

# VOLOSHYN GALLERY

## THE MEMORY ON HER FACE

a pop-up exhibition in Miami

February 5 – March 28, 2022, 676 NW 23rd St, Miami, FL 33127

**Voloshyn Gallery extended the pop-up show in Miami as the Ukrainian artists' peaceful protest against the war in Ukraine.**

*“Voloshyn Gallery opened the pop-up exhibition The Memory on Her Face in Miami back on February 5, 2022. That was three weeks before the tragic events in Ukraine, when everybody still thought this turn of events impossible. At 5AM on February 24, the Russian Federation attacked Ukraine, beginning a large-scale war against our country. To support Ukraine, Ukrainian artists and their art in this difficult time, we decided to extend the pop-up show in Miami as the Ukrainian artists' peaceful protest against the war in Ukraine. They bring together the individual and the collective grief, and document physical destruction, collective anxiety and pain caused by the unignorable events that the whole world needs to talk about,”* said Max and Julia Voloshyn, the co-founders of Voloshyn Gallery.

*The Memory on her Face* is an attempt to highlight the artists' take on historical events and processes, interactions between the past and the present, as well as their ideas of the future. The artists address the issues of national identity, destruction and renaissance. The pop-up exhibition curated by Omar Lopez-Chahoud, an independent curator and artistic director of UNTITLED, Art. The participating Ukrainian artists are Nikita Kadan, Lesia Khomenko, Nikolay Karabinovych, Maria Sulymenko and Oleksiy Sai.

*“The Memory on her Face a reflection on how past and recent historical events shape the Ukrainian identity. The artists participating in this exhibition embrace a visual language that expresses their own personal experiences in a poetic way. It transcends place and time to connect to a much broader audience where shared experiences become the common ground,”* - added Omar Lopez-Chahoud, an independent curator and artistic director of UNTITLED, Art.

The Voloshyn Gallery's pop-up exhibition will present works from Nikita Kadan's series A Broken Pole and Tiger's Leap. The title of Tiger's Leap is an allusion to Walter Benjamin's notion of “the tiger's leap into the past” in search of an impetus to actualize the political struggle in the present. Kadan's Tiger's Leap is a reconstruction of quotidian instruments refashioned into handmade spears used by workers of the Horlivka Machine-Building Factory during the 1905 armed uprising against the Belgian factory owner. On the one hand, the history of the uprising sheds light on the Europeans' role in the 1st modernization of Donbas. On the other hand, it deals with the history of abuses, workers' struggle and revolutions in the Russian Empire. In his Broken Pole, Kadan addresses the avant-garde legacy (the works of the artist Vasyl Yermilov, among others), reimagining it with a contemporary flair. The Broken Pole brings together resin-coated metal shields and silk prints of photographs of the buildings destroyed during the military hostilities in Donbas.

Lesia Khomenko deconstructs the narrativity of images, transforming paintings into objects. Her interest in comparisons and juxtapositions of history and myths helps her to reveal attempted visual manipulations. Lesia Khomenko's works usually offer elaborate statements with a strong critical potential. The exhibition features Lesia Khomenko's works on bi-flex in which the artist continues her explorations in the deconstruction of figurative imagery and her analysis of every element of the painting, as well as selected works from her earlier series Giants and “Personal vocation”. Giants is a series of large-format paintings in which regular people, “the heroes” of the contemporary world, are depicted on the low horizon. The artist tackles her Eastern European identity intertwined with

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the Ukrainian academic artistic system. In her earlier works, Khomenko critiqued and reimagined elements of the visual language entrenched in the post-Soviet figurative school. "Personal vocation" (Congenial work) is a term coined by the Ukrainian idealist philosopher Hryhoriy Skovoroda (1722-1794), who believed that every person is congenial to work of a certain kind and happiness lies in doing the work to which one is naturally predisposed. Lesia Khomenko brings this notion to the present context and attempts to integrate it into the field of critical discourse by juxtaposing it to the still relevant Marxist notion of "alienated work." The figures of workers are inscribed into the paintings in a way that leaves the impression that the painting is "too small" for them. Their legs rest on the paintings' edge while their heads are squeezed into a corner; sometimes they don't even fit into the painting. This formal method is a metaphor for the social and economic conditions that the workers currently face. The base in soft colors serves as the background for these figures. For Lesia, these neutral colors of "cutting-edge interior design" are a symbol of the illusory happiness and material wellbeing. The juxtaposition of these colors and the "squeezed-in" workers lends the paintings dramatic tension.

Oleksiy Sai's new works are portraits of tin soldiers in business suits through which he addresses the formation of the class of office drones. His protagonists, the faceless managers, become more humane and gain individual features as they age and depart from the principles of consumerist society. It should be noted that Sai creates a markedly neutral and objective representation of every facet of office workers' lives: the artist doesn't set out to criticize or caricature the corporate "lifestyle". Another work belongs to Oleksiy Sai's series, Bombed. This series, which depicts maps overlaid over other works from his Excel-Art series, is an expansion of the artist's earlier project. In 2014-2015, during the hottest days of the war in eastern regions of Ukraine, Oleksiy looked at satellite images of the bombed territories at Google Maps. After that, he took a grinder to his earlier works and "destroyed" them in order to create a new series, entitled Bombed. The artist is of the belief that no adult person can exist outside politics, which forms our reality. Maria Sulymenko's watercolors from the Glass World of People and Things... project are simple, succinct and mesmerizing. The events depicted in them look like slo-mo reels or figures frozen in the vacuum; the viewer is plunged into the atmosphere of translucent grey air. The artist has arranged every possible detail with a delicate touch and perfectly sharp vision, but the public still gets a sense of a spontaneous improvisation. The characters of Maria's drawings exist outside any concrete era and are placed in a generic, sometimes naively conveyed environment that alludes to our subconscious rather than to our reality. And there's something quite existential about this atmosphere of absurdity.

"Gypsytechno" is Nikolay Karabinovych's multimedia work that combines footage from Roma festivals in the Balkans with techno DJ sets by the artist himself. He brings together rural festivities and techno music: the two phenomena that, despite seeming like absolute opposites, have quite a lot in common. The total "innocence" of the video footage is a fundamental feature of this work: the original videos have not undergone any editing.

The pop-up exhibition will last from February 5 through March 28, 2022.

To schedule a free visit, email: [voloshyngallery.miami@gmail.com](mailto:voloshyngallery.miami@gmail.com).

Partners: IDArtLab & Adriana Meneses

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Founded in October 2016 by **Max and Julia Voloshyn**, **Voloshyn Gallery** specializes in contemporary art. It showcases a broad range of media in contemporary art, hosting solo and group exhibitions and participating in leading contemporary art fairs. In 2015, the Voloshyns made it to the Forbes' 30 Under 30 list. Voloshyn Gallery is a member of The New Art Dealers Alliance (NADA). Voloshyn Gallery fosters the integration of Ukrainian art into global cultural processes. It presents an exciting and diverse exhibition programme, as well as working in partnership with institutions, independent curators in realising both on and off-site projects. Voloshyn Gallery participates in leading contemporary art fairs. Over the course of the last two years, the gallery has participated in The Armory Show, Vienna Contemporary, Dallas Art Fair, Pulse Art Fair, Nada Miami, Untitled Art, and Expo Chicago. Zhanna Kadyrova's solo presentation from Voloshyn Gallery was awarded the Pulse Prize (2018) at the Pulse Art Fair. The project was also noted by the curators of the Perez Art Museum Miami.

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