

OPTICAL PROSTHESES

DANYLO HALKIN

VOLOSHYN GALLERY | **WGW** | 28.09 – 04.10.2023

Voloshyn Gallery proudly presents **Optical Prostheses**, a solo exhibition of **Danylo Halkin** at **Warsaw Gallery Weekend**.

In his works, the Ukrainian artist Danylo Halkin, born in the city of Dnipro, investigates the concept of public space and reflects upon influence political systems exert on people's lives. After Russia's invasion of Ukraine, he has started a project to explore Soviet decorative design, currently focused on stained-glass windows of hospitals, conscription offices, fire stations, etc. Halkin uses them to create a coherent artistic statement put in the current wartime context.

In the series entitled *Optical Prostheses*, Danylo Halkin continues his exploration of Soviet decorative design. This time, he focuses on stained-glass windows of hospitals, conscription offices, and fire stations, creating a coherent artistic statement put in the wartime context. The paintings depict windows of actual buildings located in the Dnipropetrovsk region, smoked stained glass against the backdrop of smoky sky in the wake of another Russian attack. All of the windows are either damaged by missile strikes or splintered and shattered by dismantling in the course of a decommunization project underway in Ukraine.

The absence of colours other than black and white makes the works resemble monochrome illustrations from Soviet art history books. Yet, they also speak of war news and cultural heritage. The artist paints images of the stained glass onto the canvases, thus giving it a new meaning, together with a status of a work of art, which it has never had before. In a way, the resulting pieces capture the spirit of today while allowing the viewer a peek into the atmosphere of the original surroundings of the decorative windows.

The title *Optical Prostheses* refers to distortion of history, for instance, through the prism of Kremlin propaganda and Russian imperialism. The narratives conveyed by the stained-glass windows were propaganda tools all along; in the past, they used to promise bright and happy tomorrow, but the war has upended our perception of them, reversing the effect. Now, they showcase war crimes, sometimes quite literally visualizing news headlines from Ukraine.

This brings to mind apt and befitting words from Walter Benjamin's essay *On the Concept of History*: "Articulating the past historically does not mean recognizing it 'the way it really was.' It means appropriating a memory as it flashes up in a moment of danger."

By turning to artistic heritage of the past, Halkin interweaves threads of history with the cruel reality of the ongoing war in Ukraine. He emphasizes the importance of questioning narratives endorsed by authorities and lets Soviet totalitarian art reveal its essence in a different light.

About Danylo Halkin

Danylo Halkin (born in Dnipro in 1985) is a contemporary Ukrainian artist/curator. He had studied at Dnipropetrovsk Theatre and Arts College and at Academy of Civil Engineering and Architecture. In his works, he explores the concept of public space through installations, happenings, site-specific art, etc. He cooperates with state-owned cultural institutions, drawing public attention to pieces of Soviet heritage in Eastern Europe to promote their further preservation in museums and re-interpretation.

Halkin's works have been shown in solo and group exhibitions, including *Kaleidoscope of (Hi)stories. Ukrainian Art 1912–2023* (The Albertinum, Dresden), *Out Loud* (Galeria Labirynt, Lublin), *When Faith Moves Mountains* (PinchukArtCentre, Kyiv), *Transition Dialogue Talks* (LWL-Museum für Kunst und Kultur, Münster), *Europa Endlos* (Kunsthall Charlottenborg, Copenhagen), National Art Museum of Ukraine (Kyiv) and others.

He is a two-time nominee for PinchukArtCentre Prize (in 2011 and 2015) and the winner of the Special Prize of the award (in 2013). Halkin was shortlisted for Malevich Award (in 2014) and M17 Sculpture Prize (in 2020). He also won the Special Prize of the Art Future Prize award in 2020.

About Voloshyn Gallery

Established in October 2016 by Max and Julia Voloshyn, Voloshyn Gallery specializes in contemporary art. It showcases a broad range of works in a variety of media, hosts solo and group exhibitions and participates in leading contemporary art fairs. Over the past two years, the gallery has participated in The Armory Show, Art Cologne, Enter Art Fair, Liste Basel, Art Brussels, viennacontemporary, Dallas Art Fair, NADA Miami, Untitled Art, Art Athina, EXPO Chicago and other international art events. Voloshyn Gallery is a member of the New Art Dealers Alliance (NADA).

Optical Prostheses

Danylo Halkin

28.09–4.10.2023

plac Marszałka Józefa Piłsudskiego 1/3, 00-078 Warszawa, Poland

For all press inquiries, contact:

info@voloshyngallery.art