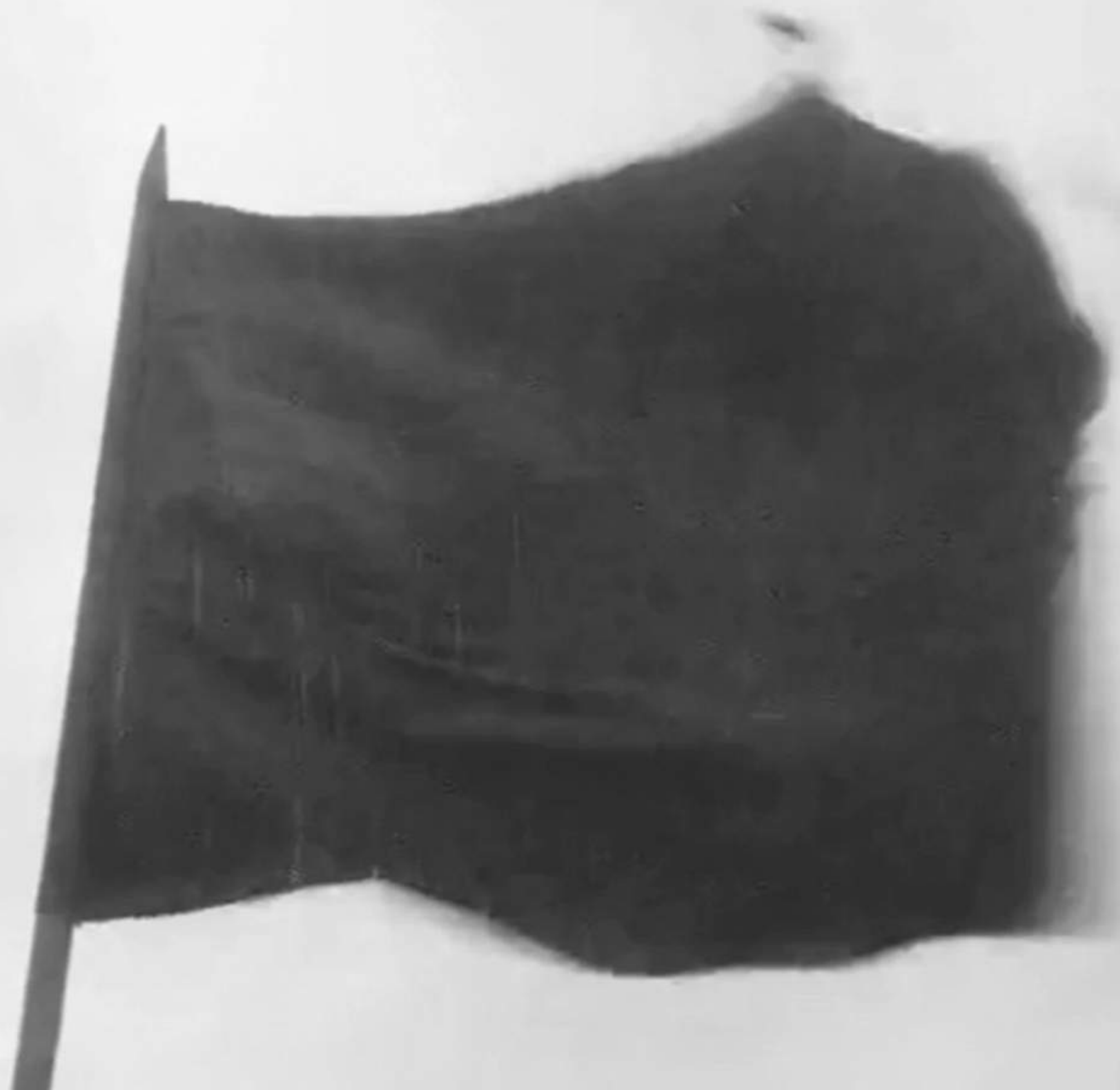


MAKSYM KHODAK



Maksym Khodak (2001, Bila Tserkva)

is an artist born and raised in Ukraine. He works and studies in Kyiv. He has studied Contemporary Art at the Kyiv Academy of Media Arts. Now he continues his study on BA Film Study program in Kyiv National I. K. Karpenko-Kary University. Maksym is also a fellow of WHW Akademija 4th generation. In 2021, he received the Prince Claus Seed Award. Maksym Khodak was shortlisted for PinchukArtCentre Prize 2022.

Maksym Khodak's works deal with the topics of history and the ways of documenting it; internet culture; a critical view on cinema and photography. In addition, Khodak's works react to the current political situation around him. The optic that unites these distinct topics is a critical rethinking of the existence of the Soviet legacy in the post-Soviet conditions of his country. Artist's recent interest is to build a dialogue through art with his generation, people who were born in the 21st century, as an attempt to invent a new political language comprehensible to the youth.



COBBLESTONE IN A TOTE BAG

2023

36-slide projection



Taking aesthetically pleasing pictures of food is a common practice among hipster youth. And especially, taking pictures on a color film. 36 slides document dirty dishes after going "for a coffee" in various popular coffee shops around Ukraine. But at some point, the glitch is happening in the peaceful images in a film roll, and the coffee cup transforms into the cobblestones. This revolutionary symbol tries to convey the politicization of 3rd wave coffee shops in Ukraine, where the young generation is constantly sculpting the image of the future between the tables. They're calmly drinking coffee now, but they know, that at some point abstract conversations must turn into political action.



CULTFRONT

2023

engraved brick from the damaged
“Slovo” House in Kharkiv



Engraved on a brick from the “Slovo” Building damaged by the Russian army in March 2022, the word Cultfront repeats the logo and name of the Soviet monthly magazine. It was published in Kharkiv in 1931-1935. A year before, in 1930, the magazine “Nova Generatsija” (New Generation) ceased to exist. From 1933 to 1938, residents of 40 apartments of the Slovo Building out of 66 built were repressed. Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation into Ukraine in 2022, the word “Cultfront” has returned to the local lexicon as an attempt to describe the activities of cultural actors during the war.



WE WILL RESTORE THE TRUST OF KHARKIV RESIDENTS AND PROVIDE HIGH-QUALITY SERVICE TO RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

2022

3-channel video (23'34), carpet, pillows,
drywall construction

produced with the support of Pinchuk
Art Centre and Goethe Institut Ukraine

link to the video:

<https://youtu.be/xW2jiqdARPo>



In the artwork, Khodak explores the political potential of the trending Chinese social media TikTok, its algorithms and the possibilities to invent a new political language comprehensible to the youth.

The artist invites the visitor to lay back and dive in the stream of TikTok videos with references to Ukrainian avant-garde practices. The videos were mostly shot in Kharkiv's 'Slovo' House, which was an important cultural centre in the 1930s for Ukrainian avant-garde artists, the majority of whom were eventually repressed during the Stalinist era. For this work, Khodak invited two TikTokers to Kharkiv to participate in the rebuilding of the city and create video content on-site, under virtually constant missile and artillery shelling. In an attempt to revive the broken tradition of Ukrainian Modernism, the artist asked the TikTokers to live in the 'Slovo' House for several days and to speculate together about the new post-war utopian country.



Right across the room from the corner with the TikTok videos, a huge drywall construction is placed; its shape refers to the aesthetics of avant-garde monumental projects. The construction is covered with quotes from the leaked viral video from 2007 showing the Ukrainian politician Mykhailo Dobkin trying to properly deliver his speech for a campaign ad for local elections in Kharkiv, with his political ally Hennadiy Kernes brutally instructing him from behind the scenes. In the installation, the artist juxtaposes an absolutist maximalist utopian idea of how politics should be made with the actual reality of politics.



THAT HOLDING

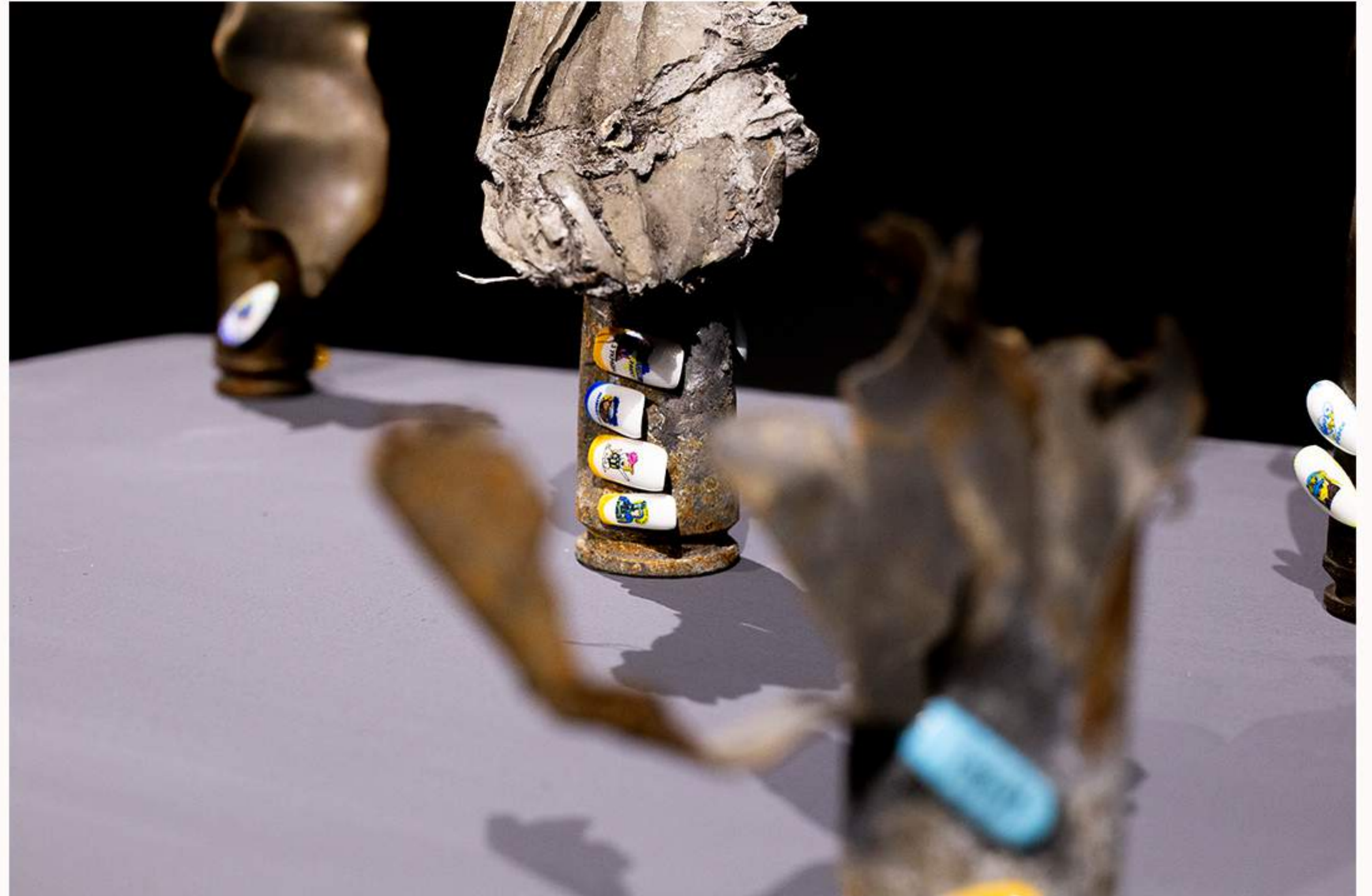
2023

cartridge, acrylic nails with manicure

produced during the residency "Where
the story was interrupted?"



The work focuses on the topic of the representation of war in mass culture. The torn cartridge case seems to be in the hand and is shown to the viewer as evidence of the crime. The nails, representing the hand and gestures of grasping and holding, are presented as a space for expressing one's own political position. They depict patriotic stories and memes popular on the Internet, which raises questions about the limits of the political and actual ways of its expression.



EMPTY PEDESTALS

2022

glazed ceramics, money, paper sign

produced during the KAIR and
Budapest Galeria AIR



The sculptures depict the pedestals from the so-called “monuments with tanks” which are established around Ukraine during the Soviet times to commemorate the victory in the Second World War. The objects are made in the form of piggy banks and used for their intended purpose. The artist has selected as references for the objects the monuments from the cities with the status Heroic City of Ukraine — the title was established on 6 March 2022 by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, on the model of the Heroic City of the Soviet Union as an expression of appreciation for the endurance and heroism shown during the invasion



Sculptures will be and already presented in several art institutions, where visitors are invited to make donations for the needs of Ukrainian art. The call to donate is shaped by the hosting institution — it creates the design and message on the sign. With this gesture, the artist explores how art institutions respond to crises through language. It continues the general leitmotif of the work with the question of what art is today and how it can respond to the challenges of war.

All the funds collected during the presentations will remain inside the objects forever. However, all the proceeds from selling or auctioning the objects will be distributed between organizations helping Ukrainian Armed Forces.



FIRST WAR KINDA NERVOUS

2022

3-channel video

link to the video:

<https://youtu.be/QujU6YBTnNY>



The artist invites Ukrainian TikTokers in Kharkiv, Kyiv and Berlin to lip sync the videos published by the Armed Forces of Ukraine which were produced to keep the morale of the citizens up. By using the popular TikTok trend of voice-overing popular video-memes Khodak translates the language of the propagandistic content created for such outdated types of media as TV or Facebook into the language of the new social media in aim to increase the outreach.



TOOLS

2022

engraved cobblestones



Pile of cobblestones with an engraving of soviet times photo camera brand's logo, in which is hidden a totalitarian ideology. Young people are obsessed with film photography. But in Ukraine, I am also intrigued that they use soviet cameras for taking those pictures. But what images did they create, if one of the most popular cameras - FED, named after Felix Edmundovich Dzerzhinsky, who was one of the architects of the Red Terror. How is the tool of production affecting the final image? Where is hidden, the killed avant-garde artist in a picturesque shot of a stylish coffee shop? Or where is the mass grave on the colorful photo of the rave?



MY FAVORITE OLIGARCH

2020

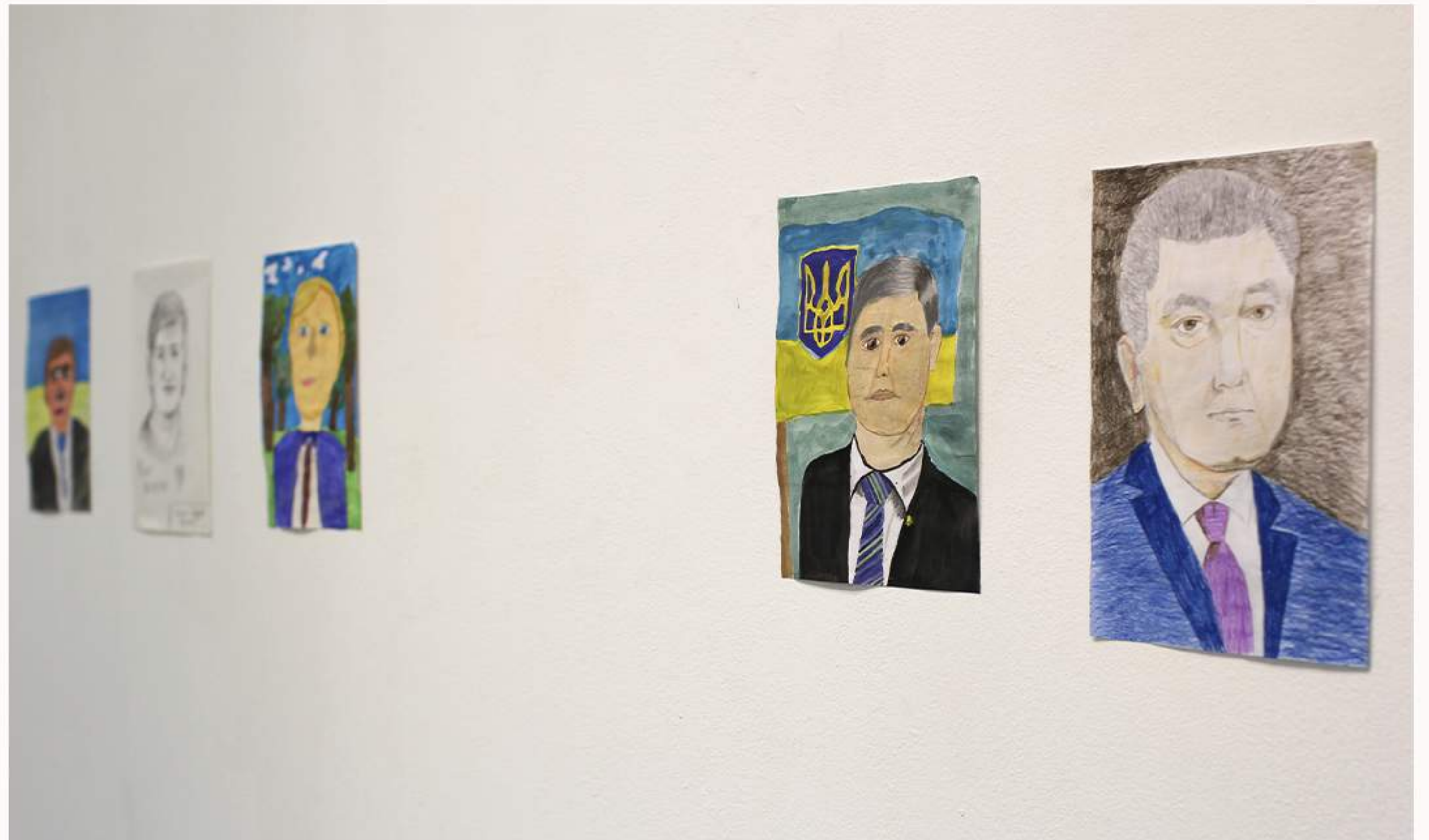
child drawing competition

produced during Artsvit gallery
residency program



The problem of the oligarchy in Ukraine has been around for many years. As a child, I was surrounded by political calls to fight oligarchism in Ukraine. I grew up, but no significant changes took place. A new generation of children is now growing up and continues to hear about the struggle against oligarchism.

My work has a form of children's drawing contest under the topic "My favorite oligarch". I invite children to draw a portrait of their favorite oligarch and compete for valuable prizes. This practice in the gallery context also becomes a reflection on the Ukrainian art system, asking questions about the origin of the money that finances art.



PRAYER FOR THE AUTHOR

2021

4 - channel video (20'36"), fiberboard construction

link to the video:

<https://youtu.be/9hjSkFb14R4>



The plot of the video is based on the story of a famous court case in Victorian England called R v Dudley and Stephens (1884). In the video, a similar story happens in a nightclub toilet. Four girls at a party are using drugs, the situation leads to a metaphorical overdose of one of them. The event forces other girls to find the right solution to the problem. During the video, the girls reflect on modern ethics, feminism and the world after #MeToo. The discussion leads them to the only morally correct decision in this situation - to kill the author of the artwork within which they are. The visual language of the film destroys the so-called male gaze and female gaze, due to the destruction of the DOP.



MON AMOUR (CINÉMA)

2021

oil on canvas

each 100 x 200 cm



The work captures an afterimage on my retina, which leaves a frame from the selected film. Afterimage is a phenomenon of visual perception, which consists in the fact that after prolonged visual fixation on an image, the eye continues to see the trace of the image, even if the object has already disappeared from view. The film I chose had to meet three criteria: to be on my list of favorite movies; I have an intimate story connected with this film; reflects my position as an artist. So I use my eye as a camera lens, translating the resulting image into a medium of painting, because only painting makes it possible to capture these involuntary spots forever.

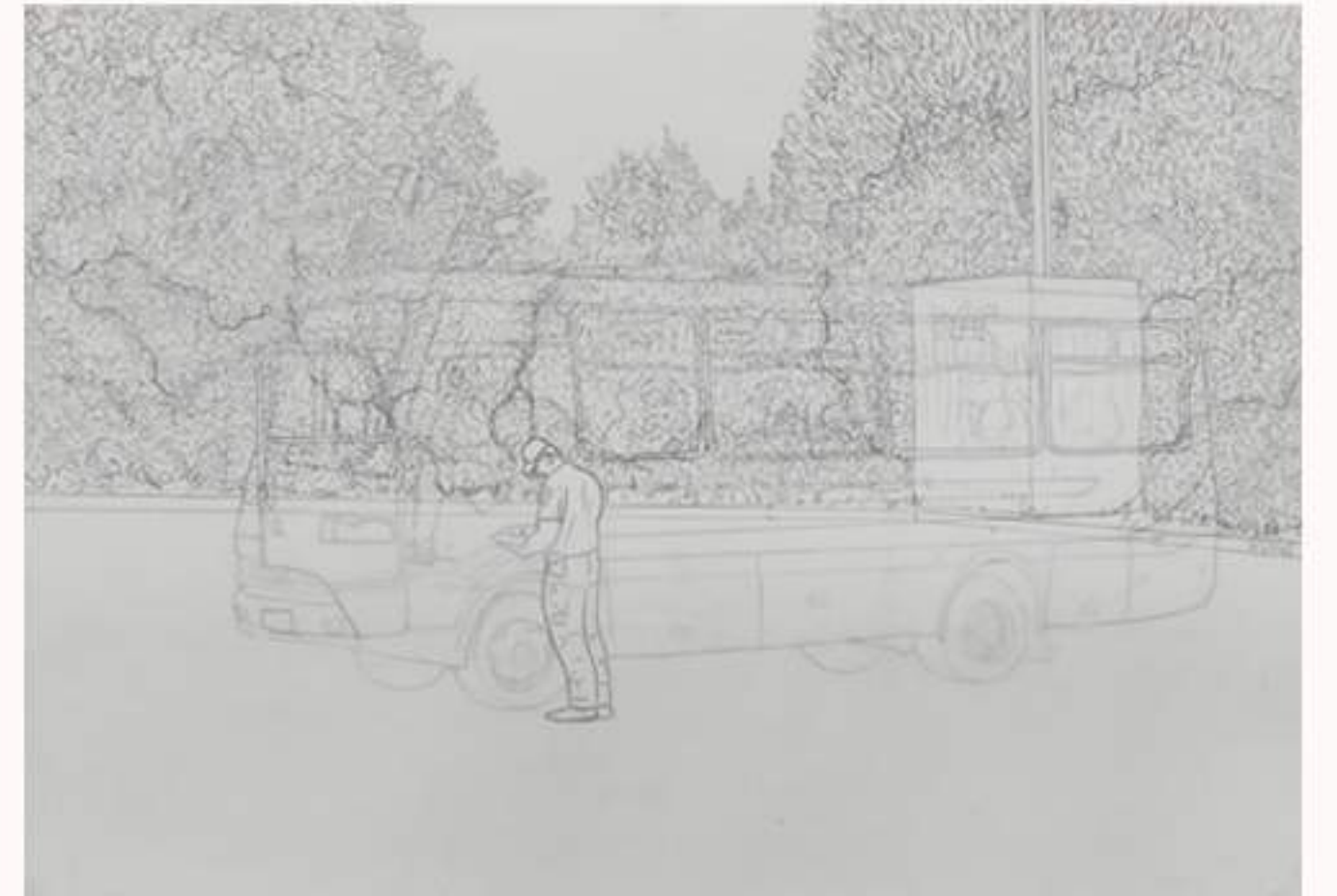


POLICE COVER

2019

pencil on paper

each 20 x 30 cm



The lockdown in Ukraine has led to an increase in police influence on city streets. The police have been given even more control. Lockdown is gradually easing, but will it weaken their control? Will the increase in police influence remain permanent? What will this lead to?



EUROFENCE

2019

concrete fence established on russian - Ukrainian border

produced with the support of
< rotor > contemporary art association and Kharkiv
municipal gallery

link to the video:

<https://youtu.be/sIE-kpwvQcE>



My work is a site-specific installation. I have established the so-called “eurofence” on the Ukrainian-Russian border. To me, this symbolizes that by protecting our own freedom and our own borders, we support the borders and make them more resilient to external dangers.

In the Ukrainian context, we can see the peak of distrust at the borders after the Russian invasion of the Ukrainian territories.



WOUND

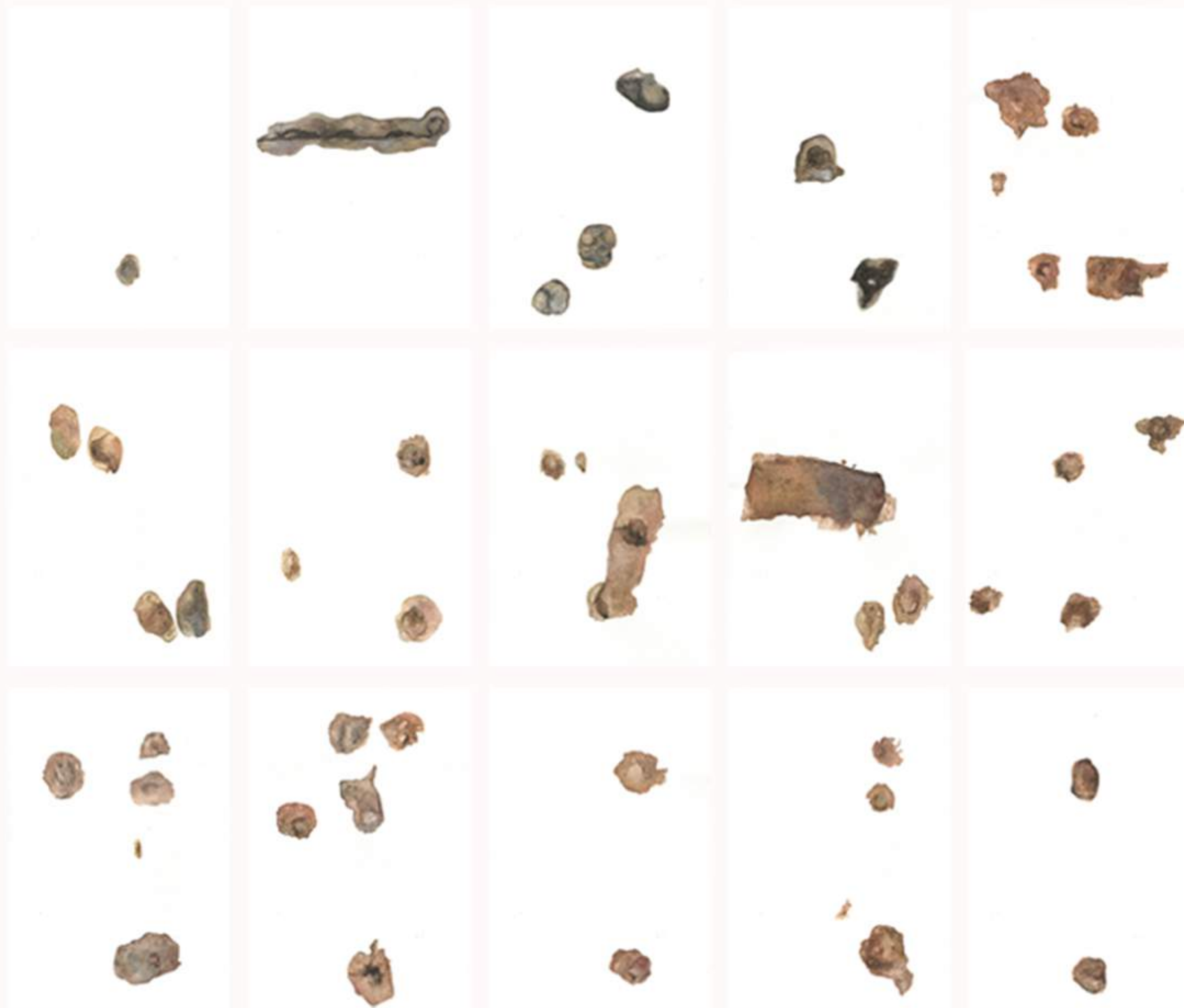
2019

watercolor on paper

29 pieces, 30 x 20 cm



This series consists of 29 watercolor drawings of holes in granite at the metro station “Maidan Nezalezhnosti”. If you use the metro you can notice it above the modern writings of the station name. One day I noticed those holes, and realized that they remained after the previous names of the station: “Ploscha Kalinina” and “Ploscha Zhovtnevoi Revolytsii”. All three names were an illustration of a government ideology. For me, these drawings show that history never dissolves into nothing. Even if something wants to be fully forgotten, some parts are always remembered.



WRECKAGE

2019

watercolor on paper

each 30 x 40 cm



These drawings of early human tools open the debate on the Anthropocene era: some researchers state that it started with the creation of the first stone tools, that is to say more than 3 million years ago. The scientific accuracy and realistic style of the watercolor flints contrast with the idea of wreckage which they convey. Maksym Khodak here casts the light on those forgotten artifacts, questioning how History moves on through the constant creation of ruins.

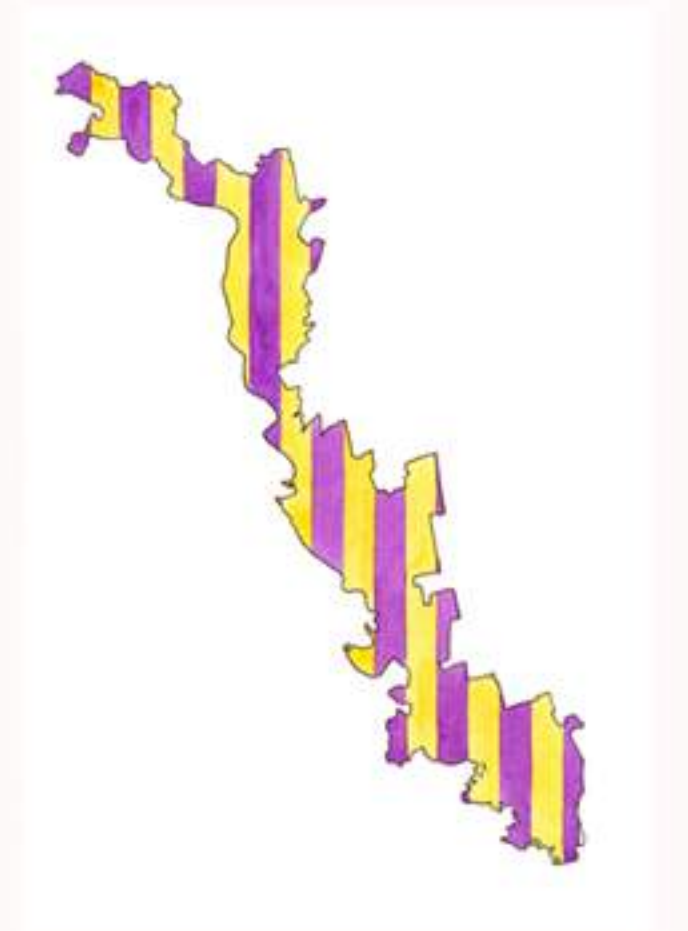
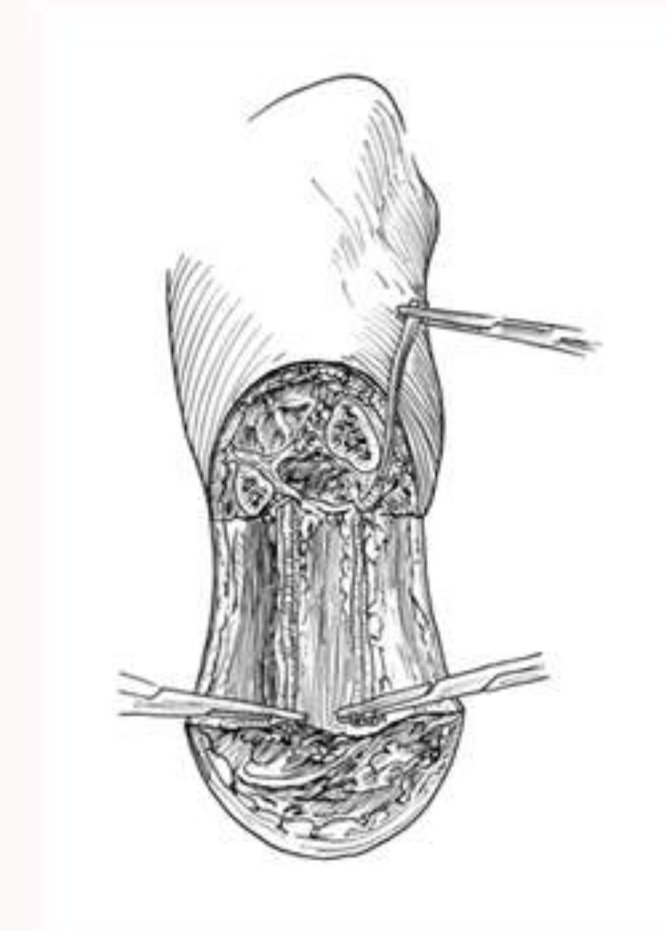


ANNEX/TATION

2019

watercolor on paper, marker

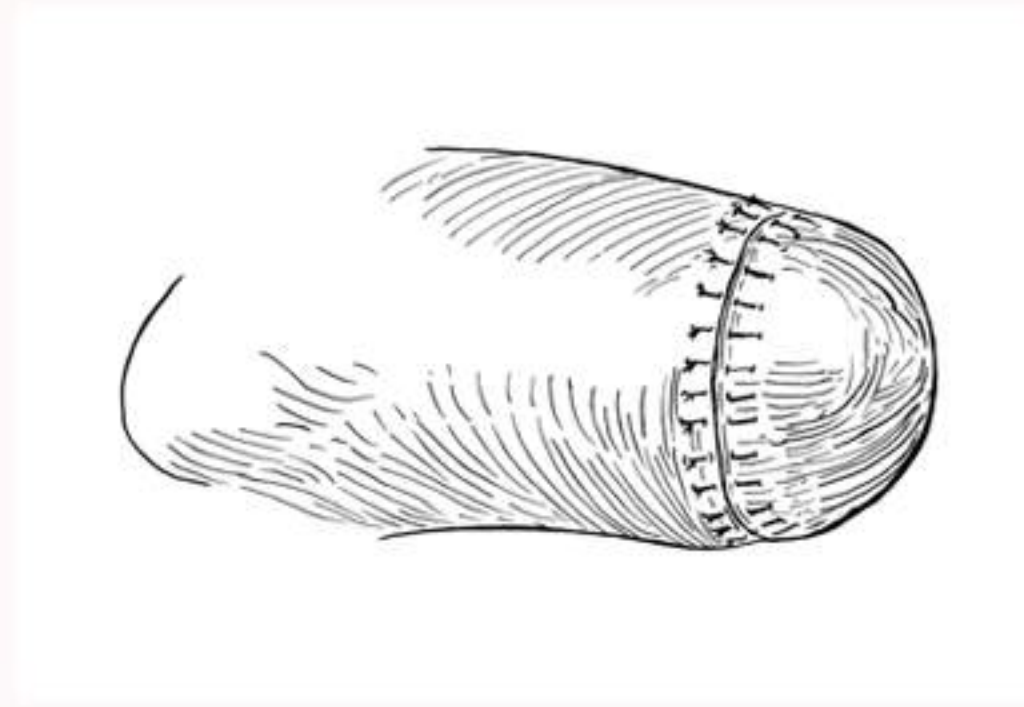
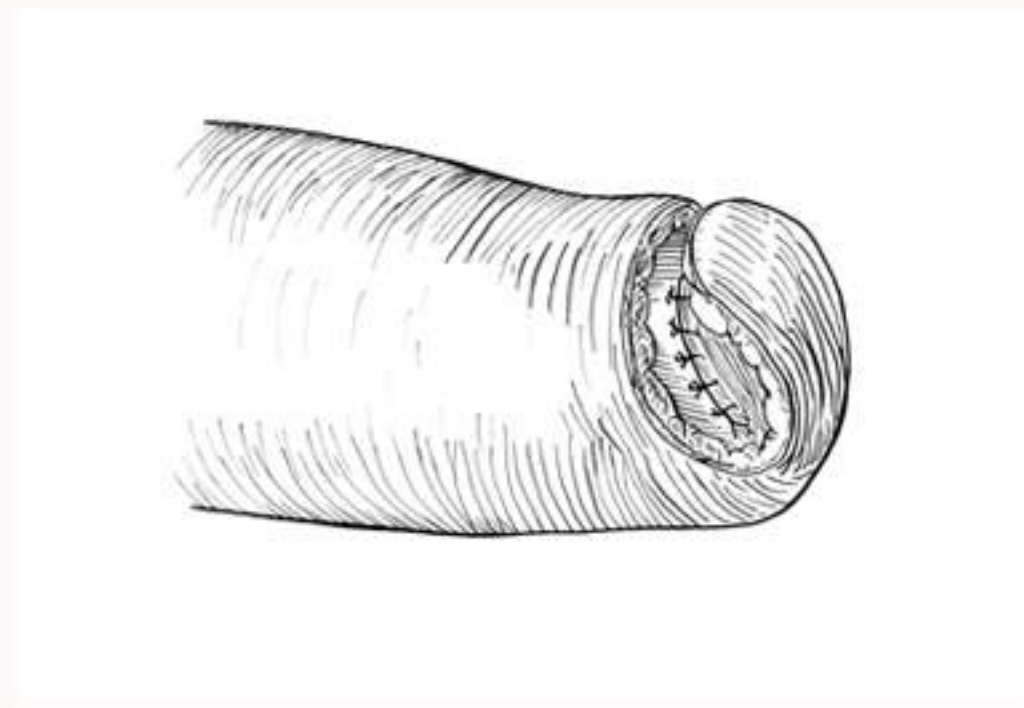
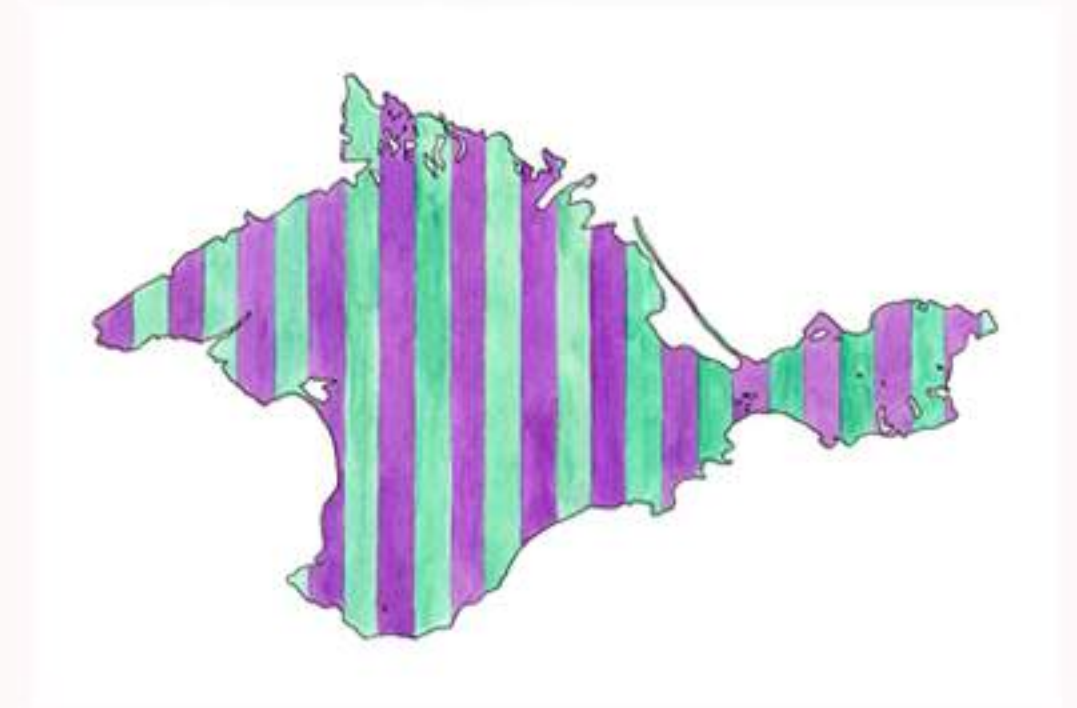
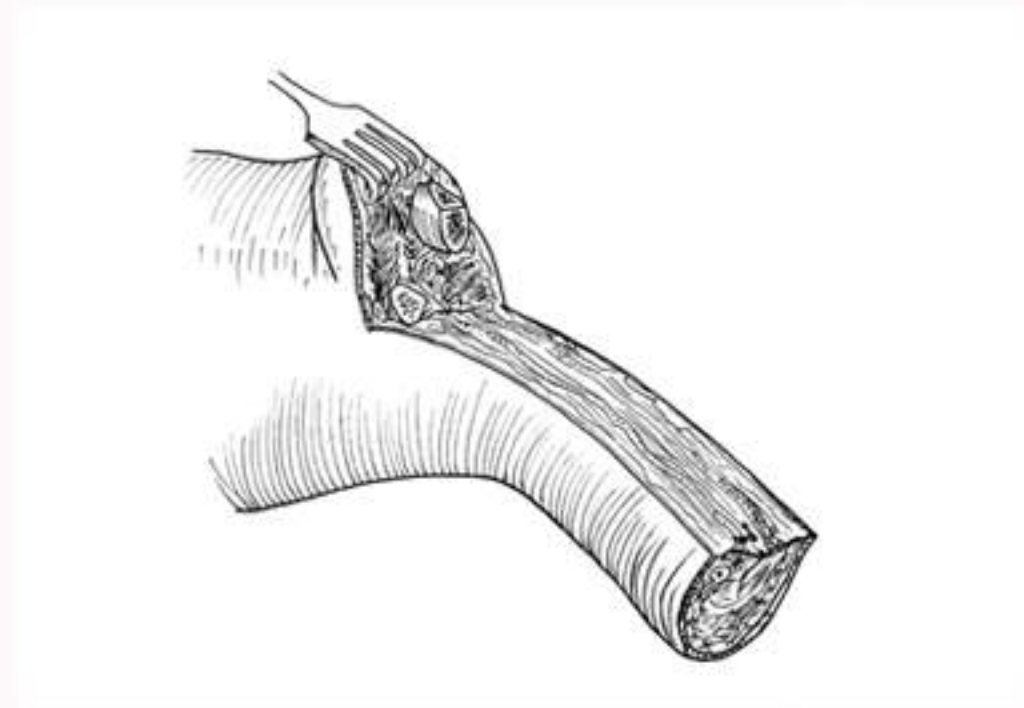
each 20 x 30 cm



Amputation for a person is a very traumatic experience. Amputation changes space and feelings. After this operation, a person has to adapt to a new life. The adaptation can go very easily. Or maybe the other way round. It depends on many factors. But the experienced experience will accompany a person all his life, but whether he will be traumatic to the patient or change it for the better depends on the life from him.

In my work, I create a very simple analogy, comparing the loss of a certain territory of the country with amputation of the limb. And for Ukraine in 2014, the surgeon who carried out such an operation was Russia headed by Putin. But we are not the first to suffer from the hands of this surgeon. In one list with Ukraine is Moldova, Georgia, and Azerbaijan.

In my work, I want to ask a few questions to the citizens of these states: How to live further? What has changed in their lives this situation? Do not they have phantom pains? And most importantly, will they be able to live without a prosthetic?



CLIMATE OUTSKIRT

2019

video (5'53'')

work produced during the Climate Art
Labs in a collaboration with Svitlana
Krakovska

link to the video:

<https://youtu.be/0mH9oQ7QYX0>



Aestheticization of factories, industrialization, heavy manual labor, and five-year plans - these were the features of social life during the forced industrialization of the USSR. went to the utopian future. And nobody thought about the environmental damage they inflicted on such actions. In those days, no one was worried because of the environmental threat and global climate change. People began to take on ecology much later. In general, the period of forced industrialization left us a huge legacy. Not only in the form of production infrastructure, but also in the form of huge CO2 emissions. Therefore, in my work, I try to understand the damage done from the point of view of my contemporary, to understand how we live with this heritage.



RESURRECTION

2018 - present

analog film photos



Monuments at the present time in Ukraine are in a very uncertain state. Historically, most of the monuments in Ukrainian cities are monuments of the Soviet era. A few years ago, the so-called "law on de-communism" was adopted. After his adoption, a large number of monuments were in an uncertain state. From the decision of special state bodies, it depends whether they can prolong their existence, will be destroyed and will leave a memory of themselves only in fuzzy photographs.



INSTITUTE OF NATIONAL MEMORY

2019

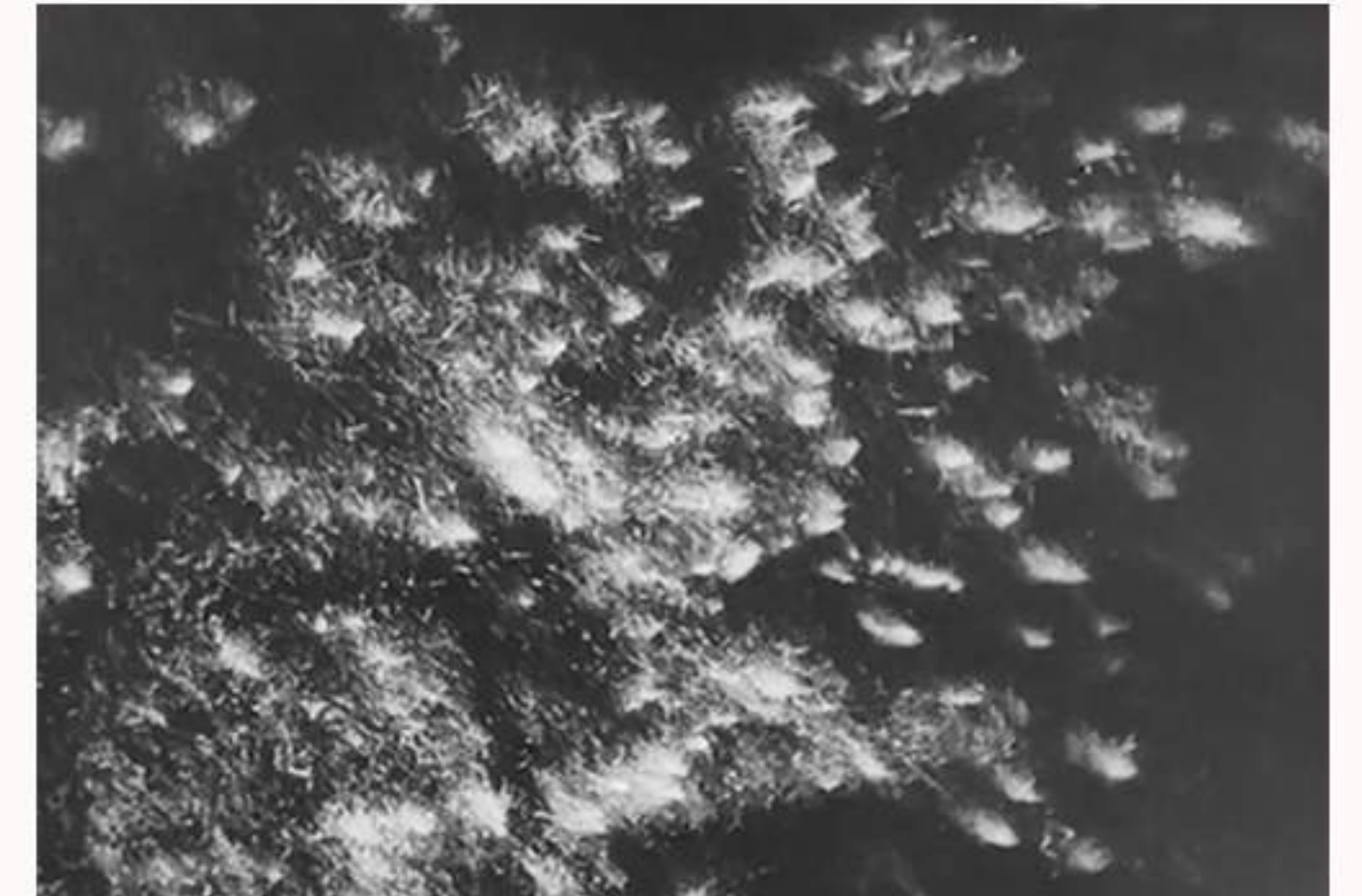
video

link to the video:

<https://youtu.be/rtoxcgU2TIM>



In my work, I am deconstructing social-realist films, turning them into meaningless abstractions. Because, in my opinion, this gesture is identical with the actions of the Institute of National Memory. With decommunization policies, they turn the memory of the Soviet Union into a memory of the same meaningless abstraction that, in my opinion, can have dire consequences. Forgetting the Soviet period as a whole, we forget the awful events of the period, which in turn can lead to their recurrence.



FLAGS OF PROPAGANDA

2018

video

link to the video:

<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLqk1oAgO7YSsSQ9XG7T5wHKiPN3CxxwEA>



Battleship Potemkin is one of the best-known films in history. However, in its essence, was the propaganda of the Bolsheviks.

The most climax of the film, which confirms the previous thesis, is the raising of a red flag over the deck of the battleship. However, removing such a frame was difficult, due to the specifics of black and white cinema. That's why Sergei Eisenstein decides to shoot a white flag. Next, he decides, for the premiere show, to paint each frame of the film, which was depicted as a flag, in red.

In my work, I repeat the gesture of the director, coloring myself, the same personnel with the flag, but with the only difference that instead of the color of the Bolshevik flag, I use the colors of the flags of the most influential ideologies, the struggle of which is in the modern Ukrainian society.

