

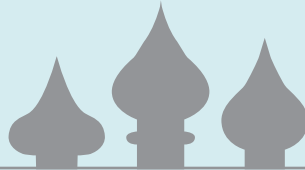


KYIV ART SPACE

Natalia Moussienko



OCCASIONAL PAPER # 309



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

DR. NATALIA MOUSSIENKO is currently a senior research fellow in the Cultural Strategies, Innovations and Technologies Department, Modern Art Research Institute, National Art Academy of Ukraine in Kyiv (MARI: <http://www.mari.kiev.ua/>). She studied philosophy at the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv (MA, 1981) and then at the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (Ph.D., 1986). She is the author of numerous articles and three books on the theory and history of culture, cinema, and urbanism—most notably, *Arts and Politics*. Since 2006 she has collaborated closely with the Kennan Institute, which regularly publishes her articles in *Agora*, the journal of the Kennan Kyiv Project. In April 2008 she was at the Kennan Institute for her research on “Mass Culture in the Political Process” and returned in September 2011 as a Fulbright Scholar for her project “Public Art in the City’s Identity Formation: American Experience in Ukrainian Realities.” She plays an active role in the civic movement for Kyiv’s preservation.

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1. ETERNAL CITY

EVERY CITY IS a living entity: it is born, develops, grows, and, then, like all living things, approaches its end. Some cities, however, are eternal. They are reborn; they rise from ashes and ruins to be filled again with life and to impress contemporaries with their indestructible magnificence and beauty. Kyiv, spread out on both banks of the Dnipro River, is one such city.

The artistic space of Kyiv took centuries to evolve. What do we mean when we refer to the urban environment as artistic space? Without a doubt, architecture plays a dominant role in this concept. Public art is another inalienable component of the urban artistic space. Monuments, memorials and sculptures in the city's streets, squares, parks, and gardens can be considered the oldest forms of officially sanctioned public art, while its main modern component is represented by social sculptures and various types of street art.

Public art is any work of art or design created by its author with the aim of placing it in public space, most often in the open and targeted at random viewers. This work of art may be several stories high or sit right on the sidewalk. It may be cast, carved, built, erected, painted or filmed. Regardless of its form, public art catches the eye and is not limited to its physical dimensions, but also makes use of dance, street theater, poetry, video, music, paintings, etc. Public art was born within the city walls: its mission is to communicate with the urban environment and residents, raising public awareness and understanding of their identity; celebrating its values by means of artistic expression; highlighting the unique nature of a given public space.¹ This research addresses modern trends in public art in the formation of Kyiv art space.

A city has to develop, and, in the process, its face changes. The main question is how this

comes about. American scholar Blair Ruble offers an in-depth study of the processes involved, in his exploration of three cities: Chicago, Osaka and Moscow, convincingly demonstrating that pragmatism and pluralism are primary engines in the development of a large city.² The urban environment, however, is not only utilitarian and functional, but it also offers artistic space, which educates citizens, contributing to their self-identification and shaping their way of life.

In the late 1900s construction fever swept over Kyiv. Former estates were replaced by six- and seven-storied houses for rent, which at the time seemed absolutely magnificent.³ Eventually more luxurious mansions were constructed, new parks and gardens laid out, industrial and public buildings erected, but tenement houses remained at the core of the construction fever of the period. At the same time, the new houses, including the famous Moroz house (Volodymyrs'ka Street, 61/11), never dominated the architectural ensemble of St. Volodymyr University or pushed it into the background. The urban development of that period is known for its proportionality. Each house had its own look, was different from the others, while all together they created a harmonious ensemble. The new architects, of whom Kyiv is proud even today, used new materials—cement and concrete—that opened up new possibilities in the arts of masonry and external decoration. New houses were built in adherence to a variety of styles: neo-Baroque, neo-Classic, neo-Renaissance, neo-Gothic and neo-Empire. Their facades were decorated with mythical creatures, while the balconies were framed with exquisitely forged railings. Often the houses bore the coats of arms or names of their owners. Kyiv acquired an artistic and romantic atmosphere.

In the mid-20th century, during the difficult post-war period, the main goal of the city developers was to provide people with somewhere to live, but no one thought of erecting a row of “khrushchovki”—standard five-storied houses—on Khreshchatyk Street, the central street of the city. There is no doubt that the construction of bedroom districts was of great help in resolving the social problems of that period. Today, however, it is clear that their aesthetic simplicity is not as innocent as it seems. The simplified geometry of these neighborhoods, as well as their uniformity, can have an extremely detrimental effect on human development in general and on the development of aesthetic faculties in particular.

The world history of urban development abounds in examples of good practices in preventing residential houses from being converted into uniform “twins.” But can Kyiv boast of modern buildings that would attract tourists in the same way that the National Museum of Art of the XXI Century (MAXXI) in Rome, built by the architect Zaha Hadid, does? Hardly. The list of new constructions causing public protest is long, while there is a scarcity of new structures of which Kyiv can be proud. It is common knowledge that the architecture of a city is one of the main sources of impressions for the tourists who visit it. It is in search of such impressions that people travel all over the world, including to Kyiv. That is why it would be great for the city to have new architectural forms distinguished by their artistry and expressive value; buildings that would not overshadow older traditional construction, but become an organic component of the artistic space of the city.

In a postmodern context the inclusive approach offered by Robert Venturi is quite popular. An architect relying on this approach attempts to combine the past and the present-day, history and innovations, while considering the future through the prism of the past. The idealization of everyday life in the past constitutes the metaphysics of contextualism. Architectural

design takes into consideration the scale of construction in a given place, and becomes a screen reflecting the structures of earlier times. Currently Kyiv’s classical urban landscape is permeated with anomalies called “highlights” by their creators. Multi-storied office buildings (e.g. the Parus (Sail) Business Center, 2-A Mechnikov Street) dominate four-storied houses, while so-called “elite buildings” (e.g. “Fresco-Sophia,” 17–23 Honchar Street) are ungainly additions to old Kyiv neighborhoods. A lamentable tendency to erect new structures that dominate and overshadow earlier ensembles with their huge proportions, destroying them visually and physically, is gaining momentum.

It is not only old Kyiv residences or rental houses that are suffering from this assault. The St. Sophia Cathedral⁴ and Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra⁵ have also fallen victim to these new developments, despite the fact that they are true historical, architectural and spiritual highlights that formed the ancient core of Kyiv. To begin with, vibration caused by heavy construction machines working in the proximity of the cathedral has had an adverse effect on St. Sophia’s mosaics. The same can be said about heavy traffic (which was the reason for the removal of tourist buses and municipal transit stops from St. Sophia Square somewhat earlier). Along with vibration, high levels of gas emissions are contributing to the deterioration in the condition of frescoes and mosaics. The level of emissions measured near St. Sophia Cathedral exceeds acceptable levels by 1.5–8 times, leading to a Rebinder effect, i.e., changes in the mechanical characteristics of solid bodies as a result of physical and chemical reactions. For this reason it is not desirable to hold concerts requiring sound-amplifying equipment in St. Sophia Square. In 2005 the mosaic began to exfoliate in a number of areas, some of which were 5–6 centimeters in width and others up to 9 centimeters. Only the efforts of leading restorers prevented the mosaic from becoming completely detached from the walls.



“Kyiv, Lavra, Dnipro Hills. The City That is No More” by Timur Ibraimov.

In order to preserve the Cathedral, major services are held elsewhere, because loud choral singing and soot from burning candles can cause further damage to the frescoes. Today, however, it is the large-scale construction activity in its buffer (protection) zone that represents the real threat to St. Sophia Cathedral. In recent years the level of ground water on the preserve’s territory has risen significantly (over 2 meters). Today this level is approaching a critical point with dramatic speed. If it rises another 1.5–3.5 meters, the ground saturation could lead to deformations and, possibly, to destruction of the cathedral and other historical monuments within the area of the preserve.

At the 35th UNESCO session in Paris in June 2011, the Kyiv community submitted a video report depicting the catastrophic condition of St. Sophia Cathedral and the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra. Both have been on the World Heritage List for the past 20 years. The short video clearly demonstrated how St. Sophia is disappearing in the shadows of new buildings and how the Cathedral is threatened by construction in the buffer zone. The same is true of the Lavra. Traditional city landmarks are being changed irreversibly or shifted to the background by newly erected high-rise buildings.

In this way traditional city landscapes are ceasing to exist. This affects the aesthetic and spiritual perception of the city by its inhabitants, as the skyline separating upper and lower worlds is broken. European cities have their own skylines accentuated by church spires and domes, hence the stringent construction requirements limiting the height of new buildings to six or seven stories. This allows the spires and domes to dominate the skyline. In Kyiv these regulations are frequently violated. One example of this is the 102-meter-high allegorical figure “Motherland,” which was erected in close proximity to the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra in 1981.

One of the most famous of Kyiv’s symbols—the Lavra Bell Tower—is now overshadowed by a house built at 7-a Klov Descent (Klovskiy uzviz). Ukrainian Parliament member and major promoter of the building Ivan Kurovsky stated at a press conference that the building in question was not much to his liking. Perhaps this was why he obtained permission to add another six floors to the structure. Under the circumstances, any commentary is redundant. Due to the mass construction of enormous buildings, the famous hills over the Dnipro River are rapidly losing their authentic charming look. “Kyiv, Lavra, Dnipro Hills. The City That is No More” is the

title Timur Ibraimov, an activist with the civic initiative “Save Old Kyiv,” gave to his photo album on Facebook.

Do these processes affect the formation and development of Kyiv’s urban environment as an art space? We are talking not only about monuments that are recognized as World Heritage sites and placed under UNESCO protection, but also about Kyiv’s traditional neighborhoods constructed in the late 19th and early-mid 20th centuries, which created the city’s famous, unique atmosphere. These very buildings are currently suffering severe attacks aimed at their destruction, and the list of historical buildings that have already been destroyed is growing rapidly. On New Year’s Eve 2011, the so-called Kazansky Mansion was dismantled at 1 Sahaidachnyi Street; in the summer of 2011, a 105-year-old house near the Hyatt Hotel at 4 Tarasova Street was consumed

by fire; in the spring of 2011, a one-hundred-year-old art nouveau house at 51 Mel’nikov Street was razed to the ground and replaced by the premises of the Embassy of Kazakhstan, despite promises from Kyiv Chief Architect S. Tselovalnyk that the old building would be incorporated into the new construction. The destruction of old buildings at times when various holidays are being celebrated has become a lamentable Kyiv tradition. It is being done on purpose, since getting hold of bureaucrats and law enforcement during weekends and vacation times is next to impossible. Once a historical monument is erased from the face of the earth, a developer is free to build whatever he pleases on the vacated lot. Meanwhile the city is inevitably losing its unique ambiance. For this reason, protection of the city’s cultural and historical monuments has become an inalienable part of Kyiv art space development.

2. WHAT IS VANDALISM?

THE TERM WAS COINED at the time of the great French Revolution in reference specifically to the destruction of *works of art*. It alluded to the name of a Germanic tribe, the Vandals, famous for plundering and ruining the city of Rome in 455 AD. Even today, psychologists, culture experts and sociologists still use the concept of vandalism, i.e. crimes against cultural values. Why is this? Vandals always look for justification of their actions. Thus, in the 1930s and 1960s, those who destroyed churches and cathedrals justified themselves by claiming that they were fighting against religion; those who poured cement over the *Stina pamiati* (*Wall of Memory*) at Baikove Cemetery (created by Kyiv sculptors V. Melnychenko and A. Rybachuk, who had spent many years working on it), covering it completely, argued

that it did not comply with the principles of Socialist Realism. In earlier times, vandals were guided by political chimeras, but what are their motivations now?

We are currently witnessing the aesthetic blindness of architects, as opposed to the masons of former times who wrote a beautiful book of culture to last for eternity. Why would new generations of architects ruin and deface our heritage? Why was it expedient to build a residential house at 17–23 Honchar Street, described by UNESCO experts as a “pretentious building, with pseudo-historical elements, which is in complete discord with the existing architectural context”? Its construction led to the rise of the ground waters around St. Sophia Cathedral, while developers tried to argue that the construction was absolutely safe for the one-thousand-year-old cathedral.

This, as well as other construction projects disfiguring the city's appearance, has a very simple explanation—the desire for profit. This desire blurs architects' vision, leads bureaucrats to put their signatures on illegal licenses and permits, and pushes members of parliament into PR campaigns that justify the acts of vandalism. Thus, one of them, known for his militant outbursts in parliament, cynically claimed that the barbarous redevelopment of the historical city's core would help to resolve the housing issue for Kyiv residents. Let us imagine for a moment that someone in Paris decided to resolve housing shortage issues by condensing the architectural ensemble of the Champs Élysées, or by erecting a skyscraper that would hide from view the basilica of Sacré Coeur in Montmartre. Indeed, there is one high-rise building in the historical district of Montparnasse—the Montparnasse Tower, and it is noteworthy that after the outburst of criticism following its construction, all further construction of skyscrapers in the historical part of the city was banned. The La Défense neighborhood in Paris is well

suited for architectural experiments. This remote area was chosen by Charles de Gaulle personally with the goal of taking pressure off the city's historical center and setting up a modern business area. Following in the footsteps of the Louvre masons, many daring projects have been implemented here: the Grande Arche de Defense, Arc de Triomphe at Étoile-Charles De Gaulle Square, and Carrousel in front of the Louvre (part of the royal road from the Louvre to Versailles) create a single axis.

But what about creating something like La Défense in Kyiv? When will projects addressing the transfer of the business center to the suburban area be implemented? When and by what means will an end be put to the ruination of the old city? The authorities do not care one bit about the beauty of the city and its positive impact on residents. Do modern architectural designs complement the urban artistic space in Kyiv? Our answer to this question is no. The unsystematic development of urban areas provides no proof of well-grounded architectural or spatial solutions.

3. SOULS OF HOUSES PRAY: DON'T KILL US

THIS WAS THE TITLE of a photography show organized by Svidomo (Awareness), a bureau of investigative journalism and community service organization, which was held on September 16, 2011 near the administrative headquarters of the President of Ukraine. The exhibit showcased old Kyiv buildings that are being destroyed. Photographer Serhiy Ous together with Kyiv historian Mykhailo Kalnytskyi revealed these buildings' stories for the public. Fashion models helped to present the fascinating tale of each house. The exhibit's curator, Sophia Kushch, is positive that this is the best way to draw Kyivans'

attention to the issue of old houses being demolished in the city center. The exhibit shows ancient Kyiv structures. The soul of the mansion of Ihor Sikorsky (the famous aviator) at 15b Yaroslaviv Val Street, laments its former owner; the soul of Kyiv's oldest cinema, Zhovten' (October), at 26 Kostyantynivska Street, cries out for help. When, in the winter of 2011, the authorities cancelled public hearings and the environmental and archeological evaluation that should have preceded any new development, the government promised to establish legal liability for non-sanctioned constructions within a period of one month. In

fact this never happened. That is why visitors who had seen the show composed a letter to President Yanukovich, asking him to remind his officials of their promises.

Meanwhile, the doomed houses in the center of Kyiv—35–37 Pushkins'ka Street, 1–14 B. Khmel'nyts'ky Street, 32 Zhytomyrs'ka Street and others—await their fate. Public activists have identified over 110 buildings, mainly former tenement houses, in dilapidated condition, despite bearing “Protected by law” plaques. For many years these buildings have stood unoccupied, and then, after becoming completely unsafe, have been demolished to make room for concrete cubes. The construction of Kyivproekt, a company that was established to develop an architectural vision for the city, at 16–22 B. Khmel'nyts'ky Street is just one vivid example of this mindless development that is so prevalent in the city planning.

Renowned Kyiv journalist Irina Karmanova, who covers the most crucial issues in the city's development, drew public attention to an elegant one-section building at 32 Velyka Zhytomyrs'ka. The house, now in total disrepair, was built in the years 1910–1911 by the architect I. Ledokhovskiy in Modern style.⁶ The composition of the main façade is asymmetric and decorated with fake granite. The highly expressive stucco moldings featuring chestnut leaves and intertwined snakes still remain and give the building its romantic look. In Soviet times, due to its pink color, Kyivans nicknamed it “The old general's bride.” Earlier the apartments were decorated with friezes depicting mythological scenes. Additions and reconstruction in the middle and late 20th century did a lot of damage to the house: some elements, such as the mythological scenes and latticed forged gates, have been lost forever. No longer in use, the house is rapidly falling into disrepair, despite the fact that it is a local monument deserving the status of a national monument, since it could become an attraction not only for the locals, but also for overseas visitors.

F. Michelson was a well-known member of the city council (Duma) and an entrepreneur. His estate and tenement houses, built by the architect V. Sychugov in the years 1884–1896, are located in the very core of the city. Today these gloomy Modern style structures at 35–37 Pushkins'ka Street barely recall their past splendor. The buildings, including the wing with the elegantly decorated façade, are being willfully ruined by the current owners. The authorities have monumental plans for developing this gorgeous plot in the historical heart of the city. None of these plans, unfortunately, envisages preservation, restoration or revival of the buildings.

Another house dating back to the same period and recalling better times is situated at 12–14 B. Khmel'nyts'ky Street. It is now being systematically demolished with the same goal in mind. No one lives there any longer. Trees are growing on the roof and balconies, and the glass window panes are broken. The artists who had been squatting there were evicted by force. Between 1960 and 2007, a famous Kyiv shop, *Ukrainski lasoshchi* (Ukrainian Candies), operated on the ground floor. Today the ground floor bears the sign “For Rent,” while the other floors would make an appropriate background for horror movies. Both the neighboring Shevchenko District State Administration of Kyiv and Kyivproekt are ignoring this dilapidated building. The historical center of the city is not very large, but its continual ruination is a real disaster for Kyivans.

Here is another vivid example of this destructive policy: during the construction of a badly needed highway junction at Moskovs'ka Square, the city managers failed to take the necessary measures to preserve a small post office building dating back to 1904. Today, when construction technologies and innovative materials would have made it possible to incorporate a tiny architectural gem of the old city into the modern overpass, they have chosen the simplest and cheapest solution, lacking either creativity

or artistry—to demolish the old building. When the time came to do so, the then city mayor, Chernovetsky, took the helm himself and, with obvious pleasure, struck a blow at the house, thus demonstrating the official attitude toward monuments of the past.

For the sake of comparison, here is a counter example: the lobby of a hotel in Montreal houses a small structure dating from the 18th century with its architectural details carefully preserved. Today it serves as a souvenir shop and museum. Montreal’s business center is home to skyscrapers characteristic of North American urban skylines, but no one would dream of erecting such a building in the Old Port quarter, composed of brick buildings dating back to the 17th century.

The development of Kyiv’s urban environment as art space requires a harmonious union of innovative art initiatives and

cultural heritage preservation projects with the local natural scenery. Disappearance of the latter will deprive Kyiv of its unique image. Never before has the natural environment of the city been subjected to such barbaric destruction—from a tiny park with lilac bushes over Teatral’na metro station to the Dnipro Hills with their nature parks and golden church domes. Construction on the Dnipro Hills is proceeding in violation of the European Landscape Convention ratified by Ukraine in 2005. A new high-rise building is being erected right over the Askol’dova mohyla (Askold’s Tomb) historical site at 11 Mazepa Street, as is the next portion of the infamous house⁷ at 9-a Hrushevs’kyi Street. In July 2011 the Kyiv Hills were proclaimed part of a joint buffer zone around the St. Sophia and Lavra preserves, but will this help to protect them?

4. BATTLE FOR KYIV

FROM THE VERY BEGINNING of the 21st century the need to protect Kyiv’s urban environment has served as an incentive for public movements and initiatives. Public actions are often combined with artistic performances, energizing the art space and contributing to the formation of the city’s new image.

Four Defenders of Kyiv marches, organized by activists from the public initiative “Save Old Kyiv” and others, took place in 2011. They included artistic performances highlighting the need to preserve the city’s cultural and historical heritage. Defenders of Kyiv formulated a number of demands, focusing primarily on environmental issues and aimed at protecting the cultural and historical city space.

A photo project implemented by Svidomo and the public initiative “Kyivans against the Ruination of Kyiv” is another interesting

example of using street art for the protection of the city. Over the course of a week the activists took pictures of city residents opposing the demolition of the small “Teatral’ny” park at 7 B. Khmel’nyts’ky Street. A notorious construction site over the Teatral’na metro station in the historical and cultural center of Kyiv was used as background for the pictures, while participants in the event held up a sign declaring “This should be the site of the park.” Later, all the pictures were displayed on a single banner, which became an artifact in its own right and was exhibited in various places: in front of the mayor’s office, in the House of Architects, etc. The grand finale of the street art photo session was most significant—young people entered the construction site and sprayed the new walls with images of flowers and the slogan “This should be the site of the park.” The event received

“This should be the site of the park,”
March 2011, Teatral’na
Metro Station.



wide coverage in the media. We see it as a meaningful example of how street art can be used to protect the urban environment.

Kyiv’s cityscape is constantly undergoing change—sometimes due to wise rulers and inspired masons, and sometimes as a result of barbaric assaults. The writer Nikolai Gogol was known for depicting the urban landscape with the utmost sensitivity, concludes a well-known Ukrainian culture expert O. Moussienko, who explores the intertextuality of his writings in comparison with their cinematic interpretations. Gogol seems to penetrate the very living soul of a city, from capitals to small towns.⁸ He was concerned about the appearance of the cities he knew. In his article “On the architecture of modern times” he wrote: “I feel sad looking at the new buildings constantly being constructed. Millions were wasted to build them, while only a few would draw the attention of an amazed onlooker with the magnificence of their design or frivolous fantasy or even luxury and splendid variety of decoration. An involuntary thought comes to mind: has the age of architecture passed irrevocably?”⁹

Almost two centuries separate us from Gogol’s precise and relevant assessment. The urban landscape is changing constantly, but the problem of harmonizing the past and the future in construction remains topical to this day. An organic combination of the old and the new is a typical characteristic of eternal cities.



Oleksandr Bryhynets, an MP in the Verhovna Rada of Ukraine since October 2012.



“This should be the site of the park” Exhibit.

5. THE KYIV COMMUNITY DEFENDS ST. ANDREW’S DESCENT

EVERY CITY HAS its own symbolic street. There is no doubt that St. Andrew’s Descent, which has connected the upper and lower cities for untold years, is Kyiv’s symbolic street.¹⁰ Since 1984 this street has been one of the main venues for the Kyiv Day celebrations. Art studios and galleries located in its old buildings, theaters, museums, bars and restaurants create a unique, romantic ambiance. The whole street is the art space of Kyiv’s urban environment, attracting locals and out-of-town visitors alike. In January 2012, St. Andrew’s Descent acquired the status of a complex historical monument of urban development. Earlier, in 2008, this status was granted to Kost’ol’na Street.

Unfortunately, neither official status, nor the love of citizens was enough to protect the art space of St. Andrew’s Descent from impudent intervention. On April 7–8, 2012, the ESTA Holding Company demolished three 19th–20th cc. houses, disrupting the harmonious

architectural ensemble of the historic street. The houses were destroyed to vacate the lot for construction of a large business and shopping center including underground parking with entrances located at 9–11 Frolyvs’ka Street and 10B St. Andrew’s Descent. The design was approved by Kyiv’s executive authority despite the fact that it violated the Law on the Protection of Historical Monuments and Principles of Urban Development in Historical Zones. According to Kyiv architect Valery Sopilka, the project cannot be implemented for the following reasons:

- It runs contrary to the state policy of preservation of cultural and historical heritage for the benefit of future generations;
- It is not in compliance with the 2025 Strategy for Development of Kyiv, as it

ignores the requirement to preserve the historically-formed aspect and cultural and historical uniqueness of the city;

- It violates the provisions of both the current and new 2025 Master Plan for Development of Kyiv;
- It entails losses in cultural heritage of the historically-formed ensemble of St. Andrew's Descent in violation of the law on protection of cultural heritage. The unique environment that preserves the way the city actually looked in the late 19th–early 20th century, which attracts tourists and has provided an optimal film location for numerous movies, will be lost irretrievably;
- It neglects the status of the urban development preserve Zamkova Hill – St. Andrew's Descent, dating back to the 11th–13th and 19th–20th centuries;
- It diminishes the significance of the monuments in the architectural and spatial organization of the area, and disrupts the scale, essence and coloring of the complex. In order to preserve the traditional aspect of the historical area, it is important to safeguard all the characteristics of St. Andrew's Descent, including the urban composition and the well-proportioned two- and three-storied buildings located on both sides of the hilly street that create a congruous rhythm and run all the way around Uzdykhal'nitsa Hill to the foot of St. Andrew's Hill. The street is crowned by the exquisite vertical of the church designed by B.F. Rastrelli. New high-rise buildings will destroy this rhythm, as well as the harmony between the existing houses and the church. Modern glass buildings do not fit into the front line of the historical street, where impenetrable ancient walls dominate the apertures of windows and doors;



Poster of the rally on April 21, 2012.

- It leads to a leveling of the relief and hence may result in the loss of this component in the landscape. Once the level is raised up to 45 meters, the new business and shopping center will be of the same height as two hills—Uzdykhal'nitsa and Zamkova—and this will have a negative impact on the overall composition.

The Chief Department for the Protection of Cultural Heritage under the Kyiv State Administration has on many occasions specified the types of development admissible for zones of cultural and historical value, warning against potential violations. The developers, however, illegally broadened the scope of construction on the lot in question.

When it caused huge damage to Kyiv art space, the ESTA Holding Company, owned by billionaire R. Akhmetov, probably did not expect such a large outcry from the public. On April 11 and 21, 2012, soon after the demolition of the houses on St. Andrew's

Descent, two protest rallies were held in front of the company's premises.

The developer apologized to Kyivans, while ESTA-Holding declared that it was abandoning its plans to construct a business and shopping center on the site and was ready to collaborate with citizens in setting up a public council to determine what should be built at Akhmetov's expense and then handed over to the city. The social tension, however, has not lessened. Kyivans as well as the citizens of other countries have contributed their suggestions via the Internet. For example, Birgit Becker from Germany proposed building a European house that would reflect Ukraine's links with Europe. It would house a small library, a gallery for exhibiting the work of European artists, and, naturally, small restaurants typical of Europe. A tiny movie theater was also part of this plan. Above all, the facility should have a restful, artistic atmosphere.

The artistic component is the predominant consideration. A public council of experts was selected by open voting on the website www.junost.org.ua with Yulia Filonenko as its coordinator. The council received a mandate from the public at large to determine the fate of the space in question. ESTA Holding offered its services for the implementation of the future project. If successful, this could mark a new stage in relations between big business and the local community.

Meanwhile, St. Andrew's Descent, like a gravely ill patient, needs thorough examination and intensive therapy. That was what the artistic group Kontra Banda (Counter Band), led by the artist Glib Vysheslavsky, stressed in its performance "Let's preserve the environment!" on October 1–3, 2010 as part of the "Street of games—games in the street" project. Among others, Anna Alabina and Volodymyr

Yakovets took part in the show. Through this project the Goethe-Institut and the Center for Modern Art, Soviart, highlighted the possibilities for a dialogue between modern art and those in charge of preserving cultural heritage when modernizing public spaces. Over the three days, the following events took place at St. Andrew's Descent: "Stones," a joint intervention by the composer Gerhard Sterbler and the writer Serhiy Zhadan; Olexiy Pryimak's graffiti "Live Walls"; the installations "People" by Andreas Herzau, "Candy House" by Yevhen Matveyev, "Emptiness-22B" by Viktor Zotov, "Give" by Ivan Hubenko and Roman Tselikov; the street sculpture "Puzzle" by Kateryna Rodchenko and Andriy Kossakivsky; a photography exhibit "Local Time" by Stefan Koppelkamm; and the performances "Farewell Skyscrapers" by Oksana Chepelyk, "Sacred Reconstructions: Kyiv" by Volodymyr Bakhtov, and "Build Using Common Sense" by Tanz Laboratorium.

The competition "Visual Projections of the Future of St. Andrew's Descent" turned into a discussion about possibilities for artistic and social reconstruction. Constructive dialogue, however, began only after Kyivans had harshly criticized the demolition of houses in the spring of 2012. It is to be hoped that the artists' creative proposals and the scholars' professional advice will be taken into account for the benefit of Kyivans. To that end the public council "St. Andrew's Descent" was set up, bringing together artists, gallery and museum curators, producers, actors, craftsmen, folk artists and writers. The council aims to act as a liaison between the authorities and the public in a joint effort to preserve and develop the art space of the iconic St. Andrew's Descent, and to establish a model for shaping the public space of the city.

6. PUBLIC ART SWEEPS OVER KYIV

A CITY THAT HAS public art is a city that acknowledges its residents. That is the experience and practice of many cities in the world. Often public art becomes a focal point for mutual understanding and considering various viewpoints concerning urban development, its mission, role, and the fulfillment of residents' potential. With its ancient history and current rapid, and sometimes detrimental, development, Kyiv is finally enhancing the presence of public art and raising awareness of its multifunctionality: from aesthetic to social, and from social to aesthetic.

A public art form of expression can either differ dramatically from traditional monumental art (through the use of new media, temporary installations, performance), or re-

main quite conventional, as it is not the form or location, but its interaction with the environment that makes public art what it is. It is noteworthy that in Europe, and in France in particular, the adjective “public” is used more often to denote not the *espace public* (public space) where a project is taking place, but the mode of interaction between the artist and the state that commissions a *commande publique* (public procurement). Art projects in public places are represented first and foremost not by the visual, but by the performing arts: festivals, streets theaters, performances. Therefore, public art is found at the crossroads of artistic, urban, technological, social, and economic processes and can be used as an indicator of current social and cultural change.



Depersonalization by Victor Sydorenko, 2008.

6.1 VICTOR SYDORENKO'S PUBLIC ART

To give just one example, the public art created by the well-known Ukrainian artist Victor Sydorenko is part of the art space of Kyiv and, at the same time, is shaping it. Sydorenko,¹¹ who participated in the 50th Venetian Biennial, took his art out to the city streets. His installation *Depersonalization* was exhibited in Kyiv in 2008: first, in July, in Kazimir Malevych Alley within the framework of the “Contemporary Art in Public Space” project, and then, in August, at 52 Artem Street and 44 Shchors Street within the framework of the “City – Art Territory” project.

Depersonalization consists of human figures of different colors, frozen in the same poses in the streets of the city, causing passersby to stop and think. The artist uses all the colors of the rainbow plus black. He was inspired to use this variety of colors by Ukraine's numerous election campaigns. Unfortunately, seven of Sydorenko's sculptures, which were placed in open spaces, were stolen. The art



LEFT AND CENTER:
Levitation, by Victor
Sydorenko, 2009.
RIGHT: Sydorenko
with his *Sculpture*
MMXII, 2011.

was treated as a means of enrichment, as the author is a renowned artist. Despite this sad occurrence, Victor Sydorenko replicated the installation so that it could continue to be exhibited in Kyiv public space. In November 2009 his new project *Levitation* was installed in Kyiv's Yevropeis'ka Square. Placed on the stairs leading to the Ukrainian House as a symbol of the IV International Salon ART-Kyiv Contemporary 2009, the figure immediately acquired a very pronounced social and political meaning. With one arm it pointed at the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, while its mouth was covered with a gauze mask, in an allusion to that year's swine flu epidemic.

Victor Sydorenko's art is emphatically anthropological. The artist focuses on the human body in its correlation with the surrounding environment and urban architecture. "Every time we find ourselves in a new surrounding, we go through an authentication process,"—argues the artist. "In other words, it is a test of authenticity, when the only important thing is whether you are really who you pretend to be; whether you won't break down in your relations with surrounding bodies."¹² The combination of current achievements and historical cultural heritage informs the artist's work with a philosophical dimension.

The inner dynamics of the static performance, which V. Sydorenko bravely offers to the city streets, is fascinating. His works have been exhibited in the renowned salons of Paris and Chicago. A sculpture representing a young woman is Sydorenko's artistic response to and his ironic reconsideration of two well-known Kyiv sculptural highlights: the Independence monument in the square of the same name and the Motherland monument described earlier in this study (see Chapter 1).

In Kyiv's urban environment Victor Sydorenko's art acquires a special meaning in terms of the self-identification of the individual. The artist believes that the success of any community, from a nation to a family, is based on the art of dialogue. His art prompts consideration of the possibility of such a dialogue and the opportunity of forming an identity.

6.2 GLIB VYSHESLAVSKY: ARTIST IN THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

The Ukrainian artist Glib Vysheslavsky is acclaimed not only for his paintings and photographs.¹³ He also offers interesting art work in Kyiv's urban space. The artist began making interventions in the urban space a long time ago, although he believes that our times are

Project “Let’s Preserve the Environment!” by Glib Vysheslavsky and Kontra Banda, 2010.



hostile to public initiatives. Vysheslavsky believes that the historical and recreational environment of Kyiv is being savagely destroyed, and this is a fact to which its residents, and artists in particular, cannot remain indifferent. From his point of view, artists are knowledgeable in history and architectural styles, and they are especially sensitive to space. It appears that the majority of developers ignore these issues. Artists, on the other hand, although better informed than developers, are left outside the process and have no levers to influence it. That is why their desire to work with urban space is turned by force of circumstance into work within the urban space. As Vysheslavsky commented, “Hoping against all hope, my colleagues (Kontra Banda) and I managed to organize a number of protest actions in the city streets.”¹⁴

For example, the action “Choice of Art” (2007), although it was held in the middle of tumultuous pre-election political campaigns, recalled eternal aesthetic values—continuity in art and the interaction between art and the environment. It was at that time that the authorities, using political unrest as a means

of distraction, were taking away facilities used for cultural purposes, i.e. galleries and artists’ studios, under the pretext of lease termination. As part of the event, a truck decorated with banners featuring works by Malevich, Ekster, Bogomazov and other Kyiv artists of the early 20th century circled the city streets. The organizers believed that it would draw the audience’s attention to the importance of a cultural component in the city space, a fact that is often neglected in the heat of futile election debates. The route began in the old heart of the city, went through the sites of political demonstrations, and ended near the university beneath the likeness of Taras Shevchenko.

The next event staged by Kontra Banda under the title “Let’s Preserve the Environment!” (2010), was held on St. Andrew’s Descent and consisted of several components: performance, artistic show, and distribution of leaflets.

As in the previous action, the artists wanted to state their position, influence the process, and put an end to the destruction. The street stage became the venue for a performance in which houses represented a doctor’s patients.

An ambulance and physician were called for, and medical equipment, stretchers and crutches were used. Many volunteers took part in the play, with its main message being the statement that the historical core of Kyiv needs “medical” assistance, as do the bureaucrats who manage the city so poorly. Later, in 2011 at the Art Arsenal, the band returned to this subject, but in a different context—models of “noble houses” were exhibited against a background of aggressive, kitschy and tasteless cityscapes. The composition was called *Surzhyk Culture* (“*Surzhyk*” being a derogatory term for an ungrammatical mixture of Russian and Ukrainian languages, often used in Kyiv). From Vysheslavsky’s point of view, all the protest actions and other efforts of Kontra Banda and other artists unfortunately remain sporadic events rather than ongoing work within the urban space. They are, therefore, of a temporary nature and have minimal social impact.

6.3 OKSANA CHEPELYK’S INTERVENTIONAL ART

Oksana Chepelyk’s interventional art, in particular her project *Farewell to Skyscrapers*, combines an urgent social message and a lyrical aesthetic note. On June 17, 2010 the artist carried out an art intervention of celestial lanterns into the urban space. At dusk, the elegant Chinese lanterns that looked like skyscrapers flew over Kyiv. Oksana Chepelyk sent these lanterns into the air as an artistic challenge to the numerous high-rise buildings erected in Kyiv, especially in the city center, on the sites of former city parks, in violation of all urban development norms. She chose Rusanivka, “Kyiv’s Venice” and an area that is also under threat from developers, as the site for implementation of her project.¹⁵

Oksana Chepelyk used the method known as *detournement*. She views it as an appeal to festival aesthetics, which has recently acquired an oligarchic-corporate connotation, but should in fact incorporate a symbolic act of



Farewell to Skyscrapers by Oksana Chepelyk, 2010.

release and a hint at potential public action. “In fact,” argues the artist, “sending celestial lanterns into the sky averts disaster, poverty, sickness and suffering. All bad things fly away with them and happily ever after begins.”¹⁶ The timing of the art intervention coincided with public hearings organized by the Kyiv City Council on the issue of non-sanctioned development in the city. The *Farewell to Skyscrapers* project obviously had a much greater impact, as it was a more expressive, conceptual and targeted example of public art. In October 2010 Oksana Chepelyk once again sent the skyscrapers floating into the sky above Kyiv from St. Andrew’s Descent within the framework of the “Street of Games—Games in the Streets” project.

Oksana Chepelyk’s *Skyscrapers* became a kind of a follow-up to her project *Origin*, in which the artist also communicated with the city from the air using air balloons and state-of-the-art visual communication media. The crucial issues of the birth rate and preservation of the nation’s genetic fund were the essence of the multi-media installation exhibited at the International Festival of Social Sculpture

in Kyiv as far back as 2007. The festival was initiated by the artist and organized by the Modern Art Research Institute of the National Academy of Arts of Ukraine (MARI).¹⁷

In analyzing the art space of Kyiv, the experience of Seattle, where public art is compared to a public library that contains a broad range of books, from children's fairy tales to modern novels, from classics to contemporary literature, seems relevant. The role of public art should be similarly representative: enriching the city, diversifying its culture, expressing what has not yet been expressed, performing memorial functions, and shaping the common destiny of city dwellers. Naturally, it should also be open for public discussion and incite debate.

A lot of public art occupies city spaces temporarily—from several minutes to several months. Despite the short duration, it never fails to provoke discussion, as befits public art. Its impact on the community is immeasurable: permeating public spaces with energy, raising public awareness, transforming the places where we live, work, and rest. Public art is a reciprocal movement of society and art towards each other, with the public space as their meeting point.

6.4 KYIV FASHION PARK

The Park of Modern Sculptures and Installations (Kyiv Fashion Park), in Kyiv's Peizazhna Alley, which is Kyivans' favorite place to walk as well as the battlefield of development wars, provokes much discussion in the city. It was here that citizens protested the construction of a residential building in the most valuable public space within the buffer zone of St. Sophia Cathedral; numerous artistic initiatives (to be discussed further) have been brought to life here. In 2010 a playground complex was built on the site.

Kyiv Fashion Park was inaugurated on May 27, 2011, offering Kyivans 17 works by modern Ukrainian artists.¹⁸ The project was coordinated by Yulia Filonenko. The sculptures and



Kyiv Fashion Park

benches were purchased by art lovers at a charity auction held in the Art Arsenal in March 2011 under the auspices of the Grand Sculpture Salon, and later returned to the city as a gift.

City authorities supported setting up the park, but it caused discontent among some artists, who launched a protest action under the slogan "Peizazhna Alley is not a private art gallery." The protesters believe there is a danger of the promenade being transformed into a kind of Disneyland. The site, they argue, is not just a green zone in need of public works, but a part of the nation's heritage under UNESCO protection. They proposed, in particular, moving the park to another area of the city that has no historical value.

Opponents of the Park of Modern Sculptures and Installations claim that it lacks a connection with the historical space and a unifying axis necessary for a park complex, since the sculptures were created by various authors. The park's founders were aware of its eclectic nature from the very outset, since different buyers would buy different art objects for the city. They argued that the promenade would become renowned and popular with the public, thus protecting it from potential development in the future. Opponents protest loudly that this concept is erroneous and the promenade could only be damaged by the accumulation of small architectural forms. All in all, the discussions testify to the fact that the Kyivans are not indifferent to the fate of their city in the future.

Today heated public discussions accompany the formation of Kyiv art space. Many neighborhoods are characterized by dull architecture and a lack of individuality. The introduction of innovations and public art in these areas is most important. In this context some initiatives deserve attention, including art exhibits organized by Svidomo in the doorways of houses, as well as mural paintings. However, in order to achieve tangible results for the whole city, an integrated concept of public art in Kyiv needs to be devised.

Experimental public art benches are becoming increasingly popular in the city. They appear on Khreshchatyk Street and in Shevchenko Park, where a competition for the best bench decoration was held in July 2010. *Graphic benches* by the artist Z. Kadyrova depict graphs reflecting economic growth. The artist's creations are located in Malevych Alley in a design that allows them to perform their utilitarian function as street benches.

Kyiv Sculpture Project

The International Festival of Modern Sculpture held at the M. Hryshko National Botanical Garden in June-July 2012 showcased new

trends in modern sculpture and highlighted the integration of Ukrainian culture into an international context. The festival is a nonprofit event and will be held biennially. All the sculptures for the event will be selected by a board of curators on a competitive basis. Europe's largest park, the Yorkshire Sculpture Park (YSP), is a partner in this project. Founded in 1977, YSP annually hosts large-scale shows of the most prominent modern sculptors. YSP curator Dr. Helen Phoebe was a co-curator for the first Kyiv Sculpture Project. It is noteworthy that MARI initiated the first International Festival of Social Sculpture in Kyiv in 2007.

6.5 KYIV MURALISTS: INTERESNI KAZKI (INTERESTING FAIRY TALES)

The authors of the *Interesni kazki* project, O. Bordusov (known by the pseudonym "Aec")¹⁹ and V. Manzhos (pseudonym: "Waone")²⁰, are, without question, renowned masters of public art. Their goal is to make Kyiv art space more positive. The artists have been working as a duo since 2003. They revive the cheerless walls of dull buildings to bring people joy and inspiration. Their main instruments



Interesni Kazki at the Modern Art Research Institute.

are spray paint and the wall. A person with a TV set instead of a head, variations on the theme of consumerism and loss of spirituality can be found in the street art of Bordusov and Manzhos, or, to be more specific, in their large-scale street murals. They call themselves muralists and compare their work to that of South American muralists. The works of these artists can now be found on walls in France, the USA, India, Spain and other countries, but they always come home to Kyiv to embellish its walls with their gorgeous paintings and to contribute to the art space of the city. Their works can be seen on the walls of MARI, of a residential building at 30 Vadym Het'man Street, on a load-bearing wall at 27 Hlybochyts'ka Street, and at a number of other sites. The "Bolshevik" shopping center is decorated with the artists' frescoes on both the outside and the inside. It is definitely high time to organize tours familiarizing the public with the works of these Kyiv artists.

O. Bordusov notes that Kyiv is totally overrun by commercial ads and looks like a huge bazaar. "We want to create non-commercial art, art that affects a person directly and positively. It should be simple."²¹ V. Manzhos stresses that paintings are made mostly for future generations, while walls are seen now by one's contemporaries: "One immediately feels the feedback—because everything is happening not in one hundred years, when your work will be valued, but right here and now."²²

The artists are open to collaboration with the community—they encourage members of the public to approach them with offers to allow the façade of their house be painted. The artists receive no royalties, and pay for everything out of their own pockets. All they need is the residents' consensus, and they will take care of obtaining the necessary permission from the city authorities. When they first started their operation making traditional graffiti, they were not granted permission to fill in the urban space. Now, however, the artists have risen to

a new level of urban space perception through their fairy-tale project and large-scale art.

6.6 KYIV GRAFFITI

Traditional graffiti have long been a part of the cityscape of Kyiv.²³ They are used to deliver their authors' messages, but sometimes turn into acts of vandalism, typical of graffiti. The program of the "I Love Kyiv" festival, held in May 2010, included the topic "Street Art." Famous graffiti artists from Ukraine and Europe were invited to participate in the festival, and, specifically, in the graffiti competition "Coming of Age in the Color of Independence." A dozen young artists worked for three hours covering 2x2 meter squares with graffiti. The winners depicted a young Cossack on an imaginary stallion surrounded by abandoned toys. The authors' concept was that the picture represented Ukraine leaving its childhood behind. The best exhibits were to be transferred onto the walls of houses. Another plan was to create the longest piece of graffiti in the world, stretching from Metro Bridge to Chernihivs'ka metro station, with a total length of over 10 kilometers. These plans were never implemented, as the "city fathers" banned all graffiti. It is worth noting that recently graffiti and specifically, "bombing" (an illegal form of painting done very rapidly to cover other paintings or posters), have been officially legalized in the Bronx, New York. Thus, the New York City authorities have decided to make the outburst of young creative energy legal.

In Kyiv, the effort to legalize graffiti has failed so far. Instead the city authorities have decided to introduce penalties for this form of art, and in spring 2012 the Verhovna Rada registered a draft law establishing fines for non-sanctioned paintings or signs on buildings and structures. According to the proposed law the fine for graffiti will amount to 300–500 times the minimum wage before deductions (5,100–8,500 UAH), because the

graffiti writers' art allegedly results in financial damage to local budgets. Cleaning non-sanctioned signs off buildings is very expensive for the city. The draft law stipulates that artists should seek permits for their work by submitting their proposed designs to the city administration for approval. Sanctioned designs will supposedly embellish the city. The street artists argue that if the law is passed by the Verhovna Rada, it will have a negative impact and graffiti will become more numerous and aggressive. From their point of view, not a single self-respecting graffiti artist would paint upon historical or architectural monuments. The authorities have no qualms about demolishing houses along St. Andrew's Descent, but ban the art of graffiti.

The postmodernist era is characterized by bridging the gap between popular and elite art, and their permeation. Public art serves as the pot in which the resulting broth is brewed. Street art's rapid evolution from being black-listed to appearing in prestigious galleries provides a vivid example of this trend. In his movie *Exit through the Gift Shop*, the famous street artist

Banksy demonstrated this process. The formerly banned graffiti art becomes a costly commodity; kitsch turns into glamour, while theoretical deliberations on the nature, value and tendencies of public art continue. Banksy's style is gaining popularity in Kyiv too. Following the imprisonment of former Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, her Banksy-style portrait appeared in the very heart of the city on Prorizna Street. Maybe this too was a Banksy portrait? There is no answer to that.

More graffiti can be found on the Kyiv embankment near the "Dnipro" metro station, near "Lisova" metro station, in the abandoned depot on Budyshchans'ka Street, on Myloslavs'ka Street, on St. Andrew's Descent, at Nyvky near ExpoPlaza, and at 16 Mechnikov Street, and other locations. Naturally, Kyiv cannot, as yet, beat New York or San Francisco as far as street art goes, but the organic incorporation of graffiti into the Kyiv art space testifies not only to its relevance in a modern context, but—and this is even more important—to the democratization of the urban public space.

7. PRODUCTION OF KYIV ART SPACE

THE FRENCH PHILOSOPHER Henri Lefebvre stresses that the *production of space* is a social process that defines the social behavior of humans and their perception. Social movements shape their own unstable spaces, while architects and urban planners, who are civil servants, create *space representations*, which transpose the dynamics of power into the constructed environment. Studying urban problems, the philosopher first formulated the *right to the city* in 1968, arguing that the city acts as a permanent proving ground for the rights of its residents. The *right to the city* combines all the rights of city dwellers, including the right to own a house and to have access

to the city's spaces. It is important that the *right to the city*, in the philosopher's interpretation, also means the right to create it as a collective work of art.²⁴



Poster: "Hands off Living Space of Kyivans," Spring 2011.

Cat in
Peizazhna Alley.



Public art plays an important role in enhancing a public response to any issue, specifically, to the issue of non-sanctioned development in Kyiv. We believe that any work of art acquires its own philosophy and public art characteristics when it goes out into the streets to protect the city from demolition. Kyivans' recent experience of struggling against the ruination and disfigurement of the city offers many examples confirming this assumption. Here are some of them:

7.1 THE FIRST LANDSCAPE PARK FOR CHILDREN IN UKRAINE

The first landscape park for children in Ukraine was inaugurated in November 2009 at the intersection of Peizazhna Alley and Desiatynnyi Lane, on the very "battlefield" of the development war that had lasted for four years. The project was authored by architect-designer Olha Kondratska, and co-authored by sculptor

Kostyantyn Skretutsky and artist Lesya Karakotsya. Kyiv has always been famous for its parks and quiet public gardens, and Peizazhna Alley is an inalienable component of this image. Implementation of the project is therefore most important in terms of protecting this location against non-sanctioned development and granting it a new lease on life. Multicolored sculptures, as well as two fountains representing a baby elephant and horses, decorate the park. The wall at the end of the park is covered with mosaics representing two extremely long cats and a tree with birds in its branches. Benches that are arranged in the shapes of a bird, hare and cat were designed by K. Skretutsky. "This park is our gift to the Kyivans, to Kyiv's kids first and foremost, to those who have persevered and triumphed, to those who have money and use it for public good, and to those who have no money but have a conscience. It is for everyone and for all times," proclaimed one of the park's initiators, the vice president of the charity fund "Kyiv

Landscape Initiative,” V. Kolin’ko, at the park opening. These words have been written on the commemorative park stone.

Kolin’ko’s belief is that one should not idly wait around for help from bureaucrats; it is important to start acting, and one of the best ways to do so is to create green zones in the city. When Peizazhna Alley and the park were threatened for the umpteenth time by new construction development, the first cultural protest action was organized on March 24, 2012, followed by another a week later.

The actions’ organizers are convinced that sometimes music can be much more expressive than picketing or smoke bombs. As a result, a city council decision passed in April 2012 protected Peizazhna Alley and the landscape sculpture park. “The main thing is to believe that results are achievable. Our worst enemy is a lack of trust in public potential, disbelief that the average citizen is capable of changing anything,” says Igor Lutsenko, the ideologist of the civic initiative “Save Old Kyiv.”

7.2 PUBLIC ART IN THE ST. SOPHIA CATHEDRAL BUFFER ZONE

17–23 Oles Honchar Street—Video on the Fence and Requiem for Old Kyiv. The buffer zone around St. Sophia Cathedral

in Kyiv has been a special target for developers. The ambitious desire “to rise higher” than the thousand-year-old cathedral, or at least to see it from one’s windows, is gaining popularity. The cathedral’s appearance has already been damaged by the construction of Hyatt and Intercontinental Hotels, residential houses on Patorzhyns’kyi Street, and a fitness center right near the cathedral walls. The Ministry of Regional Construction and Development of Ukraine has allocated 55 additional plots of land around the cathedral. New development on these plots will cause irreparable damage to it. An entire old Kyiv quarter is being demolished at 17–23 Honchar Street. To draw public and UNESCO attention to the problem, the residents decided to turn to the creative means offered by public art.

In November 2008, V. Solyanyk, a well-known jazz performer, gave an outdoor concert under cold autumn rain *in memoriam* of all Kyiv’s demolished buildings. People listened from under umbrellas, someone brought a heater for the musician, and several hundred candles were lit to commemorate the city we are losing. “Art is an effective means of expression for our goals and expectations,”²⁵ said local community leader Irina Nikiforova.

In May 2009, a protest action took place in the form of a video presentation on the wall



LEFT: Poster: “Murashko is Back,” 2011.

FAR LEFT: Opening of the mosaic on Striletska Street: Kyiv cultural preservation activists, Irina Nikiforova and Maryna Solovieva, 2011.

of an illegally constructed building at 17–23 Honchar Street. The presentation was staged by the inter-disciplinary creative union Khudrada (Artistic Board), which explores models and means for collaboration between artists and society and is attempting to introduce the figure of a politically aware artist who interacts with grassroots public movements in the Ukrainian art scene. Video art including *Bastion* by A. Ugay; *Perestroika* by the artistic group Chto delat' (What is to be done?); *Fashion Ukraine* by L. Nakonechna; and R.E.P. Group's²⁶ video clip about their own political campaign were all shown within the framework of the event.

In the block next to the ill-famed Honchar Street address, another hot spot (10/1 Strilets'ka Street) is located. Residents of this building expressed their protest in the form of a mosaic laid out and unveiled in spring 2010 on the wall of a house located 10 meters away from St. Sophia (within its buffer zone) where the developers plan to construct another high-rise building in violation of the Law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Ukraine. The author of the project is K. Skretutsky. The mosaic represented another attempt to protect the city from ruination, and, in particular, to preserve a monument of universal value—St. Sophia Cathedral. One further attempt to preserve the space of a small garden threatened by new development—a mural on the wall of a house—can be seen at 9 Honchar Street.

On December 22, 2011, the art-group Vsuperech (In Spite), together with public activists, organized an event on Mala Zhytomir's'ka Street to protect the Modern style houses at 12-a, 12-b and 14-a and b, which are acknowledged to be monuments of cultural heritage located in the buffer zone of St. Sophia Cathedral. The scholar and public activist O. Hlukhov has been defending these houses from demolition and his family from illegal eviction for several years. In the early 20th century, the renowned Ukrainian painter

O. Murashko, one of the founders of the Academy of Arts, lived in one of these houses.

The event showcased a militarized installation on the building's façade, followed by an “appearance” of the artist Murashko, who was greatly upset about the demolition of the estate. The artist was impersonated by the popular Ukrainian journalist Andriy Kulykov and accompanied by armed members of the “Army of Cultural Pressure.” “Murashko” unveiled a memorial plaque bearing the inscription: “House of exemplary protest and high public culture.” The climax of the event was the creation of a collective work of art—a manifesto. Everyone was encouraged to commit to canvas his or her wishes in regard to the preservation of Kyiv's historical heritage. The organizers understood that it would be naïve to assume that one event can change the situation. Nevertheless, they believed that modern art must be social, endeavoring to actively influence reality.

7.3 OLEKSANDRIVS'KA HOSPITAL— A CONTEXTUAL INSTALLATION

Kyivans' continuous struggle to protect Oleksandrivs'ka Hospital from the construction of a multistory building finally came to an end with the residents' victory in court in the summer of 2010. However, construction work continued between the court hearings.



The Professor Sitting, 2008.

For this reason, Kyivans established a round-the-clock vigil over the garden and also appealed to the artist community. Along with a concert in 2007, in which renowned performers, including O. Skrypka, O. Bohomolets, R. Nedashkivska, and N. Matvienko supported the Kyivans' efforts, protestors used contextual street art and situational installations. The leader of the anti-development movement, human rights activist Professor V. Berezovsky, posed as part of the installation. He sat on a chair placed on the excavator platform, thus preventing machines from doing their job. The whole installation alluded to Andy Warhol's well-known film, *Sleep*. In this case, he might have filmed *The Professor Sitting*. Today Kyivans hope that in the nearest future a monument to the renowned Ukrainian physician Oleksandr Bohomolets, sculpted by the famous artist Mikhail Shemiakin, will be erected on this anti-development battlefield.

European Square—Art Platform against Skyscrapers. Together with the civic initiatives “Save Old Kyiv,” “Kyivans against the ruination of Kyiv” and many others, young artists are becoming actively involved in the movement for preservation of the city. Using all available means of artistic expression, they are drawing attention to issues that have been the focus of Kyivans' concern. The young artists' public organization “Artistic Platform,” set up in the spring of 2010, began with a specific act of protest against the demolition of the house at 4b Hrushevs'ky Street and the construction of a high-rise building in European Square. In an article dating back to March 2009, journalist I. Karmanova warned readers about plans for the skyscraper's construction, arguing that both Maidan and Khreshchatyk would be pushed into the background by the appearance of this structure.

The activists approached the authorities, requesting transfer of the old building to them with the goal of setting up the Young Artists' Center for Relevant Art H4B. The

movement's leader, M. Marussyk, stresses that the Center should consolidate the creative initiatives of Kyivans, stimulate an exchange of ideas, and become a place where like-minded people could meet and connect with one another. According to Marussyk and his colleagues, the Center should be a non-commercial space used as a showcase for current trends in modern art to promote Ukrainian culture among a broader audience.

The Center will house artists' studios, a gallery, a small stage, and an all-purpose room for presentations and master classes. The adjacent courtyard will be used to host outdoor summer concerts as well as a sculpture park. Implementation of this plan relies heavily on volunteer support from the Kyivans engaged in the project.

With the help of city activists, Kyiv's young artists intend to disseminate positive practices for transforming old and neglected, but culturally and historically significant, buildings into youth cultural centers. A team of like-minded activists is working to implement this concept, organizing art events at 4b Hrushevs'ky Street (e.g. “Readings on the Stairs,” with the participation of professional authors), musical evenings, festivals, movie shows, and performances. Khreshchatyk runs from European Square all the way to Bessarabka Square, which also happened to be the venue for a significant cultural protest that resulted in a triumph for the Kyivans.

Bessarabka. Syayvo (Radiance). “Poetic Performance” was an event in which activists, poets, writers and journalists opposed the closing of the iconic Kyiv bookstore Syayvo. Following prolonged battles and a literal fight to retain the building as bookstore property, the activists launched an artistic event in March 2010. They recited poetry right on the street in front of the store, thereby drawing the attention of city dwellers to the problem. The noteworthy poetic performance took place directly after

the picketing of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine against non-sanctioned construction in urban green zones. The Kyivans' drawn-out struggle ended in November 2010 with the reopening of the store under the new name "Radiance of Books."

Teatral'na Metro Station, Corner of B. Khmel'nyts'ky and Pushkins'ka Streets - The Fountain Social Sculpture Contest and the Museum of Kyiv History. The demolished public garden over the Teatral'na metro station has become one of the hot spots of the anti-development wars. In violation of Ukrainian law, the developers planned to build another commercial and office building on the site. The public protest has lasted for eight years (2005–2012), and, naturally, art has played a very significant role in the process. The National Academic L. Ukrainka Russian Drama Theater is located there, as are houses built specifically for Kyiv Opera actors and city architects. The protest events were attended by actors and musicians, while artists L. Beketova and O. Komarov set up an outdoor exhibition of their works, and a brass orchestra gave several performances in support of the protesters.

The art factor should be decisive on B. Khmel'nyts'ky Street, known a century ago as the "street of three theaters": the Bergonier (now the National Academic Russian Drama Theatre), the Opera House, and the Anatomic Theater (now the National Museum of Medicine). It is important not only to oppose non-sanctioned development, but also to promote a positive concept for organizing public spaces in the city. The activists, led by M. Zharikov, Kyiv's chief architect from 1986 to 1992, announced an open competition for the best fountain design, using the concepts of public art philosophy. The fountain would be constructed in the small renovated garden on the corner of B. Khmel'nyts'ky and Pushkins'ka Streets, close to the National Academic L. Ukrainka Russian Drama Theater. A sculpture

or similar decorative element surrounded by water was to become the garden's centerpiece and embellish the city center. The fountain was also required to reflect a Ukrainian theater-related theme. The realization of this public art project could initiate a new phase in public art development and put an end to the long-standing conflict between the public and businesses that are supported by corrupt authorities.

However, the eight-year old dispute was resolved differently: the Procurator General's Office filed a claim with the court and returned the contended lot to the community. Despite the conclusions and decisions of an inter-agency committee banning the non-sanctioned construction, it went ahead and was completed. The owners were then reluctant to demolish the structure and instead gave it to the city as the premises for the Museum of Kyiv History, which had been thrown out of the Klov Palace in 2004. This unorthodox solution provoked a great deal of debate among the Kyiv public: on the one hand, the new building fails to meet construction requirements for museum buildings, and those who broke the law have not been punished; on the other hand, instead of an unwanted commercial building downtown, city dwellers acquired new museum premises. A lot of issues still need to be resolved; the fountain designs are waiting in designers' studios, and the new museum could justifiably be called a "museum of corruption." A well-known expert in Kyivan history, V. Kovalynsky, notes that the plot allocated for the museum is "three times smaller than required, and it is sitting not on land, but over the entrance hall to the Teatral'na metro station."²⁷ The Museum of Kyiv History was inaugurated in August 2012, its own history reflecting the long-standing confrontation between Kyivans and the authorities. The proactive role of the local community enabled them to win this struggle to preserve the city and shape its art space.

The challenges of the period define new trends of artistic progress and changes in art

perception. The role and significance of public art are continually growing through the interaction of its two components—the social and the aesthetic. Kyiv clearly needs public art as a dynamic concept in its art space development.

Today the concept of the *right to the city* is the focus of multidisciplinary discussions. This right is exercised through, among other things, shaping the city environment as artistic space. Lefebvre talks about the social as dominant in relation to artistic and creative activity. Citing the example of Venice, the philosopher stresses that any work of art occupies a certain space, and forms and organizes it²⁸.

We believe that the *right to the city* and its public space was exercised by Kyivans in 2004 at the time of the Orange Revolution. Kyiv became a place where a new social space significantly affected by its artistic component was formed.²⁹ Kyiv art space was actualized in the huge gatherings in Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square), with its numerous components:

- a multi-day concert by well-known and amateur performers that lasted for several days;
- art shows on Khreshchatyk; the *TAK* (Yes) big tent exhibition; slogans drawn in front of the mayor's office; a letter to V. Putin that was 60 meters long; and an enormous angel suspended over the square;
- *Veseli yaitsia* (*Jolly Eggs*) show that was instantly disseminated via the Internet and gigantic projection screens on Maidan;
- an explosion of modern folklore, originating in Maidan and disseminated via the Internet;

- professional craftsmen weaving orange *kylym* (traditional rugs) by professional craftsmen in the hall of the Kyiv Conservatory;
- orange-themed decoration of Maidan and the rest of the city; and orange painting of the city theater walls and adjacent sites.

In 2004, Kyivians' *right to the city* was also realized through its art space. In spite of all the post-Maidan disillusionment, the artistic energy of the Orange Revolution gave impetus to a range of topics and trends in modern Ukrainian art, and in Kyiv in particular. The ensuing years in the city's development highlighted and strengthened urban public movements, demonstrating close links between the social and aesthetic aspects of life in the city.

The battle for the city became a cornerstone defining not only the vision of its public spaces, but also civic society per se, especially in an era of social apathy and disillusionment following the failed aspirations of the Orange Revolution. The experience acquired in urban development processes has been invaluable. While it is true that in 2004 the citizens won and then went home, having delegated their competencies to others, the achievements of the Kyivans were the result of a joint effort on the part of civic society to monitor the authorities' operations. The leaders of independent Ukraine permanently left Kyiv to be ravaged and plundered by their vassals. None of them ever appreciated the importance of the grassroots public movements that generated new ideas, a new national identity, and put forward new leaders. Meanwhile, Kyiv's civic society is forming not only its own art space, but also new leaders capable of changing Ukraine for the better.

8. CONCLUSION

ISSUES RELATING TO the development of Kyiv's urban space as art space represent an important area of modern interdisciplinary research. Public art is an important component of Kyiv art space. Public art can be found more and more often in the city streets and parks, offering viewers new perceptions of the modern world, affecting their understanding of

the urban environment, and molding modern Kyiv's urban identity. The large movement for preservation of Kyiv's historic architectural heritage from continuous barbaric destruction has given rise to public initiatives and movements that make broad use of artistic components in their activities, thus contributing to the formation of Kyiv art space.

NOTES

1. Moussienko, Natalia. "Public art u prostori suchasnoho mista: kyiv'ska praktyka" in *Suchasni problemy doslidzhennia, restavratsii ta zberezennia kulturnoi spadshyny*, ed. V.D. Sydorenko et al. (Kyiv : Khimdzhest 2010): 136–149.
2. Blair Ruble, *Prahmatyzm i pliuralizm yak ruschii rozvytku velykoho mista (Chikago "pozolochenoj doby", Moskva "sribnoho viku" ta Osaka epokhi Meidzhi)*(Kyiv:Stylos, 2010).
3. Dmytro Malakov, *Prybutkovi budynky Kyieva* (Kyiv: Kyi 2009).
4. St. Sophia Cathedral—a Christian cathedral in downtown Kyiv, a monument of Ukrainian architecture and monumental painting of the 11th – 18th cc., one of the few surviving Kyiv Rus' structures. A major Christian sanctuary in Eastern Europe, and the historical center of Kyiv's metropolitan area: <http://nzsk.org.ua/node/531>.
5. Kyiv-Pechersk Assumption Monastery (Lavra)—one of the most important Orthodox sanctuaries in Ukraine, a remarkable historical and architectural monument founded in the 11th century.
6. Irina Karmanova. "Smert' nevesty," *Weekend* 7 (2011): 546, <http://2000.net.ua/weekend/gorod-sobytiya/situatsija/71737>.
7. A huge building was erected near Marinskyi Park on Dnipro Hill in the beginning of the 21st century despite the numerous protests of Kyivans. President Viktor Yushchenko promised to stop the construction, but did not. The building is considered a symbol of corruption. Omelchenko, the Mayor of Kyiv at the time, later stated that this construction was a huge mistake.
8. Oksana Moussienko, "Urbanistychni vizii v prozi M. Hoholia i kinematograf," *Naukovyi visnyk Kyivs'koho natsional'noho universytetu teatru, kino i telebachennia* 6 (2010): 318–335, http://www.nbuv.gov.ua/portal/Soc_Gum/Nvkkarogo/2010_6/mus_viz.pdf.
9. Nikolai Gogol', "Ob arkhitektura nyneshnego vremeni," in *Arabeski*, ed. Nikolai Gogol' (St. Petersburg: Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1952), 57.
10. Aleksei Braslavets et al., *Andreevskii spusk. Kul'turologicheskii putevoditel'* (Kyiv: Amadei, 2011).
11. Victor Sydorenko's website: <http://www.sydorenko.kiev.ua/en/>.
12. Natalia Moussienko, "Autentyfikatsiia—krok do samoidentyfikatsii," *Artkursiv*, 2 (2008): 26. http://www.glib.vysheslavsky.name/002/index_eng.html.
13. Interview with Glib Vysheslavsky by Natalia Moussienko, 24 August 2012.
14. "Farewell to Skyscrapers," <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7KEP1MS3rYo>.
15. Oksana Chepelyk, "Public Art: spivvidnoshennia formy i zmistiv," in Sydorenko, *Suchasni problemy*, 464–467.
16. Modern Art Research Institute of the National Academy of Arts of Ukraine: http://www.mari.kiev.ua/06_0300.htm#2.
17. Works at the park included: *Lyubov-rika (Love River)* by O. Lidohovsky, *Forma svitla (Shape of Light)* by Z. Kadyrova, *Buratino (Pinnocchio)* by V. Tatarsky, *Pamyatnyk Kolenvalu (Monument to Crankshaft)* by M. Virtuozov, *Doschch (Rain)* by N. Bilyk, *Master and Margarita* by O. Vladymyrov, and *Rayduha (Rainbow)* by O. Oleksiyev. The park also featured benches fashioned by contemporary Ukrainian designers and sculptors, including *Ruky (Hands)* by L. Litkovska, *Lavka myru (Bench of Peace)* by O. Zalevsky, *Kylymy (Carpets)* by L. Pustovit, *Yak vdoma (Like at Home)* by V. Kuznetsov, as well as works by Z. Likhachova, K. Skretutsky, S. Danchynov, A. Tan, and O. Hromova.
18. Aec's Interesni Kazki Project website: <http://www.facebook.com/aec.interesnikazki>.
19. Waone's Interesni Kazki Project website: <http://www.facebook.com/waone.interesnikazki>.
20. Aleksei Bordusov, interview by Dmitrii Desiaterik, October 18, 2009. <http://interesniy-kiev.livejournal.com/2490541.html>.
21. Vladimir Manzhos, interview by Dmitrii Desiaterik, October 18, 2009. <http://interesniy-kiev.livejournal.com/2490541.html>.
22. "Graffiti Zone," <http://graffitizone.kiev.ua/>.
23. Henri Lefebvre, "La production de l'espace," in *L'espace social*, ed. Henri Lefebvre (Paris: Anthropos, 1974), 83–96.
24. Natalia Moussienko, "Public art i bytva za Kyiv," *Artkursiv*, 4 (2010): 53.
25. Revoliutsionnii Eksperimental'nii Prostir (Revolutionary experimental space).
26. Polit.ua interview with Vitaliy Kovalinskiy: "Vitaliy Kovalinskiy: Nam ne potribno 'hoch schos,'" October 31, 2011. <http://polit.ua/articles/2011/10/31/museum.html>.
27. Henri Lefebvre, "La production de l'espace," in *L'espace social*, ed. Henri Lefebvre (Paris: Anthropos, 1974), 83–96.
28. Natalia Moussienko, "Mystets'kyi factor u typologii yevropeis'kykh revoliutsii v epokhu POST (Case study: Ukraine)," *Agora* 4 (2006): 148–154.

Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

One Woodrow Wilson Plaza
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004-3027

Tel. (202) 691-4100 Fax (202) 691-4247

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