

AVERT YOUR EYES

October 12 - December 10, 2024



Oleksiy Sai, from the series Bombed , 2024

Voloshyn Gallery presents a special pop-up exhibition *Avert Your Eyes*, on view on October 12 - December 10, 2024 in New York City, 25 Peck Slip. A phrase used to indicate dismissal of irrefutable facts, or withdrawal from socially and politically significant processes, it also acknowledges that through looking into another's eyes or truly attending to their experiences we derive meaning. Set against the backdrop of several ongoing wars, the exhibition interpellates for the urgency to recognize the true instigators in geopolitical confrontations. Through voices of artists from different cultural backgrounds who profoundly respond to the recent and ongoing political disasters that touch them personally, this project beckons a definitive stand against moral ambiguity in statecraft and warfare, advocating for clarity and precision in discourse.

Artists showcased include Ádám Albert (Hungary), Nikita Kadan (Ukraine), Lesia Khomenko (Ukraine/ USA), Minouk Lim (South Korea), Stanislava Pinchuk (Ukraine/Bosnia and Herzegovina), Oleksiy Sai (Ukraine), Bojan Stojčić (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Sally Warren (USA), and K. Yoland (UK).

Harnessing varied compositional and narration methods, the exhibition brings into focus depleted territories that often turn into spaces for deliberate coercion after the endgame. Through works that offer a glimpse of the lived experience of armed conflict this exhibition raises pivotal questions about the terminations of wars and the ambiguities that shadow them. Together, the artists emphasize the need to distinguish calculated aggression from the mystified terminology of the territories that "levitate between peace and war" and to reconsider global security doctrines.

Adam Albert's enigmatic construction in the gallery evokes the experience of injustice and its potential to turn metaphorical terror into aggression. Titled *One Shot-Lose Yourself - Dream of Gavrilo Princip*, the work appeals to the common knowledge about World War I reminding about the direct correlation between an individual agency and its potential to alter events on a historical scale.

Minouk Lim's film *The Possibility of the Half* uses footage captured during two distinct historical events: the death of former South Korean President Park Chung-hee (1917-1979) and the death of former supreme leader of North Korea Kim Jong-il (1941-2011) - to highlight the role media plays in shaping collective memory. Lim's practice responds to reconciliation attempts related to traumatic historical events in Korea from the late 1940s until present, including the undocumented massacres during the Korean War of the late 1940s and 50s, the labor rights protests in the 1970s during South Korea's economic expansion, and the constant fear of nuclear annihilation that grips the entire Korean peninsula.

Stanislava Pinchuk's *The Theater of War* recites the opening lines of Homer's *Iliad* next to the documentation of recent Ukrainian military training. Taking place in the 9th year of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, much like the 9th year of the Trojan war depicted in this epic war poem, this video also connects with the third site - a theater stage which held important cultural resistance during the Siege of Sarajevo in 1992-1996.

Lesia Khomenko's painting based on the found footage captured by the military drones and Oleksiy Sai's mutilated aluminum panels from the *Bombed* series situate the viewer in a psychologically charged Ukrainian war-torn landscape. These works serve as a representation of depleted lands, displaced communities, and human dependence on the prosthetic eyes of technology in the active combat zones, while reminding about strenuous efforts that are required to defend one's borders. Scenes from Bojan Stojčić's film *Hotel Hope Phantom* in the gallery are symbolically bookended by the car rear view windows, which reference the artist's road trip to a hotel near the military base in Dayton, Ohio. Three decades after the peace agreement ending Balkan Wars was signed there in 1995 under the premise of the endorsement of regional balance, Stojčić travels to this mythologized place from his home country, Bosnia and Herzegovina, to see prosaic things that only become distinguishable from the longer time-distance.

The quiet interiors of *Hotel Hope* extend into K. Yoland's carpet installation that elevates the gaze to the aerial viewpoint where a U.S. military village appears as an ornamental flat surface encrusted with the tiny dots and squares representing the buildings and sites where the artist visited and filmed. Laid on the floor, the carpet functions as a reading-zone within the exhibition where visitors can peruse newspapers on current affairs and books on borders, territory and surveillance.

The concept of distance is at play in Sally Warren's prints, which appear as sites of her embodied response to virtual experience of wars and disasters. Looking for metaphoric bridge between the tangible and mediated reality, the artist developed a special process, in which she transferred the ink from digitally reproduced images of ravaged cities to paper by hand. Photographs of the Maidan revolution in Kyiv, Ukraine, which she saved on the computer back in 2014, resurface on paper through bleeding inks and the pressure of her hands almost a decade after, signifying the accumulated emotional tension and empathy carried by the artist in response to the evolving war in the region.

Nikita Kadan's charcoal painting *The Trash Bag Character* encapsulates all the rage, deprecation, and pain that Ukrainians have been forced to experience in recent times. While on the sidewalks of the most populous cities piles of black plastic contain domestic trash inside, the Russian war fields have seen those used for cargo 200 shoving and transporting human remains after battles. Crowned with a helmet-mask that evokes an archeological artifact of the medieval steppe nomads, Kadan's composition of this tragic character poignantly compresses history. As if reincarnated in the disgraceful dead bodies of Russian soldiers, this character of war references back to the Tatar-Mongol invasion of Eastern European territories. Embodying not a Buddhist disposition, but a mentality of invaders and colonizers, this is a sinister and direful collective portrait condensed into a blunt depiction of a garbage receptacle.

Exhibition is co-curated by Lilia Kudelia, Maksym and Julia Voloshyn.
The project is supported by LU New York.

Opening Reception: October 12, 2024, 5 - 9 PM
Dates: October 12 - December 10, 2024
Gallery Hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 11 am - 6 pm
Location: 25 Peck Slip New York City, 10038

About **Voloshyn Gallery**

In 2016, Max and Julia Voloshyn established Voloshyn Gallery in the heart of Kyiv, Ukraine. Situated in a historic 1913 building, Voloshyn Gallery's space provides an unconventional setting for contemporary art. It exhibits a broad range of works in a variety of media, representing both emerging and established artists. The Voloshyn Gallery hosts solo and group exhibitions, works with accomplished curators and museums, takes part in leading contemporary art fairs, and frequently curates pop-up exhibitions. In 2022, Voloshyn Gallery made the difficult decision to close temporarily due to the full-scale invasion on Ukraine. In 2023 the gallery reopened it's doors in Kyiv, Ukraine and also expanded with a space in Miami, Florida.