

# From 1914 till Ukraine

March 11 – July 23, 2023

- “From 1914 till Ukraine” draws on the international law-breaking Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022 to reflect on European values and Europe’s destiny and future.
- The presentation is taking place in one of the Otto Dix dedicated collection rooms at the Kunstmuseum Stuttgart.
- The exhibition is curated by Anne Vieth and the duo Kateryna Semenyuk and Oksana Dovgoplova from the Ukrainian Cultural memory platform Past / Future / Art that carries out artistic research and commemorative projects since 2019 to engage broader audiences to work through the past.
- The project was supported by the CrossCulture Program of the ifa – Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen and by the Rave Foundation.

The presentation provides a dialogue between works of 10 Ukrainian contemporary artists who are dealing with the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war and selected paintings by Otto Dix. While Dix’s works address his experiences at the front in World War I and as a prisoner of war in World War II, the Ukrainian artists respond with their works to the dramatic situation in their homeland since 2014. Thus, the project is dedicated to a century of European experience of war.

The “long 19th century,” which British historian Eric Hobsbawm considered to be the period from the French Revolution to 1914, was followed by the “short 20th century,” which, in his view, ended in 1991 with the fall of the Soviet Union—the last empire. Today, however, we see Russia continuing to make imperial claims to power, indeed strengthening again by conquering countries that previously existed within the borders of the USSR. The 20th century is still continuing—when will it end?

The painter **Otto Dix** (1891–1969) glanced from the trenches of the Great War into the eyes of horror without a face or a name—and captured it in his art works. Depicting the funnels and trenches around him, Dix hoped to close the door on the atrocities in our world.

A century has passed, and **Katya Buchatska** (\*1987, Kyiv) stands at the edge of the funnel in the destroyed village of Moshchun in the Kyiv region and asks herself what future memorials of the Russia-Ukraine war might look like. The video *This World is*

*Recording* (2023) represents her artistic approach to commemorative instruments using landscapes and plants.

The collective sound work *Live* (2022) is based on the records of streams made in one day from the different parts of Ukraine by Ivan Skoryna (\*1995, Kyiv), **Kseniia Shcherbakova** (\*1999, Kyiv), **Viktor Konstantinov** (\*1997, Odesa), **Kseniia Yanus** (\*1997, Donetsk) and **Maksym Ivanov** (\*2001, Kryvyi Rih). Listening to the soundscapes of the rear cities Dnipro, Odesa, Uzhhorod, Lviv, and Kyiv conveys the feeling of continuous life in a war—from digging a trench by an artist to the silence of the curfew.

**Andrii Sahaidakovskyi** (\*1957, Lviv) does not depict war scenes per se, but after the start of Russian military aggression against Ukraine in 2014, he strives to reflect on life in the context of war. What is the landscape of the country in times of war? *False Sky* was created in 2017 in the artist's signature technique—oil on carpet with added text. It's dark and holey sky is already filled with a sense of danger that every Ukrainian now recognizes.

After February 2022, **Denys Salivanov** (\*1984, Kyiv), who usually works in various media, focused on oil painting. In his works *Immune* and *Safe Place* (both 2022) literal images of war are accompanied by inscriptions. The interplay of text and image combines direct with metaphorical levels of meaning.

The installation *Mickey Mouse's Steppe. Archives* (2023) by **Andrii Rachynskyi** (\*1990, Kharkiv) and **Daniil Revkovskyi** (\*1993, Kharkiv) is a part of the artistic research on European history through the images of tanks. The playful title comes from an actual nickname that the German military gave to Soviet tanks during WWII: to them, the opened hatches of the machines looked like the ears of the famous Disney character. In addition, the project displays archival photographs taken after the First World War, indicating that the highest density of destroyed tanks in the world can be traced on the territory of Ukraine within its 1991 borders.

## Contact

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