

ART BASEL PARIS 2025

DATES:
October 24 - 26, 2025

Location:
Grand Palais, Paris

OPENING HOURS:
Friday, October 24, 11am to 7pm
Saturday, October 25, 11am to 7pm
Sunday, October 26, 11am to 7pm

For Art Basel Paris 2025, Voloshyn Gallery and Galerie Poggi are presenting a solo show by the Ukrainian artist Nikita Kadan. Firmly rooted in the events of the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war, the show examines the country’s contemporary popular culture and studies the work of the modernists against the backdrop of increasing worldwide violence and ruination, ultimately pondering on Ukraine's future.

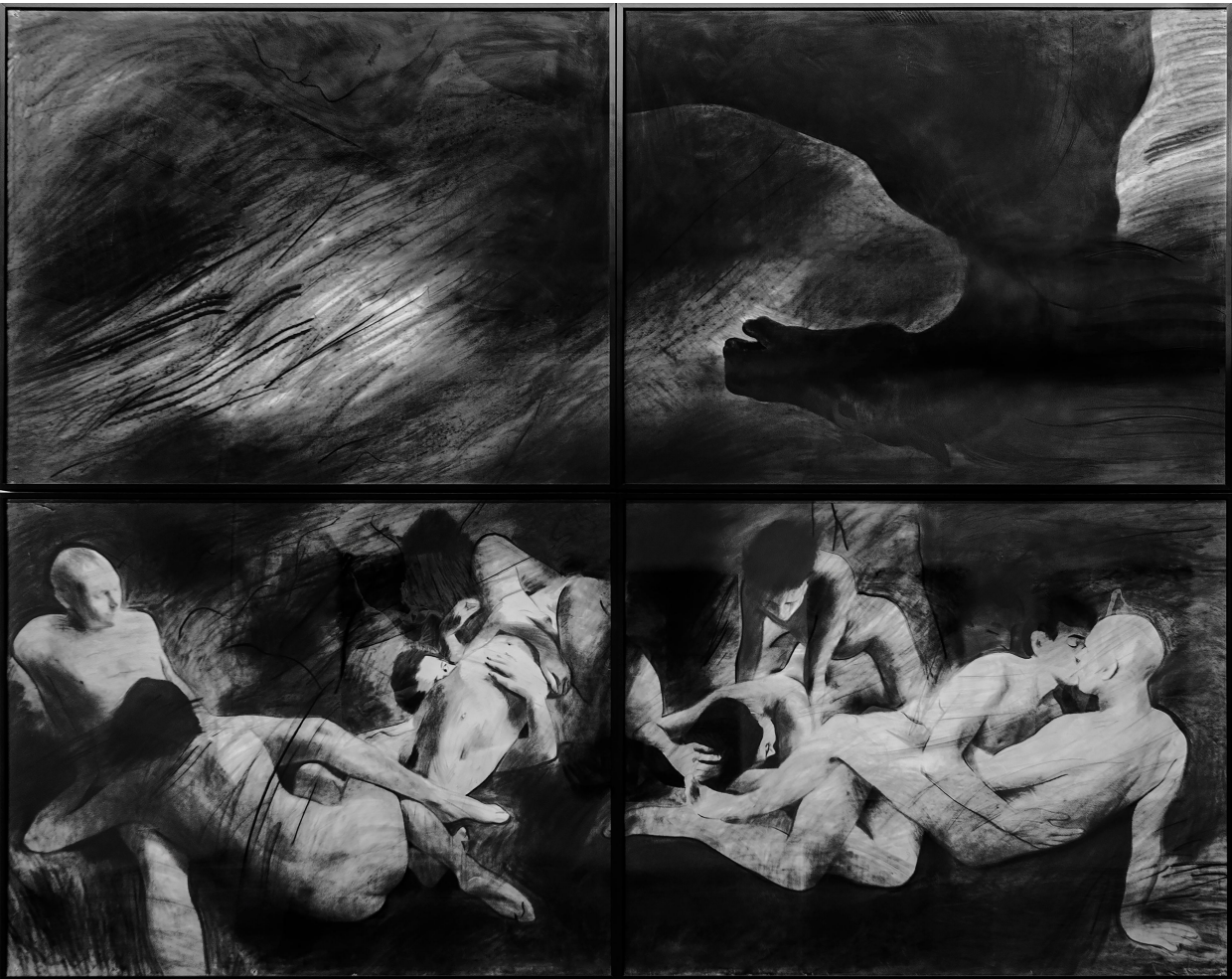
IMAGE:

Shchekavytsia, 2025
Nikita Kadan

Charcoal on paper

300 x 385 cm.
118 1/8 x 151 5/8 in.

PARIS, FRANCE
24.10 - 26.10 2025



The centerpiece of the exhibition is Shchekavytsia – a monumental charcoal drawing. Shchekavytsia is a hill in Kyiv which derives its name from one of the city’s legendary founders - a Polyanian tribe leader named Shchek. In 2022, after the start of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine and its government’s consequent threats of launching a nuclear missile towards Kyiv, a joke appeared in Ukrainian social media circles about hosting an orgy on the Shchekavytsia hill in case of a nuclear attack. It soon turned into a popular meme, serving as a coping mechanism for millions of Ukrainians in the face of the Russian government’s increasingly aggressive rhetoric.

Nikita Kadan’s monumental work depicts an imaginary scenario of a realised Shchekavytsia hill orgy. Its occurrence signifies an impending nuclear attack. On the one hand, it is a depiction of a meme; on the other, it is an element of the Ukrainian cultural canon, a great national romantic painting in the tradition of Romanticism, yet simultaneously one that subverts it, revealing hidden social and political mechanisms. In Ukraine, the topic of the relationship between nation and empire, characteristic of 19th century historical thought, forcefully remains in the ideological center, leading to a delay in other aspects of development. The absence of the "great national-romantic painting" as an attribute of the European nation-state and its "cultural canon" is one of the signs of this delay. This vacant space is filled in later periods as if to compensate, always with some incongruity. Shchekavytsia, with its symbolism of a significant event and epic scale, does not claim to occupy this place, but, rather, speaks of a readiness for such events, whether destructive or fateful. Shchekavytsia is resilience amidst death, a final attempt of love in the face of complete erasure. The story has become a part of a collective history, an example of a nation’s attempt to deal with very public threats of death and destruction.

2015-2025 combines elements from those respective years. In the second year of the war in Ukraine, Nikita Kadan found the wreckage of a shot-up GAZ truck (often called “Gazelka”) near Siverskodonetsk (then Severodonetsk) in Eastern Ukraine and made two versions of sculptures in the shape of a flag from them (“Gazelka” and “Gazelka II”, 2015). Ten years later, in the fourth year of the full-scale invasion, a metal kettle, also from the East, pierced by shrapnel was added to the second version. The long-running war, which became visible to the world only at the point of unconcealed Russian aggression, and before that was viewed mostly as an internal problem, partly disguised as a “civil” war,

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is an example of “the truth that time exposes”. However, the work of time in a grueling war is also destructive. The increase in ruins and the decrease in livable space is a bitter and real feature of today's Ukraine. In the series Universal Ruin, charcoal-drawn destroyed landscapes, which combine wrecked buildings from places of mass destruction in different parts of the globe (in particular, the ruins of the Ukrainian Borodyanka and the Palestinian Khan Yunis), become a backdrop for black-and-white photographs of modernist works. In the two works on display, these are Giacometti's "Female Head" and Brancusi's "Table of Silence". Is the silence of refined modernist art a form of apolitical indifference? Or is it perhaps a silence of mourning - for victims past, present, and future?

Kharkiv region sculpture is a flag made from a shrapnel-torn road sign from the Kharkiv region in eastern Ukraine. It is mounted on a piece of marble, a material often used for memorials and burials. This flag no longer carries symbolism, does not refer to large collective projects or group identities. What it represents is an incompletely defined place of origin and the direct experience of destruction.

Craters from explosions are gradually becoming a familiar part of the Ukrainian landscape, especially in the East of the country. The crater-mask, the crater-face - is one of the common motifs in the artist's imagery, revealing the long-lasting damage of the Russo-Ukrainian war on nature, land, and its people.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Nikita Kadan

Nikita Kadan (b. 1982 in Kyiv, Ukraine) works with painting, graphics, and installation, often collaborating interdisciplinary with architects, sociologists, and human rights activists. He is a member of the artist group R.E.P. (Revolutionary Experimental Space) and a founding member of Hudrada (Artistic Committee), a curatorial and activist collective.

Nikita Kadan has recently been featured in solo and group exhibitions, including Kaleidoscope of "(Hi)stories. Ukrainian Art 1912–2023" at Albertinum, (Dresden, Germany), "Artists in Time of War" at Castello di Rivoli (Turin, Italy), "Skin and Shell" at the Lewben Foundation in Vilnius (Lithuania), and "The Fire and the Ashes" at the MuseumSztuki in 2023. In 2021, the Pinchuk Art Centre in Kyiv (Ukraine) devoted a solo exhibition to him, following the initiative of MUMOK (Vienna, AT), which held his first institutional and international solo exhibition in 2019. The artist received the Pinchuk Art Centre Prize in 2011 and the the Special Prize of the Future Generation Art Prize in 2014. He also participated in the Ukrainian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2015 and the parallel program of the 59th and 60th International Art Exhibition at the Venice Biennale in 2022. His major solo exhibition Siren Sickle Satellite is currently on view at the National Art Museum of Ukraine.

Nikita Kadan's works are included in public collections, such as Centre Pompidou in Paris, Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary (TBA21) in Madrid, KADIST in Paris, Pinakothek der Moderne in Munich, M HKA – Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp, mumok (Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Vienna), National Art Museum of Ukraine in Kyiv, Arsenal Gallery in Białystok, Military History Museum in Dresden, The Art Collection Telekom in Belgium, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FRAC Bretagne, Centro per l'arte contemporanea Luigi Pecci in Prato, and ICA Miami in Miami.

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. Voloshyn Gallery hosts solo and group exhibitions, works with accomplished curators and museums, and takes part in leading contemporary art fairs.

In 2022, Voloshyn Gallery made the difficult decision to close temporarily due to the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. In 2023 the gallery reopened its doors in Kyiv, Ukraine and also expanded with a space in Miami, Florida.

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