

**THE MOVING  
IMAGE AMIDST  
TO WATCH  
THE INVASION  
THE WAR  
OF UKRAINE  
(2014–2023)**

GUIDEBOOK ENGLISH

**09.09.–29.10.23**

**TO WATCH THE WAR: THE MOVING IMAGE AMIDST  
THE INVASION OF UKRAINE (2014–2023)****9 SEPTEMBER–29 OCTOBER 2023**

A moving image forum with films and videos by Roman Himey & Yarema Malaschuk, Lisa Hoffmann, Yuriy Hrytsyna, Dana Kavelina, Oksana Kazmina, Myro Klochko & Anatoliy Tatarenko, Zoya Laktionova & Tetiana Kornieieva, Vasyl (Tkachenko) Lyakh, Sashko Protayah, Andriy Rachinsky & Daniil Revkovsky, Mykola Ridnyi, ruïns collective, Anna Scherbyna & Valentyna Petrova, Mariya Stoyanova, and Oleksandr Surovstov.

Convened by Olexii Kuchanskyi  
and Oleksiy Radynski.

Public program takes place on 28 September,  
12 October, and 26 October 2023.

**PRACTICAL INFORMATION****Opening Hours**

Wednesday–Sunday, 12:00–18:00 hrs.

Opening hours may vary during public holidays.

**Entrance Fee**

Regular Admission **€ 6**

Under 18s, students, CJP, and seniors **€ 3**

Under 12s, AICA, Museum Card, and U-Pass **Free**

**Group visits and introductions**

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# INTRODUCTION

## IN PLACE OF AN INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the moving image forum *To Watch the War: The Moving Image Amidst the Invasion of Ukraine (2014–2023)*, conceptualized by Olexii Kuchanskyi and Oleksiy Radynski.

The forum is convened from within the experimental film and video making that has emerged in direct response to the Russian war on Ukraine. This war began with Russia's annexation of Crimea, following the Maidan Uprising in 2014, and as we inaugurate this research exhibition at BAK on 9 September 2023, it is in its tenth year and occurs on day 563 of the full-scale Russian invasion. If this data is truly horrifying, it nonetheless pales in comparison to the horrors of destruction and the suffering of people and other-than-human worlds under this ongoing assault. So much is certain, even if, following writer and political activist Susan Sontag, one “can’t understand, can’t imagine” the tragedy of war from afar,<sup>1</sup> say, from Utrecht, where I write these words. Across distance, one can’t comprehend “how dreadful, how terrifying war is” and “how normal it becomes.”<sup>2</sup>

And yet, the notion of “distance” from this and other wars is but an illusion. For wars are inseparable from the long ongoing, deep-reaching, all-encompassing, and transversally entangled global processes in which one is always already implicated. Thus even if war can’t fully be “understood,” to concur with Sontag, with acknowledging one’s complicity with the conditions of the world that continue enabling and facilitating wars comes a call: a call to engage, in solidarity, with a multitude of perspectives dismantling extant status quos and their legitimacy, and grasping thusly not simply the terrors of war but the ways to resist its normalization into the political conjuncture.

With this in mind, *To Watch the War* opens up a space for engagement with multiple firsthand accounts of war in Ukraine, in which “not one particular perspective is presented, but [where] the viewers are confronted with many different ways of perceiving war.”<sup>3</sup> The forum assembles 19 experimental films and videos that employ various grassroots tactics and critical approaches to counter the simplistic-sensationalist imagery pushed by social and mass media that feasts on military technologies and propagandas of the renewed imperial politics. Against the grain of such—at once all-too-banal and all-too-spectacular—mediatic loops of catastrophe upon catastrophe, the forum offers much subtler, varied, and nuanced pathways to “watch the war” altogether differently. While experimentally documenting the war from the viewpoint of living (in) it, they simultaneously resist it by foregrounding not the destruction but the resilience and agency of human and other subjects that emerge in the face of this unjustifiable, protracted emergency. Together, the forum could be viewed as “a retrospective on an important historical period” of “immense film production” that is underway.<sup>4</sup>

The works are constellated around several key concerns, from documenting the major humanitarian crisis and frontline destruction of Donbas's Mariupol during its lengthy siege; to analyzing labor conditions of precarious classes under the war regime that render this war principally rooted in a class struggle; to the warfare's interlacing of genocide with ecocide; and to queer responses to war. In part a research archive and in part a fragmented cinema—for the viewer is invited to chart their own route through a variety of viewing and temporal modalities of the works—the forum inquires not only into the relationship of image-making and war but also into the larger question of the place of art in such radically trying and unjust warfare conditions. At stake, in the words of Radynski, is the “question of artistic truth.” For even as “art has never claimed objectivity for itself,” he continues, it “has always advocated truth.”<sup>5</sup>

### **Postscriptum: To Watch the War, in Solidarity**

The lasting state of war that engulfs the world—along with the global rise of fascist politics and the apparent growing lust for the hegemony of forever-empires—has been a key concern driving our work at BAK. Disturbingly, we are reminded time and time again—as with the case of the violent conflict on and in Ukraine—that waging wars is part and parcel of the global predicament as we know it. War here refers not only to moments of direct violent conflict but also, in an expanded sense, to an infrastructure of racial capitalism at the throughline of slavery, colonialism, imperialism, and oppression of all kinds. The latter is what many have come to consider as a mundane matter normalized into the everyday: the wars waged systematically by imposing hunger, poverty, houselessness, forced displacement, lies, or ecocidal regimes on the planet that wear away the options of living a livable life.

In this context, we at BAK have inquired in depth about the relationship between images and war, and have speculated in parallel about the changing role of art within it. We feel that the present calls on us to make fragments of this living archive public anew—and the project *To Watch the War, in Solidarity*—a sequel to the image forum *To Watch the War: The Moving Image Amidst the Invasion of Ukraine (2014–2023)*—sets out to do precisely that.

*To Watch the War, in Solidarity*, which takes place from autumn this year onward, unfolds as a series of artwork presentations from previous and ongoing long-term projects, including *Concerning War* (2005, 2010), *Former West* (2008–2016), and *Propositions for Non-Fascist Living* (2017–ongoing), to name but a few. Coinciding with yet another phase of renovations of BAK's premises from November on, these impromptu expositions are generously hosted by our companion institutions across the city of Utrecht, with the aim of making them public again and remobilizing the knowledges that they carry into the present.

The artworks included speak to the vast experiences war; they do so in solidarity with the people of Ukraine and all those subjected to wars of every kind, everywhere, every time. If solidarity is a multiplicity of generative pathways to become more in both the resistance to oppression and a building of a just world, *To Watch the War, in Solidarity* joins in with a modest route toward reigniting through the power of art the need to act out. This means imagining the world otherwise and living it, and, as I have urged many times before, living that imagination as if it were possible.

*We at BAK trust you will engage with both sequels of the project, as well as with the fundraising campaign for the humanitarian support of independent experimental cinema and image production in Ukraine, and for vulnerable communities on the ground.*

Maria Hlavajova

General and artistic director

- 1 Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (2003).
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Olexii Kuchanskyi cited in Sandra Biberstein, “To Watch the War. An Interview mit Olexii Kuchanskyi and Oleksiy Radynski,” 24 October 2022, <https://crisisandcommunitas.com/?crisis=to-watch-the-war-an-interview-mit-olexii-kuchanskyi-and-oleksiy-radynski>.
- 4 Radynski, *ibid.*
- 5 Radynski, *ibid.*

# SUPPORT FREEFILMERS— JOIN THE CROWDFUNDING CAMPAIGN!



Please join the global community and donate funds to Freefilmers, a diasporic cinemovement and NGO of filmmakers, artists, and activists working in solidarity with a broader network of grassroots humanitarian initiatives in the regions most afflicted by the war in Ukraine.

Originally from Mariupol, since the all-out Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, Freefilmers are now forcibly dispersed across the world, engaging in struggle against Russian imperial aggression and all imperialist warfare the world over. With your donation, Freefilmers can continue making films in defiance of war and building an intersectional network of humanitarian solidarity and support for internally displaced people and vulnerable communities, including Roma people, women from rural areas, people with disabilities, and other nonnormative minorities.

For more information and encouragement to contribute, see <https://help-freefilmers.network>.

Let's do this together!

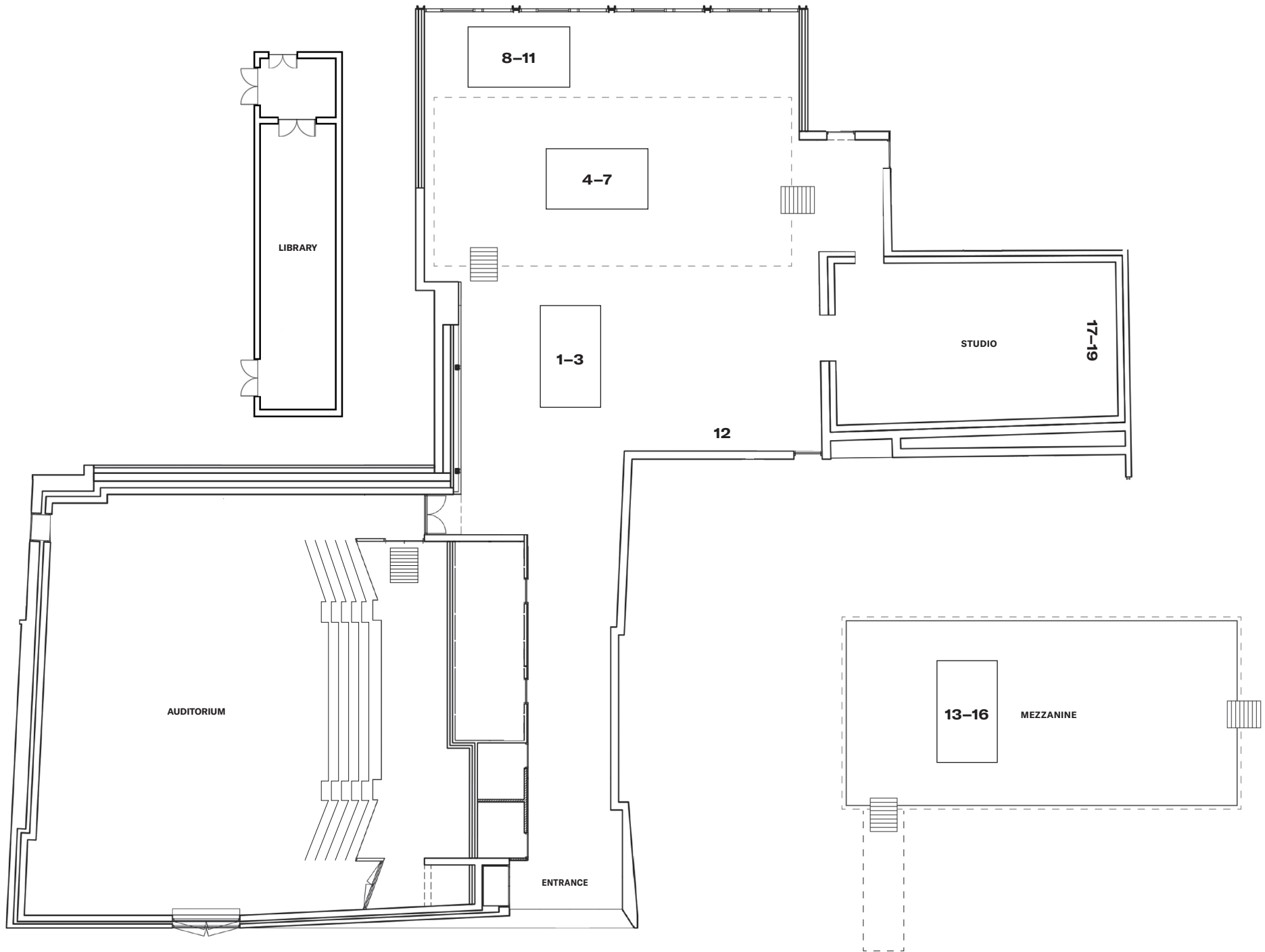
# TO WATCH THE WAR

*To Watch the War* is a moving image forum exploring the trajectories of experimental film and video that emerged during the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The invasion began in 2014 in an attempt to suppress the popular Maidan Uprising and intensified into an all-out war in early 2022. The Russian invasion of Ukraine puts the moving image into stark relief again—both as a tool for reflection and resistance.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine is a multiplicity of wars. It is a complex so distributed that it is difficult to simplify into a single explanatory system, and has proven to be all too easily ignorable by those beneath the veil of western privilege, who outsource the resolution of military conflicts that serve the international law market. But privilege or the lack of notwithstanding, the war turned out to be global: be it through the channels of affect-driven and affect-oriented governmentality; the management of gender and sexual behavior; and the distribution of labor, resources, and commodities (weapons, images, public opinions, reproductive labor, and oil and gas, among others). War—one particular node in a vast, global, and heterogenic formation of economic, cultural, social, and technopolitical hierarchies—is supported by and functions at the expense of gazes: military perceptual technologies and satellite images that provide troops with data about movement of enemy equipment, as well as sedating television technologies, sensational video reports, and the cinematic “male gaze.”

This exhibition investigates the manifold responses, implications, and complicities of the moving image in various forms of warfare. Influenced by grassroots media strategies, the Maidan Uprising of 2014 led to a marked increase in the circulation of moving images, which in turn impacted experimental film production. Central to the exhibition are visual guerrilla and critical approaches to capturing and watching war, with a number of works made in direct response to the current Russian invasion. The question is whether the moving image—that is a conductor of social and political imaginaries—is able to expand the arsenal of practices of watching war: Can the moving image create conditions that allow for oppressed, rebellious, and minor perspectives? What is the subjectivity of the audience in this case? Can this kind of spectator remain an outside observer? Can experimental and bodily modes of watching impact relations to the war?

Olexii Kuchanskyi and Oleksiy Radynski



# EXHIBITION

1

## **PEACE AND TRANQUILITY**

**MYRO KLOCHKO, ANATOLIY TATARENKO**

2022

11:00 min.

The film is based on a play written by Lviv-based author Andrii Bondarenko in the very early days of the Russian invasion in February 2022. One of the most immediate artistic responses to the Russian war, this play reconsiders the rigid notions of peace and war in the troubled historical context of Eastern Europe. Exposing the violent mechanisms that underlie so-called “peacetime” life, the film projects personal family histories of an author-protagonist onto the political history of a generation that witnessed the longest “peaceful” period in the modern history of Ukraine, which ended in 2022 but was never that peaceful to begin with.

2

## **MA**

**MARIYA STOYANOVA**

2016

17:00 min.

The film opens with landscape views taken from a high-rise building located in Mariupol. Sounds of shelling form a recurring acoustic background of the place. A woman feeds birds from her window while documenting the change of seasons with her phone camera. Alongside several other videos, these are posted on social media, providing an opportunity to communicate with her daughter, documentary filmmaker Zoya Laktionova.

3

## **KHAYT**

**SASHKO PROTYAH**

2022

8:44 min.

*Khayt* is a fictional diary about the Ukrainian city of Mariupol in 2068, where a protagonist, Sister Protyah, arrives to participate in an art residency. The traditional dance of khaytarma, practiced by both Crimean Tatar and Azov Greek minorities, is revived by the future underground electronic music scene of Mariupol in a drive to rediscover the local cultural life of the 2000s. Combining reels from the amateur online-archive of DIY Azov Greek music videos with the reconsideration of khaytarma’s rhythmic structure by the Mavru Sproutsku Paromit music collective, Protyah nurtures an imaginary horizon of the peripheral Ukrainian city after the global anti-carbon revolution.

4

## **LABOR SAFETY IN THE REGION OF DNIPROPETROVSK**

**ANDRIY RACHINSKY, DANIIL REVKOVSKY**

2018

22:00 min.

Having assembled a vast archive of videos from the social media accounts of workers of some of Ukraine’s industrial enterprises, notorious for poor labor conditions and environmentally damaging practices, the artists produced this found-footage disaster movie. Here, environmental atrocities are piled up in a devastating tragicomedy of a suicidal war on nature waged by humans. In the background, a class war is raging as well. Industrial management, factory owners, and the government who make this perpetual ecological disaster possible remain mostly invisible in the film, while the workers deploy their ultimate



weapons—mobile phones—to expose the evidence of this “class war from above.”

**5**  
**SKY. INVASION**  
**ANDRIY RACHINSKY, DANIIL REVKOVSKY**

2022  
10:00 min.

A male voice reads out a series of enigmatic letters, words, and phrases in Russian, while stunning views of the sky, reminiscent of landscape painting, are criss-crossed with signs of military activity. The voices come from the intercepted military ciphers used by the Russian army during the invasion of Ukraine, while the images represent the confusion and awe of the early days of the war. In this two-channel video installation, the artist duo develops their method of sourcing found footage from online sources to trace how violence and war are made banal.

**6**  
**DIMA**  
**MYKOLA RIDNYI**

2013  
8:00 min.

For his film *Dima*, Mykola Ridnyi conducted an interview with a former police officer about his decision to leave the police force. Dima, who now works as a stonemason, explains how his initial idealism and the idea of working for justice as a policeman gradually slipped away in the face of corruption and despotism within the Ukrainian police apparatus. Filmed partly in the style of a classic worker portrait, documenting daily operations at the stonemason’s workshop and including footage of the serial production of tombstones, Ridnyi disrupts the routine of Dima’s workday with a special commission: he asks him to carve a pair of

police boots out of granite, based on the style of a Soviet monument in Kharkiv in Eastern Ukraine that marks the liberation of the city from German Nazi troops.

**7**  
**FAIRY**  
**LISA HOFFMANN**

2019  
5:30 min.

Addressing war as a complex of systematic violence and power relations rather than a set of media sensations, one may realize how much it depends on the appropriation of ecologies and the capturing of unpaid care work. Referring both to ecological emergencies as well as to author Hans Christian Andersen’s figure of the little mermaid, *fairy* investigates care work and the notion of cleanliness. The film’s narrative is accompanied by a voice singing “Where have all the flowers gone?”—a circular song associated with the early environmental and anti-war movement and originating in a traditional Cossack folk song. The video is part of a series of video-performances by the artist that deal with destruction by care. Voice: Anna Petzer

**8**  
**ONTOLOGY**  
**OLEKSANDR SUROVSTOV**

2017  
30:00 min.

In 2017 in Mariupol, independent filmmaker Sashko Protyah lent a video camera to his friend, odd-jobber and cinephile Oleksandr Surovtsov. As a result, Surovtsov created a stunning self-portrait film, documenting his own life and work as a night guard in a semi-abandoned post-industrial facility in Mariupol. Surovtsov’s *Ontology* is a key

work of a prolific Mariupol experimental film movement, which was booming in this Donbas city up until the moment it was almost completely destroyed during the Russian invasion of 2022.

**9**  
**THE FILM OF SAND**  
**SASHKO PROTYAH**

2019  
12:35 min.

*The Film of Sand* is an autofictional essay about a gay community, which makes use of a communication network consisting of amateur radio and grassroots hookup apps. While the air is constantly interrupted by homophobic messages, networks of love, empathy, and support become ever stronger. Produced as a close observation of everyday media practices and the social life of love relations, *The Film of Sand* takes an unusually close look at the intersections of war and intimacy, threat and empathy, fiction and documentation.

**10**  
**TREASURE**  
**VASYL (TKACHENKO) LYAKH**

2023  
18:48 min.

This work examines the relations between image and transgenerational trauma by interviewing members of Lyakh’s family, who are of Azov Greek origin, and observing filmic documentations of minority community. The protagonist searches for relics hidden underground by his relatives in the yard, discovering meanwhile multiple layers of repressed and abandoned memories of the Second World War, the experience of deportation, gender-based violence, and the destruction of the ongoing war.

**11**  
**DIORAMA**  
**ZOYA LAKTIONOVA, TETIANA KORNIIEVA**

2018  
11:00 min.

Life flows in its everyday ways, but suddenly something elusive changes its course. All that remains is to immerse oneself in memories, where everything can be kept intact, as if in a museum. Mariupol is a resort town. The sea offers the joys of swimming and relaxation, but unexpectedly, war intervenes in this picture that has been unchanged for many years. Should the explosive mines, which were placed here but have not exploded yet, become part of the diorama in the Museum of Local History, a portrait of the Mariupol ecosystem?

**12**  
**INTERMUTATION. NEITHER A FAIRYTALE**  
**NOR A MUSICAL**  
**OKSANA KAZMINA**

2020  
23:00 min.

The video observes bodily practices developed by Ukraine’s community of queer artists in recent years, of subverting, resisting, deactivating, parodying, and ignoring the heteronormative corporeal state. Developed while the country was facing war in its eastern part, these images contradict the unifying western gaze, which regards Eastern European queer people as exotic, but “not yet” emancipated enough from an underdeveloped homophobic milieu. By focusing on the specificity of the experiments in and intermutations of gender in the region, the work dissolves this gaze into a record of the myriad playful, joyful, and rebellious relations within the local network of solidarity, support, and care. Performers: Katia Libkind, Ksenia

Kropotkina, Valentina Petrova, Marina Usmanova, Vasyl (Tkachenko) Lyakh, Fritz von Klein, Maryna Gaba (Sequin Lalaguna), Oksana Kazmina, Natalka Dyachenko

**13**  
**MIRACULOUS BODY MODIFICATIONS**  
**IN CARPATHIANS**  
**OKSANA KAZMINA**

2020  
9:00 min.

This work was created during a walk to the Vorozhske Lake during Fantasery residency at Drahobrat in the western part of Ukraine. The video explores the possibilities of joint mutation of a collective of human bodies, a film camera, and the environment of the Carpathian Mountains.

Participants: Anatoly Belov, Oksana Kazmina, Natalka Dyachenko, Vasyl (Tkachenko) Lyakh

**14**  
**SISTERS**  
PART OF THE SERIES ARMED AND DANGEROUS  
**ANNA SCHERBYNA, VALENTYNA PETROVA**

2017–ongoing  
12:22 min.

*Sisters* is a fictional film based on a real-life anti-feminist conservative female movement, the Sisterhood of Saint Olha. This group of young, educated women denies the concept of gender, postulates the patriarchal structure of society, and struggles for the abolition of a woman's right to vote. But things aren't as simple as they might seem. *Sisters* aims to analyze and reflect on the image of an anti-feminist female activist. This piece of subversive feminist filmmaking was created within the framework of *Armed and Dangerous*, an experimental series of

films that deal with the issue of gun violence and ideologies of hatred, initiated by the artist Mykola Ridnyi.

**15**  
**LETTER TO A TURTLEDOVE**  
**DANA KAVELINA**

2020  
20:00 min.

*Letter to a Turtle dove* is a feminist, artistic appropriation of amateur footage shot during the war in the Donbas region of Ukraine, recombined into a surreal anti-war film-poem. The war videos are interspersed with Dana Kavelina's own animated segments, staged mise-en-scènes, and archival footage of Donbas from the 1930s onwards—when the region became a hot-spot for Stalinist industrialization of the Soviet Union, and for heated class warfare. This piece of filmmaking encapsulates the multitude of traumas, grievances, horrors, dreams, and hallucinations that have descended upon the Donbas region since its invasion by Russia in 2014, even though numerous elements of this multitude originate from long before the war broke out.

**16**  
**SALTY OSCILLATIONS**  
**RUÏNS COLLECTIVE**

2021  
5:35 min.

The work explores the influence of terrestrial and subterranean landscapes on the imagination and the unconscious. The project began as a series of interviews recorded in June 2021 with residents of Soledar in the Donetsk region of Ukraine. They shared their perception of the Steppe; dreams of their hometown's nature, its animals, and its landscapes; as well as the symbolic

meanings of salt in the monotown known primarily for its salt industry. Combining these documentary stories with a contemplation of the terrestrial and underground landscapes that reflect the town's industrial past, this video tries to identify the influence of local lore mythology and geological features on the formation of identity and the idea of “the sublime.”

**17**  
**K-OBJECT FROM LL GROUP**  
**RUÏNS COLLECTIVE**

2019  
6:00 min. 6:00 min.

“K-object” is the working title of the Knyhynya meteorite that landed near the village of the same name in Zakarpattia in June 1866. It was included in the collection of the Natural History Museum in Vienna, came to the attention of novelist Jules Verne and biologist Charles Darwin, made an impact on the panspermia hypothesis, and was later recognized as the biggest meteorite in Europe. ruïns collective's film portrays these collisions of the socialization of the meteorite in capitalist and extractivist Central Europe can be observed. Central Europe can be observed.

**18**  
**THE WANDERER**  
**ROMAN HIMEY, YAREMA MALASCHUK**

2022  
9:00 min.

In 1994, a group of now-famous Kharkiv photographers (Boris Mikhailov, Sergey Bratkov, and Sergiy Solonsky), known as the Fast Reaction Group, created a formative work of Ukrainian contemporary art entitled *If I Were a German*. The artists staged images of German Nazi soldiers in

Ukraine to reflect upon the collapse of a symbolic order in the wake of the dissolution of the USSR. In 2022, the artist duo Yarema Malaschuk & Roman Himey reenacted this piece, this time posing as dead Russian soldiers on Ukrainian soil—an obscene image that has put itself into the focus of popular desire.

**19**  
**VARTA 1, LVIV, UKRAINE**  
**YURIY HRYTSYNA**

2015  
1:04 hrs.

The experimental documentary *Varta1, Lviv, Ukraine* by Yuriy Hrytsyna interrogates the notions of online mobilization, direct democracy, hierarchy, and violence. In February 2014, as a result of the Maidan Uprising, the pro-Russian government in Ukraine was overthrown. During the brief interregnum that followed the collapse, a grassroots patrol militia formed in Lviv in Western Ukraine, among other places, and patrolled the city. The car drivers communicated via an online radio channel run by the app Zello. Hrytsyna uses this archive of conversations to overlap it with landscape shots of Lviv's surroundings with a lo-fi Hi8 filter, creating a dense reflection upon the events and the role and limitations of technology within it.

# CONTRIBUTORS

**Roman Himey and Yarema Malashchuk** are Kyiv-based artists and filmmakers who have been collaborating at the edge of visual art and cinema since 2013. Himey and Malashchuk graduated as cinematographers from the Institute of Screen Arts at Kyiv National I. K. Karpenko-Kary Theatre, Cinema and Television University, Kyiv. They are also members of the Prykarpattian Theater art collective. Their debut documentary feature *New Jerusalem* (2020) premiered at Docudays UA International Film Festival, Kyiv in 2020 and received the Special Mention Award at Kharkiv MeetDocs. Additionally, they participated in the Future Generation Art Prize in 2021 and received the main award of the PinchukArtCentre Prize in 2020, the VISIO Young Talent Acquisition Prize in 2021, as well as the Grand Prix at the Young Ukrainian Artists Award (MUHi) in 2019. Their video works are included in the collections of Frac Bretagne, Rennes; Fondazione In Between Art Film; and Seven Gravity Collection.

**Lisa Hoffmann** is a visual artist, filmmaker, performer, and researcher. She grew up in Dresden, where early on she found her way into the DIY music scene and political awareness. A graduate from Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, Weimar in sustainable product design (MFA) and from the Universität der Künste Berlin, Berlin in Art and Media (MFA), she is currently an active member of the climate education collective Klasse Klima. Her work investigates transitional states, daily life fictions, and fragmented realities with a focus on ecological anxieties and the deconstruction of dominant narratives. She participates regularly in various collaborations and exhibitions globally, notably *The Centre for Dying on Stage*, Cow House Studios, Ballybawn, 2016; *The Villa Iris Visual Arts Workshop*, Botín Center, Santander,

2017; The Museum of Odessa Modern Art, Odessa, 2015; Kunstfest Weimar, Weimar, 2015; BBB centre d'Art, Toulouse, 2016; *The Triennial of Photography Hamburg*, Hamburg, 2018; and *Biennial of Photography Porto*, Porto, 2019. Her films have been screened, amongst others, at Tampere Film Festival, Tampere; Hamburg Short Film Festival, Hamburg; and the Architecture Film Festival Rotterdam, Rotterdam.

**Yuriy Hrytsyna** is a Ukrainian film director, film critic, photographer, and anthropologist. His areas of interest are temporary archives, amateur videos, digital anthropology, memory, and nostalgia as a mobilizing and demobilizing project. His filmography includes *The Language and the World* (2011); *Varta1, Lviv, Ukraine* (2016); and *Far from Lviv* (2020). *Varta1, Lviv, Ukraine* was awarded the FIPRESCI prize at the Odessa International Film Festival in 2016, and also received a special mention at the International Human Rights Film Festival Docudays UA in Kyiv in the same year.

**Dana Kavelina** is an artist and filmmaker. She was born in Melitopol and graduated from the Department of Graphics at the National Technical University of Ukraine, Kyiv. Kavelina investigates feminist perspectives, the agency of victimhood, as well as the common, personal, and unrepresented traumas which habituate post-Soviet and Ukrainian contexts in particular. Her works have been exhibited at the Kmytiv Museum of Fine Arts, Oblast; Closer Art Center, Kyiv; and Sakharov Center, Moscow. She has received awards from the Odesa International Film Festival and KROK International Animated Film Festival.

**Oksana Kazmina** is a Ukrainian documentary filmmaker, media artist, and performer. Since 2014 her main interests and practices

have interconnected and grown horizontally through various collaborations. Recently, she has released the first album of her and Vasyl Tkachenko's music project, *Serviz Propav*. Currently, she teaches the basics of video narration at Kyiv Academy of Media Arts, Kyiv. Besides that, she was also a visiting assistant professor of film studies at Wesleyan University, Middletown, in 2016. Kazmina graduated from the Faculty of Journalism at Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Lviv; the Faculty of TV-Directing at Kyiv National I. K. Karpenko-Kary Theatre, Cinema and Television University, Kyiv; and Moving Academy for Performing Arts, Amsterdam.

**Myro Klochko** is a filmmaker. In 2019 she received a bachelor's degree in film directing at Film and TV School of Academy of Performing Arts (FAMU), Prague. Since then she has desperately looked for her own film path which looks to combine documentary with fiction and create magic realism in film. **Anatoliy Tatarenko** is a photographer and filmmaker who also works with theater. In 2016, his photographic organization *Periscope* started publishing books and organizing exhibitions. In 2012 he graduated from the Faculty of Cinema and Television Arts at Kharkiv State Academy of Culture, Kharkiv, where he studied cinematography.

**Olexii Kuchanskyi** is an independent researcher, film programmer, and writer whose main interests lie in experimental moving-image art, collective visual practices and their ecological impact, and critical cultures of nature. S/he was a member of *Occupy Kyiv Cinemas*, an activist network protecting Kyivian communal property cinemas at risk of privatization. S/he was born in 1998 in Vinnytsia, studied at the Cultural Studies Department of National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Kyiv. S/he lives in Kyiv and Lviv. His/her works

have been published in *Prostory; Your Art; TransitoryWhite; Political Critique; East-European Film Bulletin; Arts of the Working Class; Moscow Art Magazine; e-flux Notes; and Theory on Demand*, among others.

**Zoya Laktionova** worked as an independent artist and documentary filmmaker until the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Her artistic activity is related to the issues of war, landscapes, memory, and personal stories. In 2017, for the first time, she entered the world of documentary cinema as one of the heroines of the film *Ma*, directed by Maria Stoyanova. A year later, she created her first own documentary titled *Diorama* (2017), which revolves around the mined sea around Mariupol. The film received an award at the 86 International Festival of Film and Urbanism, Slavutych, in the MyStreet-Films category and participated in several European film festivals, including DOK Leipzig, Leipzig; Ji.hlava IDFF, Jihlava; and FilmFestival Cottbus, Cottbus. In 2021, her film *Territory of Empty Windows* premiered at the Docudays UA International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival, Kyiv, followed by screenings at the Molodist International Film Festival, Kyiv. It won a number of awards at international film festivals. **Tetiana**

**Kornieieva** works in various media, including performance, installation, and painting. She is a co-founder of *Live Art Lab*—workshops of performative practices in public space—and a performer at *PostPlay Theater*, Kyiv. Kornieieva has participated in the performance festivals *Days of Performance Art*, Lviv; *Carbonarium*, Kyiv; and *Riga Performance Festival Starptelpa*, Riga.

**Vasyl (Tkachenko) Lyakh** is engaged in filmmaking, painting, photography, as well as music made with Soviet synthesizers. In August 2019, he joined the NGO *Freefilmmers* and took part in the *Creative East-2* project. His practice concerns the issues of living

together and the transmission of experience between minor social groups, gender identities, species, regions, and cultures. His artworks were shown at *Nad Bohom*, Vinnytsia; *Rotterdam International Film Festival*, Rotterdam; *Naked Room*, Kyiv; and *Diogenes gallery*, Lviv, among others. Lyakh's film *Metallabour* (2019) was awarded with a Special Award for Creative Directorial Vision and Promising Independent Voice at the *Kyiv International Short Film Festival*.

**Sashko Protyah** is a filmmaker and activist. He lived in Uzbekistan for 14 years until he settled down near the sea in Mariupol in 1992. He has been engaged in cinematography since 2006. Started as a hobby, it finally became a full-fledged project named *Freefilmmers*, which was founded by Protyah in co-operation with Oleksandr Surovtsov, Vova Morrow, and Iryna Berezneva. The screenings of their films have taken place at *Kharkiv MeetDocs Festival*, Kharkiv; *New drama of Zaporizhia*, Zaporizhia; *Mikhail Zoshchenko Apartment Museum*, St. Petersburg; *Nad Bohom*, Vinnytsia; *Platform TU*, Mariupol; *Youth Center*, Mariupol; *Palma of the North Contest* at the 86 International Festival of Film and Urbanism, Slavutich; *Lantern 42*, Severodonetsk; *Molodist International Film Festival*, Kyiv; and *Internationale Kurzfilmtage Winterthur*, Winterthur; among others. In 2018, Protyah, along with Oksana Kazmina, directed the project *TvorchSkhid*, within which two films about the cultural phenomena of the East of Ukraine were made: *Are you stealing metal here?* (restoration of the space) about the abandoned houses and different experiences and reflections upon such phenomena as “abandoned one,” and *Sho Sho?* (East-Ukrainian dialogue), about the multicultural orientation of the East and the importance of trying to get to know and to hear Others.

**Andriy Rachynsky and Daniil Revkovsky** are an artist-duo based in Kharkiv, Ukraine. Their projects are based on structuring and rethinking materials found in urban space, archives, and social networks. Their works have been shown at *Kmytiv Museum*; *Artsvit Gallery*, Dnipro; *Kunsthalle am Hamburger Platz*, Berlin; etc *galerie*, Prague; *Yermilov Center*, Kharkiv; *Galeria Labirynt*, Lublin; among other venues. In 2020, they received the *Public Choice Award* of the *PinchukArtCentre Prize* for their project *Mischievous*.

**Oleksiy Radynski** is a filmmaker based in Kyiv. He was born in 1984 and raised on the ruins of a documentary film studio in Kyiv. After studying film theory at *National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy*, he took part in several film education experiments including *Home Workspace Program* (Ashkal Alwan, Beirut) and *Labor in a Single Shot* by Harun Farocki and Antje Ehmann. His films have been screened at *International Film Festival Rotterdam*, Rotterdam; *Oberhausen International Short Film Festival*, Oberhausen; *Krakow IFF*, Krakow; *DocAviv*, Tel Aviv; *Sheffield DocFest*, Sheffield; *Docudays UA*, Kyiv; *DOK Leipzig*, Leipzig; *Internationale Kurzfilmtage Winterthur*, Winterthur; *The Institute of Contemporary Arts*, London; *e-flux*, New York; *SAVVY Contemporary*, Berlin; and *International Studio & Curatorial Program*, New York. As an essayist he has contributed to a number of publications including *Proxy Politics: Power and Subversion in a Net-worked Age* (Archive Books, 2017), *Art and Theory of Post-1989 Central and East Europe: A Critical Anthology* (MoMA, 2018), and *e-flux Journal*. In 2008 he co-founded *Visual Culture Research Center*, an initiative for art, knowledge, and politics. Radynski was a *BAK Fellow* in 2019/2020.



**Mykola Ridnyi** is an artist, filmmaker, and essayist living and working in Kyiv. Since 2005, he has been a founding member of the SOSka group, an art collective which has curated and organized a large number of art projects in Kharkiv. Since 2017, he has been the co-editor of the online magazine *Prostory*. He graduated in 2008 from the Kharkiv State Academy of Design and Fine Arts, Kharkiv. Ridnyi works across media ranging from site-specific installations and sculpture to photography and experimental films. His works have been shown in exhibitions and film festivals including *Transmediale*, HKW, Berlin, 2019; 35th Kassel Documentary Film Festival, 2018; *The Image of War*, Bonniers Konsthall, Stockholm, 2017; *All the World's Futures*, 56th Venice Biennale, 2015; and *The School of Kyiv*, Kyiv Biennale, 2015.

**ruïns collective** is a Kyiv-based art group consisting of Teta Tsybulnyk and Elias Parvulesco. It works at the intersection of film and contemporary art, focusing on the topic of nonhuman agency and questioning the anthropocentric perspective on nature. Tsybulnyk studied sociology at National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Kyiv and social anthropology at Central European University, Budapest. She has worked as a film curator, editor, and translator. Parvulesco graduated in engineering, contemporary art, and film studies. He has been involved in journalism, filmmaking, and film research. In 2020, he was nominated for the PinchukArtCentre Prize. The collective's works have participated in Ukrainian and international film festivals and exhibitions.

**Anna Scherbyna** is an artist, curator, and illustrator. She graduated from National Academy of Visual Art and Architecture, Kyiv (2015) and the Contemporary Art Course at Kyiv Academy of Media Arts, Kyiv (2015). In her work, she explores the visual

traditions of Ukraine's painting school, the political aspects of a landscape, historical memory, and gender performativity. Scherbyna works with painting, drawing, video, and installation, and practices collective exchanges and co-operation. Since 2009, Shcherbyna resides and works in Kyiv. **Valentyna Petrova** is an artist and curator. Currently she lives and works in Kyiv. Her art education was through Course of Art, Kyiv (curated by Kateryna Badianova and Lada Nakonechna), and The School of Engaged Art, St. Petersburg (run by Chto Delat). Her artistic practice primarily focuses on the themes of work, poverty, discursive violence, and institutional critique. She studies the performative through form. Her approach to formulating a statement involves special attention to context, to the political, and to objectlessness.

**Maria Stoyanova** is a Ukrainian documentary film director and editor. She was born and works in Kyiv. After finishing her education in cultural studies and social anthropology, she worked in different positions within the Ukrainian film industry. She has directed and edited several short documentaries, among which are the award-winning films *Ma* (2017), *Above the Styx* (2019) and *The Second Wave* (2020). She is currently working on her first feature-length documentary.

**Oleksandr Surovtsov** is a filmmaker and photographer who was living in Mariupol until March 2022. He was a factory worker until 2016. In the same year he became a member of Platform TU in Mariupol, one of the few art spaces in the Eastern Ukraine to promote human rights and freedom through an inclusive culture and contemporary art, and to develop critical thinking and tolerance in society. Surovtsov is a member of Freefilmmers, a cinemovement whose goal is to make films as alert and sensitive

to reality as possible. The main focus of Freefilmmers concerns human life and the struggle for equality and freedom. The cinemovement is promoting independent filmmaking and the decentralization of the cultural processes in Ukraine, especially East Ukraine. Surovtsov's movies were screened at Ukrainian Independent film festivals and at many different art spaces. After his escape from Mariupol with his wife and son in March 2022 he made a video essay entitled *Without Inspiration* during the Working Room residency, Asortymentna kimnata gallery, Ivano-Frankivsk, which was also presented at A:D, Berlin.

# COLOPHON

This guidebook has been published on the occasion of *To Watch the War: The Moving Image Amidst the Invasion of Ukraine (2014–2023)*, an exhibition at BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht.

*To Watch the War: The Moving Image Amidst the Invasion of Ukraine (2014–2023)* is conceptualized by Olexii Kuchanskyi and Oleksiy Radynski. The exhibition is an expanded version of a project shown in 2022 at Coalmine – Raum für Fotografie, Winterthur, which was realized in collaboration with Annette Amberg.

## Guidebook by

**TEXTS:**  
Maria Hlavajova, Olexii Kuchanskyi, Wietske Maas, and Oleksiy Radynski

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDITING:**  
Aidan Wall

**DESIGN:**  
Sean van den Steenhoven

## Exhibition

**CONCEPT:**  
Olexii Kuchanskyi and Oleksiy Radynski

**BAK ITERATION:**  
Olexii Kuchanskyi and Oleksiy Radynski in conversation with Maria Hlavajova, Wietske Maas, and Thomas Orbon

**PRODUCTION:**  
Irene Calabuch Mirón, Jitka Demoed, Thomas Orbon, and the BAK team

**INSTALLATION:**  
Gerardo Gómez Tonda, Alfredo Alejandro Navarrete Cortés, and Thomas Orbon

**COMMUNICATION:**  
Bram Tanczos

**DOCUMENTATION:**  
Tom Philip Janssen

**EDUCATION:**  
Jolijt Bosch and Jo-Anneke van der Molen

## Public Program

**CONCEPTUALIZED AND CONVENED BY:**  
Olexii Kuchanskyi in conversation with Oleksiy Radynski and Wietske Maas

**PRODUCED BY:**  
Irene Calabuch Mirón, Thomas Orbon, and the BAK Team

**LIFESTREAM:**  
Benjamin Henninger and Tim van Loon

## Organized by

**THE BAK TEAM:**  
Clara Balaguer, curator civic praxis; Jolijt Bosch, education; Irene Calabuch Mirón, coordinator studies & fellowship for situated practice; Jitka Demoed, office; Maria Hlavajova, general & artistic director; Daniel Lodeweges, building management & technique; Wietske Maas, curator research & publications; Alexandra Martens Serrano, editorial management; Dina Mohamed, convener fellowship for situated practice; Jo-Anneke van der Molen, education; Alfredo Alejandro Navarrete Cortés, coordination and office assistance; Lodewijk Reijs, operations management; Jun Saturay, building management & technique; Bram Tanczos, communication; Lisanne van Vucht, fundraising & rentals; Bart Witte, outreach & operations; and hosts Charlotte Beelaerts; Kosta Besermenij; Nicoletta Cirlig; Nella Felic; Alec Gatenby; Katerina Kallivrousi; Julia Stefania Kassyk; Elisabeth Kollen; Tim van Loon; Nina Spa; Anita Schuurman; and Maria Sujecka.

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