

About us

Ukraine and Social Sofa

2022

How did a group of Ukrainian women, fleeing the war, end up in Karin's Bruers house? This has significance and our project is exactly about that.

Since the beginning of the war, more than 5 million Ukrainian women with children have sought a safe place outside of Ukraine. We: Vira, Oksana, Nastya, Artur, Dzvinka, Sofia and Olesya - found shelter, got a sense of care and security in Karin's house.

The war that began on February 24, 2022 or more precisely in 2014 - is still going on.

You can say that Ukrainians have been resisting Russian onslaught for hundreds of years.

In the designs we are going to use in this Social Sofa project, we intend to highlight women artists whose destinies, names, lives were stolen by the Soviet Union. As Ukrainian artists, they became famous only after the 1990s, when Ukraine regained its independence. These women carried their identity through the totalitarian regime, through oppression and non-recognition.

Oleksandra Exter, Hanna Sobachko, Kateryna Bilokur, Maria Pryimachenko, Sonya Delone, Alla Horska, Lyubov Panchenko are genius Ukrainian women. They were anonymous folk artists from the Soviet Union, or emigrants - who were acclaimed across the world except the USSR. The Independence of Ukraine allowed their names to be revived and we were finally able to get acquainted with their art.

Women who are part of our project are as vibrant as their paints. They possess subtle yet powerful energy - they're confident and bold. This project is about life, which is being awakened in spite of everything - it is powerful in a new way and it depicts the truth.

A woman is a creator who carries the genetic code to her children and into her art. She is the definition of rebirth. Our project is about life, reconstruction, future dreams and hope, it symbolizes support, strength and resistance. We dedicate this to women who are at war and those who are holding the lines of support - who perform so many incomprehensible functions that they leave no chance for despair.

Our women are magical phoenixes who can make a ton of dumplings, organize truckloads of humanitarian aid, drop off sandbags to checkpoints, find unattainable bulletproof vests and helmets, drive dozens of vehicles for the military from Europe - and will go to bed tired. Despite that will wake up with renewed energy and will weave kilometers of camouflage nets, buy gas masks and turnstiles. They wake up daily and continue to hold the line, paint flowers around bullet holes at the gates, feed the refugees, and take care of their children and others. Because life must go on.

Our project is about life! When we put sofas in the recreation area, we tell people about the history of women in art - it's just about prosperity, rebirth, stability. It's about a bold choice and the future.

About the Artists:

Oksana, 48 yo



Mother of Orest and Dzvinka. She has been married to her husband, Mikhail for 27 years. Holding a master's degree in publishing and editing from Ukrainian Academy of Printing- she is a journalist and an editor. Oksana is a founder and a publisher of a Ukrainian family magazine. At the time of the magazine's creation, it was difficult for Ukrainian publications to break through and hold on in the publishing sphere. The young mom was eager to help other mothers and created a universal guide that would help so many. The magazine sought reliable information and collaborated with specialists such as doctors and teachers. It had information about traveling with children, food and entertainment, education and early

development and many other important themes. Over time, it has delivered over 8,000 unique articles about the family.

In addition, Oksana has her own brand of handmade knitted sweaters @my_woolcraft. She dreams of returning home to continue her projects. The goal is for even our small Ukrainian impact to bring great value all over the world.

Vira, 40yo



Artist and founder of the art school in Lviv "Malyuvtsi". Mother of two adult daughters Sofia and Olesya. Art has always been a part of her life. Upon finishing the art school, the Academy of Arts, she realized that it was important for her not just to create art, but to delve into the question "When and why art arose, how it evolved over time, how to regard it and understand how it came to be as we know it". It became important to share these views with others. After the birth of her children, much of her time was devoted to the development of their creative processes, throughout realizing that she would enjoy teaching art to the children. This was a clear and understandable way for them to communicate with the other world.

Together with her friend they took a risk and created an art studio for children @malyuvtsi_kids_art. Vira has created many iconic art projects, about notable Ukrainians, about Ukrainian and world history of art.

Anastasia, 23yo



Has been immersed in art since childhood. At the age of 5 she began studying at the school of arts. Master of Architecture with honors from Lviv Polytechnic National University. She opened her own ceramics studio @ nzce.ramic in Lviv. She gave clay a new life. She sculpted and baked various household items that create comfort and add uniqueness. Worked in the field of architectural design and subject design. She took part in international architectural competitions. She is also interested in clothing design and jewelry. Raises a 7-month-old son. She dreams of a quality reconstruction of Ukraine, the reopening of the studio and a bright future for her son.

Our children. They faced trials with COVID, quarantine, isolation, and now the biggest obstacle yet - the war. We see perspective and rebirth in them - they are our future.

Arthur, 7 months

Our only boy in our women's circle. He's polite and handsome, cheerful and wonderful. Mother's pillar and support in the future. Arthur was only 4 months old when he arrived in the Netherlands - already 7- we observe with admiration as it grows and develops.

Dzvinka, 18yo



At 16 she opened a home-based confectionery @tartsss. From an early age, all associations about events and travels were painted in smells and tastes. This amazing story about the creation of a business by a teenager at the age of 16, at the height of the covid, was filmed on the central Ukrainian channel. Since then, the business has grown even more. She had internships and worked in renowned Lviv confectioneries. She studied international courses. Convinced that "It doesn't matter how old you are, it only matters how many roads you've traveled." Now she works in one of the best confectioneries in the Netherlands @bijrobert in Oisterwijk. She dreams of studying

in the best confectionery schools in the world. She dreams about owning a coffee shop in Lviv, about a family business and her own culinary school, at home - in Ukraine.

Sofia, 17 yo



She wants to become a doctor. He has a bright and extremely active and high-spirited mind. But even with that character, she has not been able to maintain a sense of stability since the war commenced. Therefore, we were forced to flee from sirens and explosions.

Sophia is wise and persistent - she knows her purpose. She dreams of admission to a medical university. Later working in Ukraine, where she will be able to build her career.

Olesya, 15.



Empathetic and creative. Has a subtle sense of beauty and style. Similar to people with a fine musical hearing pointing out when melody is off-tune. Olesya feels the shortcomings in the architectural design, in the shape of cars, in clothing and the environment. Therefore, this year she plans to enter an art school. Afterwards, she dreams of studying and establishing herself in architecture. After all, after the war our country needs to be rebuilt and it needs to be done wisely.

The designs

Maria Prymachenko

A bright representative of "naive art", one of the most famous Ukrainian artists. According to UNESCO, 2009 was recognized as the year of Maria Prymachenko.

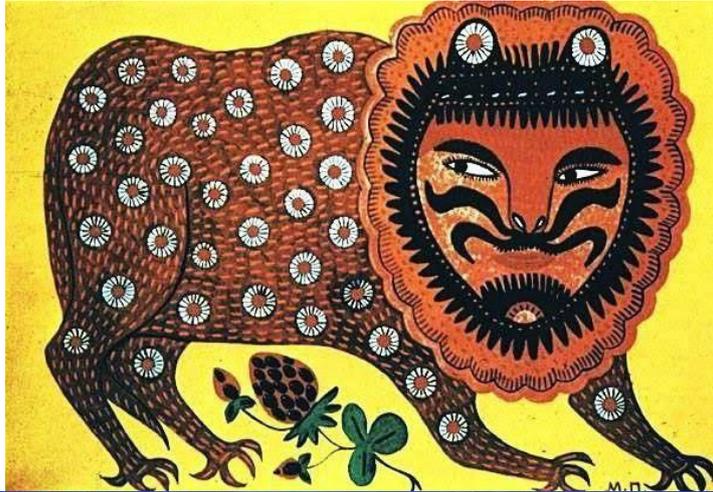
Maria Oksentiyivna wonderfully combined drawing and painting in her work. It is both picturesque graphics and graphic painting at the same time. Prymachenko is constantly learning from his native Polissya nature. Her paintings also embody pagan images of fantastic monsters and birds. Prymachenko seems to synthesize the experience of many generations of folk artists. Sources of her work is also seen in widely used in Ukraine wall paintings - one of the oldest genres of world decorative art. It's like a bunch of emotional impressions from fairy tales, legends and life itself. Also, the master has a perfect sense of rhythm, her forms are always well coordinated with each other. And at the same time they are not static, but some particularly mobile: plants, even flower petals are presented in interaction.

All elements form a kind of ensemble with its own rhythm and forms. In all of Prymachenko's works this unchanging, calm, endless ornamental movement is present.

She has more than a thousand paintings. When she painted, she never mixed paint, she made the brush herself from cat hair. She did not like to draw animals realistically. Her works made more than a thousand paintings. When she painted, she never mixed paint, she made the brush herself from cat hair. She did not like to draw animals realistically.

"Why paint them as they are and so beautiful. And I paint for the joy of people," - said the artist







Sonia Delone (Hannah Stern)

Sonia Delone was born in Odessa. Her whole childhood was spent in the outskirts of the city, soaked in the sun and sea. Everything that surrounded her as a child – laid so much energy that it was enough for life.

The first woman whose personal exhibition was held at the Louvre; fashion legislator, whose design was used for Parisian dresses and cars; representative of the Art Deco direction, a woman who, together with her husband, created a picturesque style of "simultaneous" and Officer of the Legion of Honor - all about Sonya Delaunay.

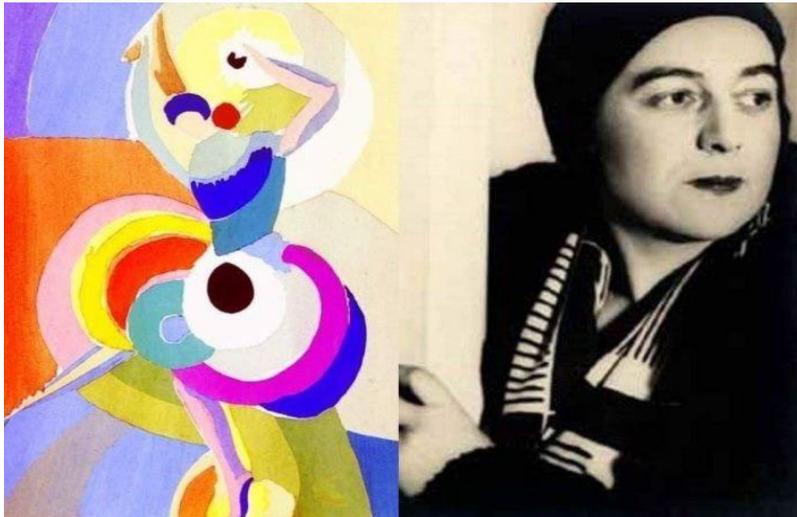
Creativity of the French artist and designer of Ukrainian origin Sonya Delaunay (Sonia Delaunay) – is a huge inspiring world of color. Delaunay was outstanding representative of art deco, avant-garde and together with her husband Robert Delaunay created a new direction in painting - simultaneousism (another name - Orphism). Image of color motion in the light - this is how the artist defined her works. For the first time the form does not dominate, and obeys color; for the first time the form is constructed not by means of light and shadow, but for using the depth of the color itself. Colors, like living organisms, affect one another, create the illusion of movement and rhythm. This approach was completely unique in painting. In the works of Sonya Delaunay, color theory has received due recognition and wide practical use. Her work has expanded her understanding of how color

affects human perception, and the psychology of color itself has become one of the most important modern design tools.

Delaunay developed ideas of simultaneousism not only on canvases, but also in the practical sphere:

she created clothing and footwear design, theatrical costumes, the design of fabrics and carpets for French factories, illustrated books, engaged in ceramics and stained glass and even designed cars.







Kateryna Bilokur

Kateryna Bilokur is something unearthly. It is all Flemish and Dutch flower painting combined. Only she did not study anywhere and made brushes from cat's tails, and paints from improvised materials.

Flowers, painted by Kateryna Bilokur, are immediately recognizable because they seem to hang in the air and emit light. "If we had an artist of this skill level, we would make the whole world talk about her," said Pablo Picasso, who is considered one of the greatest artists of the 20th century. Meanwhile, Kateryna Bilokur, like all Ukrainian peasants in the USSR, did not even have a passport. However, the strength of her talent was such that she broke through even the Iron Curtain. Her work was presented by the Soviet authorities as "the work of a collective farmer from the village of Bogdanivka."

This is a genius, set in conditions that made self-realization impossible ... This woman with her incredible, just mad pride and stubbornness, one against the system, against the community and against the family, with whom we also had to fight for the right to be ourselves





Oleksandra Exter

Oleksandra Exter is a Ukrainian star of the avant-garde world - a sophisticated intellectual, Amazon avant-garde, Scythian horsewoman, bright, strong-willed. Painter, graphic artist, designer, theater and film artist, master of applied arts.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Oleksandra Exter Studio in the center of Kyiv, as well as the Pablo Picasso Studio in Paris, was a center of Ukrainian avant-garde art.

We can say that it added color to Cubism, because it used to be monochrome. The form was then divided into plastic fragments, and Exter adds color based on folk embroidery and Ukrainian art. Oleksandra Exter comes from a noble family of Hryhorovychs who moved from Bialystok to Kyiv, where she grew up and studied.

O. Exter has always been interested in and attracted to Ukrainian folk art. She felt that in the depths of folk culture preserved an indelible reserve of morality and optimism.

All of Exter's painting is a decisive change in the unshakable order of things. Impressionist still lifes and landscapes, cubofuturistic works, pointless painting.

The sound of color and the color of the sound were important to her.

She begins to think abstractly and creates a revolution in world scenography.

Color, rhythm, movement, extremely powerful colors appear.

Her performances became a theatrical revolution. She renewed stage with the help of cubism, constructivism. Made the stage and costumes dynamic. And it was an innovative spectacle.

Extremely new vision, even for the avant-garde era. She "painted" cubism. It was a course whose task was to break the shape into plastic planes. The color was unimportant, and she proved the opposite. Because with the use of color, a new rhythm appears, the heart beats more often. She was the latest innovator in the field of scenography in Europe. One of Exter's most famous works was her work as a set designer in the first futuristic horror film "Doctor Caligari's Office", 1920

Anna Sobachko-Shostak

Iconic artist. She is most amazing for that she has introduced an avant-garde, futuristic spirit into folk art. Folk art is a very traditional thing, it has an impact on other areas, but it is very reluctant and slowly changing. Sobachko worked in the studio with Malevich, Exter and very quickly changed the sound.

The brightness of the works is a very unifying factor. This is something that Europe has already rejected at that time, because it is too fauvistic. But we have an expressive soul - that's how we breathe, that's what we stand for and are reborn.

Her fate, like that of many Ukrainian artists, is connected with the revival of Ukrainian artistic traditions in the early twentieth century and their destruction by the Bolsheviks in the 1930s. During her long life, the artist has created many highly artistic works. The Museum of Ukrainian Folk Decorative Art houses a unique collection of works by Anna Feodosievna Sobachko-Shostak. For more than fifty years, the museum has been working hard to promote the artistic heritage of the master. Her works have been exhibited at more than 40 museum exhibitions in Ukraine and around the world. These include exhibitions in France, Hungary, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Belgium, Austria, Denmark, Portugal, Yugoslavia, Germany, Poland and the United States.

Today, after many years of oblivion, the understanding of the contribution to the treasury of world culture of the invaluable artistic work of a simple peasant from the Skoptsi village - Anna Sobachko, is returning.

