

PRESS RELEASE

Незридані сльози
[nezrydani sl'ozy]
Ungeborene Tränen

JULIA BELIAEVA, VOLO BEVZA, SASHA KURMAZ,
VICTORIA PIDUST, ELENA SUBACH, MARTA VOVK

September 1 - October 22 2022
Opening Thursday, September 1, 6 - 9 p.m.

Introduction with the artists around 7 p.m.

- 10% of all sales will be donated to Ukrainian reconstruction projects -

For some time now, art works have no longer been created by simply pressing the release of the camera, transferring pencil sketches to canvas or carving stone; in other words, as an analogue process between artists and reality. In fact, the hand on the mouse, the outstretched arm into digitality, is the first creative act of art production for many young artists today.

Through the exchange between Galerie Judith Andreae and the Ukrainian artist couple Victoria Pidust and Volo Bevza, the idea and concept for an exhibition project was born that invites six young artists from Ukraine to present their current works and creative focus together for the first time. In the case of JULIA BELIAEVA (*1988), VOLO BEVZA (*1993), SASHA KURMAZ (*1986), VICTORIA PIDUST (*1992), ELENA SUBACH (*1980) and MARTA VOVK (*1989), the emphasis is on new forms of artistic expression and visual aesthetics, but also thematically on the exploration of one's own self, their homelands Ukraine, its past and history, but also holistically on the current, ever-present situation.

The group show summarises this common thematic anchoring under the title 'Незридані сльози | Unborn Tears' - a poetic neologism by the Ukrainian avant-garde writer Pavlo Tychyna (1891-1967). Tychyna created this term in 1918 under the sign of the war and it is just as relevant over 100 years later. Even in their vague German translations such as 'nach innen geweinte Tränen (=inwardly wept tears)' or 'ungeweinte Tränen (=unwept tears)', Tychyna's words refer to forms of emotional reaction to war, separation, loss of homeland and denial of one's own identity. Nevertheless, the title deliberately implies the glimmer of a vision for the future, since even tears of relief or tears of joy can be unshed tears.

Just as the content-related spectrum of all the works ranges from current political conflicts to the preoccupation with one's own identity, so too does all the artists' material spectrum of work extend from classical photographic imaging processes to 'digital morphogenesis'; the generation of forms that only computers and digital programs can create. By using a wide variety of media such as photography, VR technology, painting, 3D printing, ceramic processes, woodworking and film, all six artists' works share a development within the interfaces between analogue and digital art and the tension and interconnection of both fields.

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At the same time, the question of reality and distortion of reality forms the background for artistic explorations of one's own homeland, historical entanglements and one's own self.

'Незридані сльози | Unborn Tears' unites all these different approaches, creates overlaps and shows connections, thus revealing a cross-section of young, Ukrainian art.

The show is further accompanied by a distinct conception of the exhibition design, which was created by *otog studio*, consisting of the Ukrainian couple Ola and Mark Otog.

The two graphic designers, who fled the Ukraine and currently live in Belgium, place great emphasis on process and less on results-oriented work, using transdisciplinary and intermedia approaches that range from fashion, costume design, video art, laser technology and 3D print to virtual reality. Within this spectrum of activity and with their claim to push the boundaries of classical graphic design, the collaboration with *otog studio* opens up another level of contemporary Ukrainian art production to the show.

For the duration of the exhibition, the show and exhibition spaces will also provide room for exchange and a platform for artists' talks, readings and concerts by Ukrainian artists.

JULIA BELIAEVA

Julia Beliaeva's artistic work develops on the basis of the apparent opposites between tradition and progress and the interdependencies of both. On the one hand, in her mostly figurative sculptures, she draws on porcelain as a traditional material and as a connection to the once successful and now almost extinct Ukrainian ceramics industry. Furthermore, for Beliaeva, porcelain is not only a significant cultural heritage, but also symbolically charged as a material that is both fragile and extremely strong and resistant at the same time.

Another level in Beliaeva's work is the exploration of new technologies such as 3D scanning, 3D modelling, 3D printing and, last but not least, virtual reality. Usually, the production process of her sculptures develops in the sequence of scanning technology, sculpting in ZBrush, model as 3-print to the final porcelain casting.

Culture and its collapse, influences of digital media on society - as aberrations, additions or updating of her consciousness - are thereby negotiated by the artist from a very intimate point of view. Thus, she herself usually functions as a human study object for her sculptures, but also for her video pieces. Furthermore, Beliaeva's works are oriented towards historically charged cultural assets or moments of contemporary Ukraine observed by her, towards symbolic figures and traditional motifs of art history. The latter include, for example, actualisations of the figure of Judith, Saint Sebastian or the saga of Romulus and Remus, and thus also the theme of motherhood and topic of giving birth, but also the creation of "a now" in an exchange between the past and the present.

Julia Beliaeva (*1988 in Haisyn) studied at the Kyiv State Institute of Decorative and Applied Art and Design from 2005 to 2011. After her studies, she took courses on 3D technology. Visits to international art museums eventually introduced her to working with porcelain. Beliaeva was part of the International Symposium of Modern Art "Biriuchy 019" (2019). Solo exhibitions of the artist's work have been held at American House 2018 and Institute Français d'Ukraine (2018) as well as at Bereznitsky Aesthetics (2015) in Kyiv and at the Invogue gallery in Odessa.

At the same time, Beliaeva has been included in group exhibitions at PinchukArtCentre in Kyiv; the State Art Gallery, Poland; at the Odessa Fine Arts Museum; at KWADRAT Berlin and at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington D.C. and more. Before the outbreak of war, Beliaeva lived and worked in Kyiv; since March 2022, the artist has been part of an artist residence of the ‚Ö Landes-Kultur‘ in Linz (Austria), in the course of which her works can be seen at the Gmundner Ceramics Manufactory.

VOLO BEVZA

Volo Bevza's primarily abstract oil paintings negotiate the omnipresence of the internet and its floods of images within the classical field of painting. His works are preceded by a hybrid, cross-media process of creation that questions perspectives of painting and content mediation. Central to the artist's work is the significance of the panel painting in the post-digital age. From his artistic beginnings in the field of stage design until today, fragmented and deconstructed messages influence his work. He translates visual information, such as widely circulating images in media but also his own photographs, via a software and then transfers them to the canvas. The conversion from the real to the digital and finally to the analogue painting leads to multiple connotations of the painterly result. Similarly, the painting gives rise to set pieces for video works that expand the artist's repertoire with digital moving images. Digital processes are used as a means of alienation, just like painting itself, whose supposed illusionism is exposed as a lie. This approach is extended by analogue approaches such as painting over photographs - Bevza's conscious confrontation with print media and classical print products. "Painterly gestures thus confront the (alleged) facts," the artist explains. Here, the special potential of the interweaving of digital, computer-generated art, interrogation of reality, media juxtaposition and the painter's personal handwriting becomes apparent.

Volo Bevza (*1993 Kyiv) studied scenography at the National Academy of Fine Arts and Architecture in Kyiv from 2010 to 2014. In 2015, he began studies in painting at the Weißensee Kunsthochschule Berlin in the class of Prof. Friederike Feldmann and Prof. Werner Liebmann, which he completed as a master student in 2019. Bevza's works have since then been shown in solo shows at the Mironova Foundation and WTFoundation in Kyiv as well as at Fahrenheit Berlin (2021). They were also part of group shows at the Stiftung Neue Kunst Berlin-Brandenburg (2022) and Kunstquartier Bethanien as well as Kunsthalle am Hamburger Platz in Berlin (2017). In 2012, Volo Bevza received the ELEVA prize in the field of realistic drawing and was recently a guest in the discourse format 'Studio Bonn' at the Bundeskunsthalle Bonn (April 2022). Since the beginning of the year, Bevza has held a teaching position at the Weißensee Kunsthochschule Berlin. The artist lives and works in Berlin.

SASHA KURMAZ

Sasha Kurmaz's works are sometimes playfully ironic but mostly direct, non-conformist and radical. They build on a very explicit (visual) language, disturb familiar visual habits and

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provoke the recipient's threshold of endurance. The artist works in multimedia, in the field of photography, video art and time-based media, but also in the field of sound installations, public interventions, performances or conceptual approaches that involve local communities. For Galerie Judith Andrae, Kurmaz designs an expansive, collage-like installation from two artistic processes that go hand in hand for him: Photography and graffiti. Sasha Kurmaz has been working with graffiti for 10 years; in the course of this, he deals with the expression of urban subcultures, the relationships between people and public places and the reclamation of these. Photography, on the other hand, forms a starting point for communication as a personal connection and possibility of memory documentation, also against the background of ever-changing media structures.

Kurmaz's works are characterised by a certain simplicity of execution, depictions of the extreme and an anthropological documentary and highly political approach.

Even before February 24 2022, the war played a major role in Kurmaz's works: earlier pieces already negotiate the interconnections between Ukraine and the Soviet Union, tensions between citizens and the state, violence, the visualisation of tragic events and especially hidden power structures.

Sasha Kurmaz, born in Kyiv in 1986, first studied communicative engineering and then design at the National Academy of Culture and Arts Management in Kyiv. In addition to receiving the C/O Berlin Talent Award (2015) and the Kazimir Malevich Artist Award, Kyiv (2020), Kurmaz has been exhibited internationally at the ZKM Karlsruhe (2013), the PinchukArtCentre, Kyiv (2016), the Latvian Museum of Photography, Riga (2019), the Semperdepot Vienna (2019), the Academy of Fine Arts Berlin and many more. Most recently, Kurmaz's work has been shown at solo exhibitions in Kyiv at the Naked Room gallery (2021) and the PinchukArtCentre (2016) and at galleries in Krakow and Warsaw. Many international magazines such as Vice, Libération, Foam Magazine, the Rolling Stone, the Süddeutsche Zeitung and the ZEIT and many more have published his work.

Kurmaz lives and works in Kyiv.

VICTORIA PIDUST

I am looking for something abstract based on reality" - that's how **Victoria Pidust** reflects on her artistic focus, which relies on painting and photography. Pidust's works are hybrid, collage-like photographs inheriting a painterly-aesthetic appeal. For this, the artist captures moments from urban as well as private spaces; however, in further steps, she generates a profound reflection on processes of perception. She uses the medium of photography in order to reveal it as a means of modelling and alienating reality, far from its function of depicting reality. Pidust's works are thus created within the tension of "destruction and creation". Instances of the latter in Pidust's work are her phone camera, screenshots, scans and especially the process of photogrammetry, a process of generating and transferring 3D models, primarily used in the field of architecture. Within this computer programme, the artist creates 3D spaces and is able to coordinate work-forming factors such as light, materiality and colour, just as one does in the classical composition process. In addition, she deliberately disrupts the software by withholding parts of the necessary image information. The artificial intelligence of the system thus takes on a creative function itself, contrary to 'pattern recognition'. The results of this interplay of arbitrariness, deceptive programming and the artist's subjective selection are then

converted back into a 2D format and the haptic art object - mostly printed on Dibond - is created.

Just as the programme is never provided with all the information by the artist, we too, in a hyper-digitised and networked world, are left with information gaps. This has recently been revealed in the news coverage of the war, in the context of which Pidust's latest works are to be located.

They are composed of photographic images of destroyed Ukrainian cities and their public buildings, which the artist subsequently transforms into abstract entities by means of photogrammetry. As a result, the works can be considered a visual attempt to capture and at the same time distort moments of war.

Born in Nikopol in 1992, **Victoria Pidust** studied multimedia at the Institute of Book Studies and Printing Technology from 2010 to 2015, as well as photography at the NTUU KPI school in Kyiv. From 2013 to 2015, Pidust took private photography courses with photographers Roman Pyatkovka and Alexander Lyapin. In the following years she studied Visual Communication and from 2017 to 2020 Fine Arts and Painting, both at the Weißensee Kunsthochschule Berlin. Pidust has been awarded numerous prizes such as the Mart Stam Prize (2020) and the National Photography Prize of Ukraine several times (2013, 2015, 2017). She has had solo shows at Kunstverein kjubh (2021) and ZERO FOLD Cologne (2020). Most recently, her work has been part of group exhibitions at FUHRWERKSWAAGE, Cologne, Stiftung Neue Kunst Berlin-Brandenburg (2022) and Marburger Kunstverein (2021) and was shown at the Curiosa Sector at Paris Photo (2021). Victoria Pidust lives and works in Berlin.

ELENA SUBACH

Bright to dazzling colours, inspired by traditional icon painting, contrived landscapes, the motif of the circle, striking materiality and interferences between reality and the unreal characterise **Elena Subach's** works. The initiation of her photographic works, explicitly the series 'Grandmothers on the edge of heaven', was the confrontation with her personal family history and the handling with grief. According to the artist, the works can even be understood as a "lyrical dedication to the older generation". In doing so, Subach transfers motifs captured via camera to a metaphysical level; more precisely, Subach mounts her portrayed 'grandmothers' in a landscape of the sky created by her, sometimes manually with scissors, sometimes by means of Photoshop. In Elena Subach's distinctive visual language, documentation, staging, computer processes and handwork thus coincide. The results are digital, emotional collages of attachment, religiosity, tradition and immediacy. At the same time, the artist sees her photographs as a means of communicating the peculiarities, beauty and fragility of her home Ukraine.

Born in Chervonohrad in 1980, **Elena Subach** first worked as a textile designer in Kyiv and Lviv after receiving her master's degree in economics from Volyn State University in Luzk. Since 2012, she has devoted herself solely to photography, but has also been working in curatorial practice at the Lviv National Art Gallery since 2019 and teaches courses at the School of Visual Communications SCVOT in Kyiv. She has received awards such as the New East Photo Prize (2016) and the Gaude Polonia Scholarship (2019) while her photographs have been published

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in numerous magazines and newspapers, including British Journal of Photography, Weltkunst, Vogue Poland, the Guardian, Süddeutsche Zeitung and many others. Her work has been shown at international exhibitions, most recently at the Willy Brandt House in Berlin, the World Bank in Washington DC, the Katarzyna Kozyra Foundation in Warsaw and the Tycho Brahe Museum in Ven, Sweden (2022). Currently, the artist lives and works in Lviv.

MARTA VOVK

Materials **Marta Vovk** preferably resorts to are spray paint, Window Color, (boat) varnish, acrylic paint and plywood panels of various sizes. The composition of these materials is usually preceded by well forward planned working process beginning with collages created via Photoshop and hand-drawn sketches. Final works incorporate estranged, graphic elements from the advertising industry, stickers, doodles, figures and shapes from comic culture and urban graffiti. The artist positions herself aside from a too strong politicisation of her art in traditional art history.

Her piece created distinctively for this shows draws on the world-famous McDonald's logo. Here, however, the name of the fast-food chain is written in Cyrillic; the letters, typeface and outlines of the work - and thus the entire corporate identity of the brand - are in turn drastically distorted. Nevertheless, the prevalent critique of capitalism in Vovk's oeuvre falls short behind the theme of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. In this work, she deals with it on a social and linguistic level: sanctions against the aggressor caused a closure of McDonald's restaurants in Russia, which affected younger generations in particular more than reports of human rights violations. As a result, alternative fast-food restaurants opened in Russia, which continue to use the McDonalds corporate identity, albeit in a slightly different form. The linguistic modification of the lettering also occurs manifolded in Vovk's piece: while the brand name McDonalds is used in Cyrillic in Russia, Latin characters are used in Ukraine. Here it is written in Cyrillic, but with the Ukrainian spelling, recognisable by the use of 'з' instead of 'c'. The work thus refers to the Soviet Union's historical exercise of power over Ukraine, which in part entails linguistic oppression that still exists today. Questions concerning economies of warfare, belonging and appropriation and the dichotomy of East-West encounter distortions such as the downwardly striving formal structure and the melting of letters. Both contain aspects of unease, reminiscent of 'creepy inscriptions' or even evoking associations with (not yet) shed tears.

Marta Vovk (born 1989 in Lviv) studied German philology and art history at the University of Bremen before she commenced her studies of Fine art at the Vienna Art Academy in the class of Daniel Richter (2015) and from 2011 to 2017 at the Weißensee Kunsthochschule (class of Friederike Feldmann). Vovk subsequently received grants from the Senate Department for Culture and Europe (2020) and artist residencies abroad. Since 2015, she has been co-founder of the conceptual artists' collective 'Sorgen International'. Vovk has been represented at many international exhibitions, for example at the Tube Culture Hall in Milan (2022), at KINDL - Centre for Contemporary Art Berlin (2020), at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp (2017), at the Künstlerhaus in Vienna (2016) and many more. Works by Vovk are widely spread in public collections such as the Pizzuti Collection at the Columbus Museum of Art in the USA, the Wemhöner Collection in Herford and the Finstral Collection in Bolzano.

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Wednesday 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Thursday and Friday 2 – 6 p.m.

Saturday 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

We look forward to making individual appointments with you, even outside our opening hours.