

# 10.7.–11.9.2022, *A Letter from the Front* (EN), Kunsthalle Münster

1–2 Yaroslav Futymsky (b. 1987 in Poninka, Ukraine) is active in the fields of graphic art, installation, performance, street art, photography and poetry. Futymsky has also curated group shows at Dzyga Gallery in Lviv in 2013 and Labirynt Gallery in Lublin in 2017.

His videoperformances are often related to the traces of political history hidden in the landscape. At the same time, they take the shape of political manifestations in a postpolitical world: summoning the ghosts of past and present revolutions. The bewitching simplicity and poetics of Yaroslav Futymsky's works derive from temporariness and impermanence of materials which he uses.

When creating his works, Futymsky utilizes found objects or affordable ones, which are connected with everyday life, available in the most ordinary surroundings.

3 Yuri Leiderman (b. 1963 in Odessa, Ukraine) is an artist and writer, part of the Moscow Conceptualists. Based on texts produced by himself, his film *Birmingham Ornament* consists of various fragment acted out by different characters such as two "TV announcers", an "Odessa chanson singer", a "Berlin street philosopher" etc. This fictional line is interwoven with fragments in which the artist's father talks about his family's ordeals during the years of the Second World War.

Leiderman participated in apartment exhibitions in Moscow and Odessa since 1982. He graduated from the Moscow Institute of Chemical Technology in 1987. Also he was one of the founding members of the *Medical Hermeneutics* group in 1987, leaving the group in 1990. In 2005 he was awarded the Andrei Belyi literature prize. He was a member of the groups *Kapiton* and *Corbusier*, during the period between 2008 and 2010. He participated in the 68th Venice International Film Festival.

4–6 AntiGonna (b. 1986 in Vinnitsa, Ukraine) is both an artist and a model. In her works, she uses in particular her body as an artistic tool, staging it both erotic and desirable but also as a cold instrument in order to interact with the world. Her transgressive artistic practice using shock moments to destroy common social conventions and norms—encouraging the viewer to rethink his own experience: "The main themes of my work are fear, sexuality and death, the change of boundary states, self-flagellation, narcotic utopia and dissatisfaction with today, tomorrow and the day after tomorrow." She pursues the long-term goal of overcoming various taboos, social stigmas and stands up for sexual liberation, equality and emancipation by resisting the constraints of the dominant society. Showing the naked body was forbidden in the USSR and was equated with freedom and the right to individuality, especially in the subculture. Modern Ukrainian society also continues to stigmatise nudity and sexuality by excluding this essential part of human existence from the public sphere. For this reason, AntiGonna understands the body as the last inalienable bulwark of individuality and, through their art, declares it a battlefield of public and personal interest.

Their films *Enter the War* and *Rave on the bones* refer to the current war in Ukraine in the genre of "porn horror". The war lives deep underground. The people themselves let it in. The war asks to be let in. At the same time, if the war in Ukraine continues to this day, the raves also continue.

In collaboration with Nikita Kadan, she realised the film *Lucid Skin*. In it, the protagonist of the film questions his identity. He resorts to self-harm to punish his "masculinity". He then goes to a nightclub that is a queer safe space. Just before the entrance he is physically attacked by aggressive and homophobic guys. The special thing about this is that in reality this group is played by Ukrainian, anarchist, pro-feminist artists.

AntiGonna was nominated for the PinchukArtCentre Prize. Since 2016 AntiGonna has been participating in performances of the Theater of provocative fashion *Wild Orchid* by Mikhail Koptev. Participant of such queer festivals and exhibition projects as: Vienna PFFV Queere Festival Vienna, Austria (2020), Southern Maltings—5 Minute Film Festival South Maltings, UK (2020), 4th International Horror Festival. Mostra Espantomania, Sao Paulo, Brazil (2019), Love, Lust & Fury, Klaipeda, Lithuania (2019), Audience Awards New York, USA, (2019), RabarBar Queer Festival, Krakow, Warsaw, Poland (2019), POMADA. Eden 8 Warsaw, Poland (2018), 12th Internationale Berlin Porn Festival, Berlin, Germany (2017).

7 The artistic practice of Katya Libkind engages a variety of media, including painting, video, installation, performance, and stage art. The artist is a co-founder of *Atelier Normale* ("a project by artists with or without Down syndrome") and a member of *Montage* art-group. As head-artist of *Ukho's* (musical agency) she staged the operas of Gervasoni, Cella, Sciarrino for the National Opera of Ukraine. Her objects and videos are often based on a very close observation of herself and the space around her. In many cases they either document a performance or contain a potential for interaction with the viewer. Building on processualism, borderline candidness, and an intuitive, direct emotional experience of reality Libkind's work touches on the issues of personal boundaries, conditionality of perception, the very idea of norm or beauty. In her film *Where Are Your Big Ears Dear Dead Grandma?* the artist pays homage to her ancestor, reconstructing a nonexistent conversation on her birthday. Libkind's grandmother died at the age of 86 in Israel, choking on plain water.

8 The focus of the film *Dedicated to the Youth of the World II* by Yarema Malashchuk & Roman Himey is the techno rave *Cxema* and the youth, on which the camera is carefully focused the next morning after the event. This is the place and meeting that the youth of Kyiv are waiting for and preparing for—this particular escape from everyday life, rejection of it—evokes strange feelings of modern ritual.

Yarema Malashchuk & Roman Himey are collaborating as artists and filmmakers at the edge of visual art and cinema since 2013. Both of them graduated as cinematographers from the Institute of Screen Arts in Kyiv, Ukraine. They received the main award of the PinchukArtCentre Prize (2020), VISIO Young Talent Acquisition Prize (2021), Best Short Documentary at Festival Internacional de Cine Silente México (2019), as well as the Grand Prix at the Young Ukrainian Artists Award (MUHi 2019). Their debut documentary feature *New Jerusalem* premiered at Docudays UA International Film Festival 2020. The film received the Special Mention Award at Charkiw MeetDocs and the duo were also recently participated at Future Generation Art Prize 2021.

9–10 R.E.P. was established at the end of 2004 during the Orange Revolution in Ukraine. The group initially integrated 20 artists. Since 2006, the R.E.P. group's members are Ksenia Hnylytska, Nikita Kadan, Lesia Khomenko, Volodymyr Kuznetsov, Zhanna Kadyrova, Lada Nakonechna. Their work began with a series of actions united by the name *Interventions*, which appeared as a reaction to the politicized public space of a "post-orange" Ukraine. The group's subsequent activity has been focused on long-term serial projects. In their work, the R.E.P. group addresses a number of themes that are variously symptomatic of the current state of Ukrainian society. These include labor migration and the state of post-Soviet cultural institutions; social stratification and shared mythical images of prosperity; Soviet heritage and the simulation of Westernization; popular demand for a certain type of art and the individual responsibility of the artist.

Their film *Yodler* is part of a series of videos documenting site-specific performances that the R.E.P. group has produced in diverse, peripheral contexts, according to local folk traditions and current cultural situations. Each time, the actor-performed piece borrows its title from the language in which it is realized, carrying the tradition of, itinerant folk musicians, in this case from Austria, who write and perform religious, historical, and epic songs.

*Smuggling* is a documentary reality about those who cross the border daily, those traveling to a slightly better-off country in hopes of selling a carton of cigarettes or a bottle of vodka for meager profit, in some miraculous way both does and does not correspond to the actions of the artists traveling with them.

11 Nikolay Karabinovych's *As far as Possible shows* a tour group travelling by bus through the Kuyalnitsky Estuary on the outskirts of Odessa, where Jewish inhabitants, including the artist's great-grandmother, found refuge at the beginning of the Second World War.

Nikolay Karabinovych (b. 1988 in Odessa, Ukraine) works in a variety of media, including video, sound, text, and performance. In 2017, Karabinovych was an assistant curator of the 5th Odessa Biennale. In 2020 and 2018, he was awarded the first PinchukArtCentre Prize. From 2019, he is studying at the Higher Institute for Fine Arts (HISK) in Ghent. He has participated in the following Exhibitions: *From Sea to Sea*, Hit Gallery, Bratislava, *Spring (Summer, Fall, Autumn) of Nations*, BWA, Tarnow, Poland, *Ain't nobody's business*, PinchukArtCentre, Kyiv, (2019), *The Human Condition*, Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center, Moscow (2018).

12 Is Dana Kavelina's *There are no Monuments to Monuments* people are talking about a monument that was presumably erected to memorize a catastrophe, during the monologue their speech falls apart, and we cannot compose a single image of either the monument or the disasters that happened to these people.

Dana Kavelina (b. 1995 in Melitopol, Ukraine) graduated from the Department of Printmaking of Kyiv Polytechnic University. She works with text, painting, graphics, video and installation and creates animated films. She brings an artistic component to active civic participation and street protests. The themes of her work are about personal and historical trauma, vulnerability, and perceptions of war outside of mainstream narratives.

13 For their film *Labor Safety in the Region of Dnipropetrovsk* Danyil Revkovsky & Andriy Rachinsky assembled found footage from various industrial sites at the Dnipropetrovsk region is assembled into a seemingly neutral way, without specific montage. A landscape of ruined but still working industries, a landscape of exhausted nature and work. The events taking place are both mundane and catastrophic—they are part of the working routine and they are also manifesting the state of collapse

14 Artists Oleksiy Sai (b. 1975) makes his living as director of commercials. His video work is using fragments of this commercials with repeating slogans *The longest and the most productive* and *Deep cleansing power*. As one of his colleagues said: "Our hell will look like this".

In his work Sai uses different media but he is mostly known for his personal invention—the praxis of Exel-Art. Sai has been working with Excel software as a visual language resource since 2004. He graduated from the Kyiv College of Arts and Industries with a degree in graphic design in 1993, and from the Department of Easel Graphic Art at the National Academy of Fine Arts and Architecture in 2001. PinchukArtCentre Prize nominee 2009, he is widely exhibited. Oleksiy Sai took part in many group and solo exhibitions in Ukraine and abroad. His works were exhibited at Black Square Gallery (Miami, the USA), Saatchi Gallery (London, the UK), Bunsen Goertz Gallery (Nurembreg, Germany), PERMM Museum of Contemporary Art (Perm, Russia), amongst others.

15 Alina Kleytman's film *Responsibility* shows a girl wearing a ridiculous costume to show how people wear other people's expectations of them like clothes.

Alina Kleytman (b. 1991 in Charkiw, Ukraine) has participated in exhibitions in Ukraine and abroad, was a nominee of the PinchukArtCentre Prize 2011 and a winner of the Non Stop Media Biennial. In 2010 Kleytman opened her own gallery-laboratory in the building of former stables. She received her Bachelor's degree in the Charkiw State Academy of Design and Arts in the specialty of Monumental Sculpture in 2012. In 2013 she curated the project *Room Temperature* within the framework of *Unrespectable* of Boris Mikhailov. From 2012 to 2015, she studied at the Rodchenko Moscow School of Photography and Multimedia. In 2015 Kleytman won the Pinchuk-ArtCentre Special Prize for young artists. She won the Public Choice Award at the PinchukArt Centre Prize 2018. In 2021 together with Nikita Kadan and Bogdana Kosmina, she created the curatorial group *Wet Hole*. Together they founded Dzherelo Art Pavilion—a 24/7 public art space. The artist creates several queer performance shows.

16 Lada Nakonechna: "I propose that we try to place ourselves inside the Catastrophe and to think about finding ways of how we can speak about it from the position of being within. Catastrophe could be something very personal, but on the other hand it is not only about the single person, because the person is not alone, in this situation or in this war. It is also a catastrophe of relations and of the social sphere, which influences politics, general attitudes and our relationships."

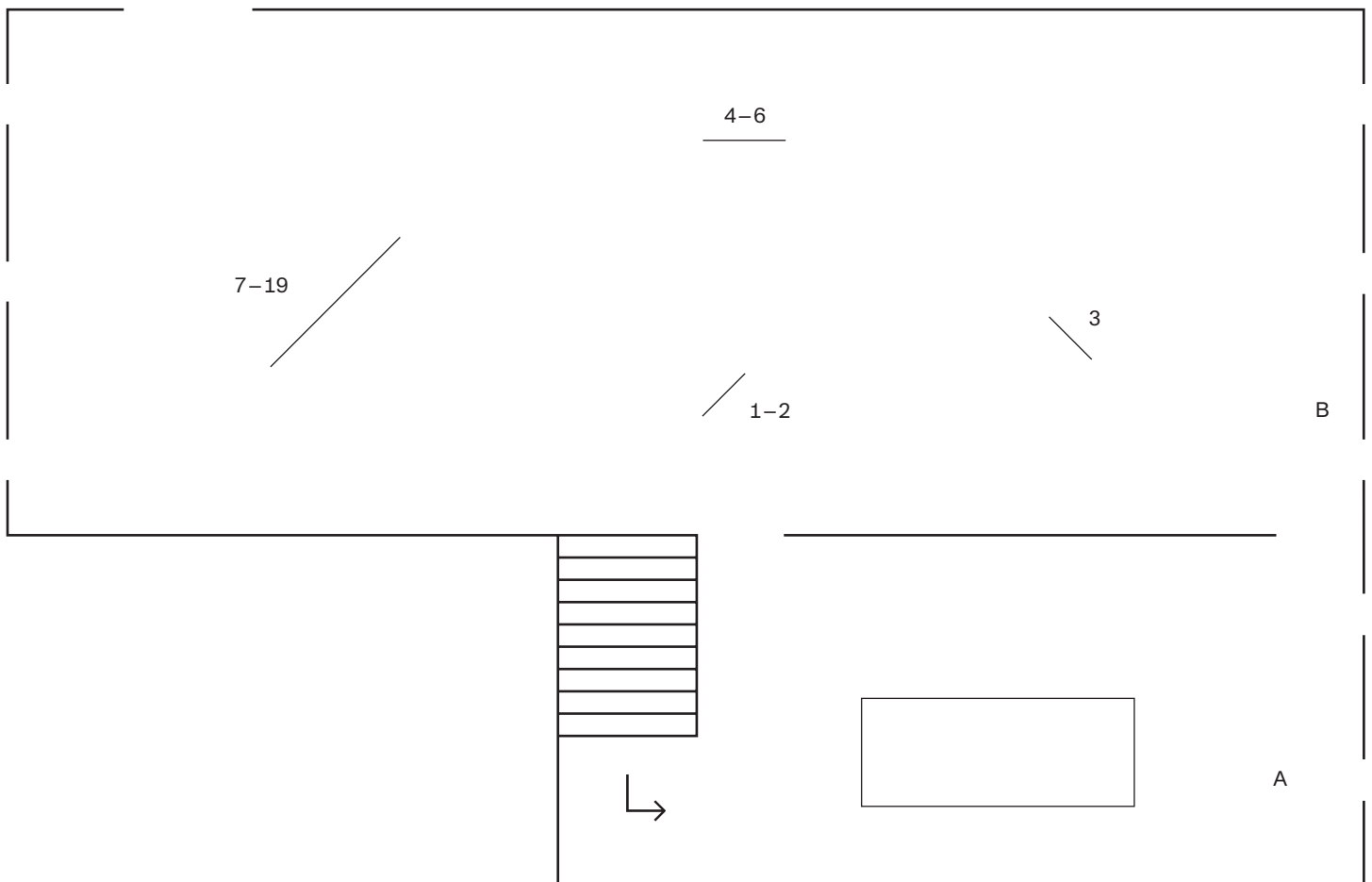
In her drawings, installations, videos, and performances Lada Nakonechna (b. 1981 in Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine) confronts us with images of current events and pictorial experiences from collective memory, which she manipulates or alienates. She often lets the human being in the form of the viewer himself become the manipulative disruptive factor, influencing and changing a given image. In creating her works, Lada Nakonechna is always careful to create space and leave it free for others. To a certain extent, her works can be considered as visualizing the need for a viewer.

17 The stop-motion animation by Lesia Khomenko is based on a painted self-portrait. While painting her face, she kept changing the eyes: initially open and staring insolently at the viewer, they gradually drooped shut with sleep. Having collected 1,500 shots for the video, she painted the completed self-portrait over with white paint, transforming the canvas into a screen for the video projection. The work was inspired by exhausting attempts to put her young daughter to bed: they both pretended to fall asleep while peeking at one another. This temporal processuality steeped in personal experience is transposed onto the processuality of an artistic medium: the painting loses its traditional material medium, leaving nothing but memories of itself.

18–19 Mykola Ridnyi (b. 1985 in Charkiw, Ukraine) graduated in 2008 from the National Academy of design and arts in Charkiw, where he got his MA degree in sculpture studies. Ridnyi combines different artistic activities: he is an artist and filmmaker, curator and author of essays on art and politics. Ridnyi works across media ranging from early collective actions in public space to the amalgam of site-specific installations and sculpture, photography and moving image which constitute the current focus of his practice. In recent films he experiments with nonlinear montage, collage of documentary and fiction. His way of reflection social and political reality draws on the contrast between fragility and resilience of individual stories and collective histories.

The main heroes of his film *NO! NO! NO!*, are the young people from Charkiw, a city located in the Eastern part of Ukraine. Reaching their early twenties coincided with the breakout of the war in the neighbouring region of Donbass. An LGBT activist and poet, a fashion model, a group of street artists, a creator of a computer game—all of them are artists or working in the creative industries, typical for the peaceful life of a big city. However, the proximity to the war affects each of the characters and their activities. Heroes react and reflect political events through their specific relationships with the urban space and the reality of the social media.

For *Regular Places* he filmed comings and goings of citizens in five public sites around Charkiw from a static angle. Without a sense of context, the uneventful footage seems irreconcilable with the brutally violent conflict between pro-Ukrainian and pro-Russian activists that occurred here only months earlier. Rupturing the calm atmosphere, audio excerpts extracted from online videos have been overlaid on top of the footage. Shouts of threats, warnings, abuse and intimidation echoes across indifferent scenes, in a forced confrontation between recent traumatic memories and a present state of collective denial.



- A Timothy Snyder, *Germany's Historical Responsibility for Ukraine*, 2017, Video. With friendly permission of Marie-Luise Beck, former member of the Deutscher Bundestag Bündnis'90 / DIE GRÜNEN
- B Asia Bazdyrieva, *The Labor of Witnessing*, 2022, audio piece

- 1 Yaroslav Futymsky, *Flag is burning*, 2019, colour, sound, 1:51 min
- 2 Yaroslav Futymsky, *Second attempt*, 2019, colour, sound, 3:28 min
- 3 Yuri Leiderman (in Zusammenarbeit mit Andrey Silvestrov), *Birmingham Ornament*, 2011, colour, sound, 65 min
- 4 AntiGonna, *Enter the War*, 2017, colour, sound, 3:57 min
- 5 AntiGonna, *Rave on the bones*, 2017, colour, sound, 6:59 min
- 6 AntiGonna (in Zusammenarbeit mit Nikita Kadan), *Lucid Skin*, 2019, colour, sound, 16:16 min

- 7 Katya Libkind, *Where Are Your Big Ears Dear Dead Grandma?*, 2021, colour, sound, 6:44 min.
- 8 Yarema Malashchuk & Roman Himey, *Dedicated to the Youth of the World II*, 2019, HD-Video, colour, sound, 9 min
- 9 R.E.P., *Yodler*, 2011, colour, sound, 17:59 min
- 10 R.E.P., *Smuggling*, 2007, colour, sound, 10 min
- 11 Nikolay Karabinovych, *As far as Possible*, 2020, b/w, sound, 6:23 min
- 12 Dana Kavelina, *There are no Monuments to Monuments*, 2021, colour, sound, 34:35 min
- 13 Daniil Revkovsky & Andriy Rachinsky, *Labor Safety in the Region of Dnipropetrovsk*, 2018, colour, sound, 22:13 min
- 14 Oleksiy Sai, *The longest, the most productive/Deep cleansing power*, 2021, colour, sound, 3:29 min
- 15 Alina Kleytman, *Responsibility*, 2017, colour, sound, 6:24 min
- 16 Lada Nakonechna, *Switch on Red*, 2016, colour, sound, 3:02 min
- 17 Lesia Khomenko, *Self-portrait*, 2013, colour, sound, 7:33 min
- 18 Mykola Ridnyi, *NO! NO! NO!*, 2017, HD-Video, colour, sound, 22 min
- 19 Mykola Ridnyi, *Regular Places*, 2014 -2015, HD-Video, colour, sound, 15:23 min