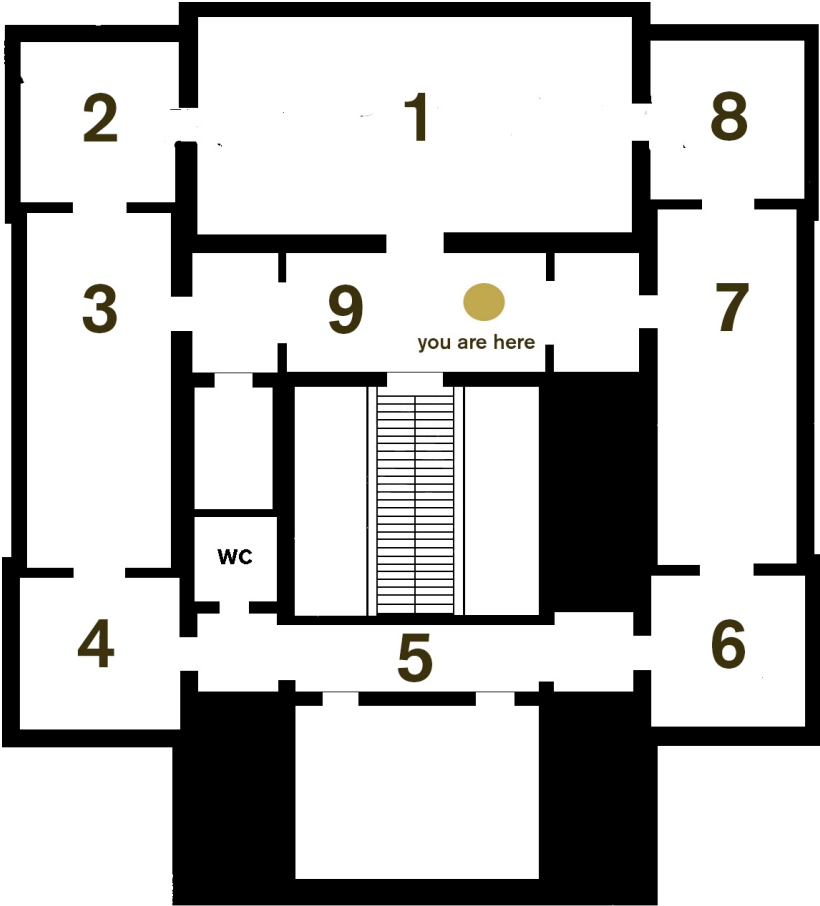




**I AM A DROP IN THE OCEAN**  
**ART OF THE UKRAINIAN REVOLUTION**  
**April 11 – May 25, 2014**

**EXHIBITION INFORMATION**  
**ENGLISH**

I AM A DROP IN THE OCEAN  
ART OF THE UKRAINIAN REVOLUTION



# **I AM A DROP IN THE OCEAN ART OF THE UKRAINIAN REVOLUTION**

The exhibition I AM A DROP IN THE OCEAN is dedicated to the artistic and visual expressions of the protests that shook the Ukraine from November 2013 until February 2014.

When the government on November 21, 2013 unexpectedly dropped the negotiations with the European Union on an association agreement and instead negotiated with Russia, the peaceful protests turned into violence.

On January 19, 2014, the violent clashes between the protesting masses and the security forces escalated. The protest, which originally called for an agreement with the European Union, was increasingly directed against corruption and the governmental authority.

Since the beginning artists have been at the center of events. They designed protest posters, organized (mass-)performances and created their works directly on the Maidan. Every imaginable artistic expression was welcomed to give the revolution a face. There is probably no comparable event in the recent past, in which artists played a similar role.

The exhibition I AM A DROP IN THE OCEAN presents original art works, photo and video material and objects used by the protesting masses.

Curators: Konstantin Akinsha, Alisa Lozhkina

## **Participating artists**

Maksim Belousov, Aleksander Chekmenev, Mariam Dragina, Andriy Yermolenko, Kirill Golovchenko, Igor Gusev, Ilya Isupov, Ksenia Hnylytska, Civil Sector of Maydan, Boris Kashapov, Pavlo Kerestey, Vladislav Krasnoshchek, Sasha Kurmaz, Sergei Lebedinskyi, Olexa Mann, Oleg Matsekh, Markiyan Matsekh, Boris Mikhailov, Roman Mikhaylov, Roman Minin, Maria Pavlenko, Psyfox, Vlada Ralko, Vinni Reunov, Mykola Ridnyi, Oleksiy Radynsky, Aleksander Roytburd, Aleksei Say, Ivan Semesyuk, Nikita Shalennyi, Andrey Sydorenko, Victor Sydorenko, Strikeplakat, Oleg Tistol, Vasily Tsagolov, Myroslav Vayda

# ROOM 1

## **Artifacts of the Ukrainian Revolution**

All authentic artifacts from Maidan, including catapults, shields, helmets, arms, stoves, flags and slogans are provided by *Maidan Museum collection* of Ivan Gonchar Museum (Kiev) and Bacteria Gallery(Kiyv).

## **Markiyan Matsekh, *Imagine*, 2013, performance**

Markiyan Matsekh, a musician from Lviv, on December 7, 2013, installed a piano painted in the national colors, blue and yellow, in front of the line of police guarding the presidential administration building, sat down and proceeded to play Chopin. The image of the young musician seemingly unaware of the helmeted policemen in anti-riot gear became an icon of the protests.

## **Euro-Standard group (Andrey Zelinsky, Oleg Tistol) *Shields for Maidan*, 2014, wood**

Euro-standard produced shields for the Maidan fighters. They are decorated with a portrait of the president Yanukovich and a slogan recommending the president to disappear from the political scene. The shields were used during the battles and later returned to the artists. Artworks transformed into arms were transformed into the artworks again.

## **Mariam Dragina, *Ukrainian Women Against a Future of Slavery*, performance documentation, 2013**

The parliament's adoption of dictatorial laws prohibiting peaceful protest and limiting civil liberties inspired a performance piece, *Ukrainian Women Against a Future of Slavery*. The idea belonged to Mariam Dragina, a scriptwriter. A group of women approached the building of the presidential administration, she recalls, "carrying soft toys, children's clothes and shoes—things they had bought for their children. The new laws deprive us of a future, which means that we do not need these things anymore."

## **Vladislav Krasnoshchek, Sergei Lebedinskyi, *Health Care Treatments – 2. Grushevskogo Street*, 2014, black and white photographs (in collaboration with Open Gallery, Moscow)**

The photographs were taken in January 2014 at the Grushevskogo street, one of the main battlefields of the Ukrainian revolution. Due to the aesthetic effect of the analog photography, the documentation correlates to tragic historic photographs taken during World War I and the Civil War in the Ukraine.

## **Natsprom group (Mykola Matsenko, Oleg Tistol), *Together Forever*, 2013, oil on canvas**

## **Roman Minin, *Price for Silence*, 2013, mixed media**

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**Maria Pavlenko, *Euromaidan – New Middle Ages. Medicine*, 2014, photograph**

Nurses Anna, Igor and Anastasia, photographed in the St. Michael cathedral. Pavlenko was fascinated by the medieval elements of the revolution: protesters dressed like knights, the Maidan surrounded like a medieval fortress by the walls of the barricade and chants of monks accompanying the street battles.

**Civil Sector of Maidan, *The Kingdom of Darkness Is Surrendered*, performance documentation, 2013**

Organized by a group of activists that called itself Civil Sector of Maidan, the performance was titled *The Kingdom of Darkness Is Surrendered*. Dozens of people, young and old, formed a line facing the ranked riot police. They held mirrors that echoed the shields carried by the police. Some mirrors had the words “God, is it me?” inscribed on them. The police were forced to look at their own reflections. The civil activists who prepared the performance saw it as an artwork as much as a political act.

**Vasilii Tsagolov, *Ballet Dancer*, 2012, mixed media**

**Ksenia Hnylytska, *Police nesting dolls*, 2013, mixed media**

## **ROOM 2**

**Roman Minin, *Sarcophagus*, 2013, wood**

The landscape of the Donesk region, a traditional sit of the coal industry, is covered by gob piles that resemble Egyptian pyramids. Minin ironically suggests that the Donetsk oligarchs - the real pharaohs of the contemporary Ukraine - had to be buried in gob piles in Egyptian looking sarcophagi.

**Ilia Isupov, *Happy New Year*, 2014, oil on canvas, collage**

Ilia Isupov uses Facebook to disseminate his ironic graphic works and paintings. His “Christmas card” painting depicting Yanukovych wearing a Santa Claus hat and carrying a hunting gun surrounded by slaughtered piglets with masses of riot police in the background, became an instant social-media hit. Isupov got the idea when he heard in a news broadcast that Yanukovych was boar hunting in the forest while riot police were attacking students on Maidan.

**Vlada Ralko, *Kiev Diary*, 2014, 100 pages**

The artist worked on her graphic diary through the months of the revolution. Ralko addressed in her work the dark side of the psyche of people who had to witness violence and death of their comrades.

**Aleksander Chekmenev, *Warriors*, 2014, photographs**

The artist was working on this series during the most difficult period of the clashes:

when the barricades made of used car tires were set on fire and more than hundred people were killed by the riot police and sharp shooters. Chekmenev created portraits of the revolutionaries who just stepped out from the battlefield – exhausted, stressed, but nevertheless full of vigor and will to change the fate of their country.

## ROOM 3

**Vasily Tsagolov, *Molotov Cocktail*, 2013, oil on canvas**

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**Andriy Yermolenko**

***Destructive Shevhenko*, 2013, digital print**

Taras Shevchenko (1814–1861) was an Ukrainian national poet. His 200<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration this year is conceived as a national holiday. Yermolenko produced an ironic commentary to the limitless Shevchenko cult.

***Jewish Platoon*, 2014, digital print**

This composition is a tribute to the so-called *Jewish Hundred*, a self-defense unit of Maidan led by the Orthodox Jews.

***Welcome*, 2014, digital print**

***Mother Anarchy*, 2014, digital print**

Andriy Yermolenko, Olexa Mann and Ivan Semesyuk belong to the group of anarchist artists. As Semesyuk he often uses ironic imagery referring to the anarchist movement of the civil war period (1918-1921).

**Oleksiy Radynski, *Integration*, 2014, documentary film**

Tomas Rafa, Max Savchenko

Camera: Sasha Bojko / Editing: Oleksiy Radynski / Producer: Lyuba Knorozok

The film explores the escalation of the violent resistance during the protests in Kiev. It focuses on the relations between violence and ritual, politics and faith, religion and insurgency. The narrative starts at the celebration of Orthodox Christmas in early January 2014, two month after the beginning of the protests. It documents violent conflicts in the streets of Kiev in late January and February and ends at the post-revolutionary Maidan that became a symbol of the deeply traumatized society of the Ukraine.

**Nikita Shalennyi, *Where is your brother?*, 2013, photographs**

*Where is Your Brother?*, a series of staged photo based works shown in the Art SVIT Gallery in Dnepropetrovsk in January 2014, include a reworking of *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp*, with masked members of the special forces replacing Rembrandt's doctor and medical students. The series refers to the wave of kidnappings and torture that had become an everyday reality.

**Vasily Tsagolov, *Critical Degree*, 2013, Öl auf Leinwand**

Some of Ukrainian artists have predicted the coming revolution. Vasilii Tsagolov, a

well-known painter, worked already in 2012 on a series of monumental paintings called *Ghosts of Revolution*. Ironically, four of the works, representing fierce fights between the police and people throwing Molotov cocktails, have been exhibited in Kiev on October 24, 2013 just one month before the beginning of the unrest.

## ROOM 4

### **Ivan Semesyuk, *Two Slobs and MP*, 2012, plaster, oil, tempera**

Semesyuk created cartoonish portraits of typical corrupt members of the parliament and thugs appointed by the parliament to “solve” problems with political opponents.

### **Psyfox, *Tribute to Banksy*, 2014, oil on canvas**

Numerous graffiti of the popular street artist Psyfox became a customary decoration of the walls of Kiev during the days of revolution.

### **Roman Mikhaylov, *Breath of freedom*, 2014, mixed media**

In the night of November 21, 2013 a wave of demonstration and civil protests hit Kiev. The protests remained peaceful despite violent attacks by government forces, repressions and torture. The demonstrations were not stopped even by freezing temperatures and heavy snow. On January 19, 2014 the first car tires were put on fire at Grushevskogo Street. The black veil of smoke, which became the borderline between the revolutionaries and the riot police, marked the transition from peaceful protests to a violent standoff. The burning tires became a symbol of struggle for freedom for the artist.

### **Aleksander Roytburd, *The Massacre of Chios*, 2014, oil on canvas**

Aleksandr Roytburd painted this work at the end of the uprising inspired by the famous painting of the French artist Eugène Delacroix. It shows the attack by Ottoman forces on the Greek population of Chios on April, 11 1822. The painter want to express the despair and grief of the victims of the Ukrainian revolution.

### **Mykola Ridnyi, *Fortress*, 2013/2014, video**

The video is based on a documentary footage filmed during the events on Maidan in December 2013 / February 2014. The artist wanted to explore the parallels between the development of the contemporary neoliberalism in the post-Soviet countries and the feudal monarchy system in Europe. He also compares the aesthetics and ethics of contemporary political protests with the struggle of medieval free cities against the ruthless barons.

## ROOM 5

### **Victor Sydorenko, *Revolutioner*, 2013/2014, oil on canvas**

## ROOM 6

**Nikita Shalennyi, *Catapult*, 2013, wood / *Catapult*, 2014 video (room 7)**

**Andrey Sydorenko, *When the Lie Weakens Power*, 2014, video**

**Euro-Standard group (Andrey Zelinsky, Oleg Tistol), *layout of images on Eurostands*, 2014**

The artists designed simple anti-government propaganda images which according to their idea had to be stenciled on the garbage containers.

**Olexa Mann**

***Chaps from Priluki are Beating the Shit out of a Trendy Guy*, 2013, acrylic on canvas**

Olexa Mann is member of a group of anarchist artists. Her works are often sharp comments on current event. Stylistically she is influenced by the visual language of comic strips and German expressionism. This painting shows the beating of a photojournalist from Lviv by a crowd of “supporters of the president” – thugs and petit criminals are hired by the government to attack the protesters.

***The End of Time at one District*, 2013, acrylic on canvas**

***Beat the left until they become right, beat the right until they become left*, 2013, acrylic on canvas**

***Nice Day*, 2013, acrylic on canvas**

**Strike Plakat Posters, 2013/2014, digital prints**

The Facebook community *Strike Plakat* was active from the first days of protests. A group including both professional graphic designers and amateurs, immediately started to design posters, which were downloaded and printed by the protesters all around the country. Some of these posters like, for example, a portrait of president Yanukovich with the red clown's nose designed by Egor Petrov, became the icons of so-called Euro-Revolution. The slogan! “I am drop in the ocean” gave topic to numerous posters and became the symbol of the peaceful protest.

## ROOM 7

**Myroslav Vayda *Forest*, 2014, installation (car tires, air humidifier)**

Vayda's installation *Forest* was prophetic. One year after he showed this installation heaps of burning car tires became a customary element of the cityscape of Kiev.

**Sasha Kurmaz, *Barricades*, 2014, photographs**

**Vinni Reunov, *Fight in the Verkhovna Rada*, 2013, oil on canvas**

The Verkhovna Rada (the Ukrainian Parliament) became notorious because of its



travesty of democracy. False voting using electronic cards of the absent MPs, changing political parties for bribes and real fist fights with the parliamentary opposition became everyday reality of the Ukrainian parliament. Reunov's painting, based on the documentary footage of one of such fistfights, is a sad and ironic comment on the degeneration of the parliamentary democracy in the country.

**Kirill Golovchenko, *Maidan. Under Construction*, 2014, photographs**

The series was created between February and March, 2014. The barricades became an art form of Maidan – people constantly constructed them and lived among them for months. Golovchenko wanted to reflect the atmosphere of the Revolutionary encampment and to explore the strange architectural form which in the days of the revolution defined the cityscape of the center of Kiev.

**Ivan Semesyuk**

***Lawmaker*, 2013, acrylic on canvas**

Semesyuk produced numerous ironic portraits of imaginary but very typical Ukrainian politicians, which often look like combination of election posters and the 17th century Ukrainian portrait painting. The works are usually full of textual parodies of political programs that are composed of the typical populist rhetoric combined with obscenities.

***Horror named after Veriovka*, 2013, acrylic on canvas**

Semesyuk's often plays with words and their meanings, often making fun of the symbols of the official Ukrainian national culture. The title of the painting is a play with the name of the national chorus, named after the composer and chorus conductor Hryhoriy Veryovka. However the word *Veryovka* means rope. A singer from the chorus, dressed in the Ukrainian national costume, was transformed by the artist in the image of death.

***Montana*, 2013, acrylic on canvas**

*Montana* is a part of a portrait series of thugs fighting against the protesters on behalf of the government.

Semesyuk created a funny mix of national costume elements and ornaments, training suits – the uniform of petty criminals – and the names of popular Western brands.

***The Absolute Beaver-rat Hat of Prosperity*, 2013, acrylic on canvas**

The painting has many layers of references immediately understandable for Ukrainians. Hats made of fur from Beaver-rats were highly desirable luxury objects in the Soviet Union. Such a hat was expensive and indicted the social status of its owner. Prosperity became one of the false promises of Yanukovich's presidency. President Yanukovich started his career as a petty-criminal, also steeling fur hats during the winter.

***Freedom, or go to..., 2009, acrylic on canvas***

An attempt to inject art into the thick of the action was made by a group of anarchist-artists, whose usual gathering place is a fringe art gallery called Bacterium. Believing that their time had come, they decided to seize the moment. They built a roofless plywood shack close to the barricades, which they called the *Artistic Barbican*, referring to a medieval fortified tower. On its rough walls they exhibited works in the

revolutionary spirit, such as an ironic image of Nestor Makhno, the legendary Ukrainian anarchist leader of the civil war period (1918–1921), along with anarchist slogans—“Freedom or Death”—and expletives created by Semesyyuk.

## ROOM 8

**Aleksei Say, *Smoke*, 2014, mixed media**

**Alexsei Say, *How we became better*, 2014, photographs of art objects**

Alexei Say often depicts ordinary office clerks. In his new project he reflects the dramatic change in the life of white collar workers that was brought with the smoke of the revolution. Many representatives of the middle class participated actively in the recent events in the Ukraine. In the series of photos *How we became better* the artist explored the evolution which turned slick office managers into real street fighters.

**Igor Gusev, *The Vertical of Power*, 2014, oil on canvas**

**Pavlo Kerestey, *Group Dynamics, Deserters*, 2013, oil on canvas**

**Boris Mikhailov, *The theatre of Military Combat, act No 2, time-out*, 2013 photograph**

Mikhailov, who was born in Charkiw and now resides in Berlin flew in 2013 to Kiev to see the Ukrainian revolution with his own eyes. Works created during his stay in Kiev show the daily reality of Maidan and the deceptive calm before the final standoff with the government forces.

## ROOM 9

**Artifacts of the Ukrainian Revolution**

All authentic artifacts from Maidan, including catapults, shields, helmets, arms, stoves, flags and slogans are provided by *Maidan Museum collection* of Ivan Gonchar Museum (Kiev) and Bacteria Gallery (Kyiv).

**Maksim Belousov, *The Watch of Maidan. Gatekeepers*, photographs, 2013**

The work is dedicated to the members of the *Selfdefense of Maidan* who protected protesters often by sacrificing their own lives. A portrait of Serhii Nikhoian, who was mortally wounded on January 22, 2014, is on the left wing of the triptych. The 20-year-old Armenian student became the first martyr included in the so-called *Heavenly Hundred*, the martyrology of the fallen heroes of the revolution. The central photo depicts barricades topped with a dummy to distract the attention of the government shooters. On the right wing is a photograph of a typical “gatekeeper” dressed up to the best standards of the revolutionary fashion.

## **Eurostandard group (Andrey Zelinsky, Oleg Tistol), *Layout of Images on Euro-stands, 2014***

The artists designed simple anti-government propaganda images which according to their idea had to be stenciled on the garbage containers.

## **Chronology**

**November 21, 2013:** The Ukrainian government suspends preparations for signing an Association Agreement and a Free Trade Agreement with the European Union. Thousands of Ukrainians protest against that decision.

**November 29, 2013:** Not signing of the Association Agreement with the EU. The participants in the protests are rising.

**November 30, 2013:** Berkut, a special unit of the Ukrainian police, disperses with excessive force student protests.

**December 1, 2013:** Hundreds of thousands Ukrainians call for the resignation of the government.

**December 8, 2013:** The protest reach a second peak. Over 500,000 people demonstrate on the Maidan. Demands: deposition of Viktor Yanukovych, presidential elections, association agreement with the EU.

**December 17, 2013:** Ukrainian-Russian Action Plan

**January 19, 2014:** The protests escalate as hundreds of Ukrainians are trying to storm the parliament building. 200 people are injured.

**January 21/22, 2014:** Three demonstrators are killed by the Ukrainian police. The President awards medals of honor to the police forces and military forces who have served in the conflict.

**January 27, 2014:** Opposition and government agree on the abolition of the controversial repressive laws passed on January 16, 2014 and on an amnesty for the Maidan defenders.

**February 4/5, 2014:** EU chief diplomat Catherine Ashton visits Kiev to talk with the government and the opposition.

**February 18, 2014:** The riots escalate. At least 28 people are killed in the street battles. More than 1000 are injured. Poland warns of civil war.

**February 21, 2014:** Settlement of the conflict – agreement mediated by the foreign ministers of Germany, France and Poland.

**February 22, 2014:** deposition of President Yanukovych. Release of Yulia Tymoshenko.

**February 23, 2014:** appointment of Olexandr Turchynov as interim president.

# künstlerhaus

## **I AM A DROP IN THE OCEAN**

## **ART OF THE UKRAINIAN REVOLUTION**

**April 11 – May 25, 2014**

### **EDUCATION PROGRAM**

#### **Guided tours for individuals**

Every Thursday, 6 pm

Every Saturday, 3 pm

Language: German

#### **Guided tours for groups**

Tour fee per group (max. 25 people): Euro 50,- (excl. admission)

#### **Schools**

**I AM A DROP IN THE OCEAN - ART OF THE UKRAINIAN REVOLUTION - ART POWER REVOLUTION**

We will deal with the complex functions that art can play as a commentator and critic of political, social and economic situations and grievances. In addition, we will find out how art can give a revolution a face. School level: Advanced (min. 14 years old)

#### **Tours in English on request**

#### **Contact**

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### **EXHIBITION PARTNERS**

In cooperation with

MYSTETSKY ARSENAL, Kiev, Ukraine



Main sponsor

ARTS TREND COMPANY, Riga, Latvia

