

# AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE IN THE WARTIME: THE ROLE OF PERFORMANCES AND PERFORMATIVES

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**Abstract:** *The article is devoted to the philosophical and aesthetic analysis of modern Ukrainian art, which was created in times of full-scale war. The authors use the performative studies as a methodological approach. Aesthetic experience is extremely valuable because it helps open a person to the special presence of his existence and enriches all other dimensions of human experience. Aesthetic experience includes the analysis of people's psychological and sensory experiences and their embodiment of artistic creativity. In times of war, the Ukrainian artistic works and projects are characterized by the search for new forms, expansion of the subject matter, creativity, originality of ideas and embodied images, and a combination of artistic, psychological, and socio-cultural perspectives. Today, many artists have realized their mission – an artistic and figurative reflection of the war, a creative and symbolic space favorable for the formation of modern Ukrainians.*

**Keywords:** *performance, performativity, aesthetics, art, war, aesthetic analysis.*

## 1. Introduction

The Russo-Ukrainian war continues and creates many challenges and threats: everyone on Ukraine's territory is in danger. Ukrainian objects of cultural heritage, art monuments, museums, galleries, etc., are threatened. The beginning of a full-scale war was extremely difficult for Ukrainians: since February 24, 2022, most people have experienced tough hours, days, weeks... For many, the experience of the war turned out to be very traumatic. Unfortunately, someone had to be in occupation, captivity, or experience the loss of relatives. Today, there is a need for a comprehensive, philosophical, and, in particular, aesthetic reflection on the experience of this unjust war.

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Aesthetic experience is extremely valuable because it helps open a person to the special presence of his existence and enriches all other dimensions of human experience. Aesthetic experience includes the analysis of people's psychological and sensory experiences and their embodiment of artistic creativity. It refers to the study of the specifics of works of art that arose in war conditions. An equally important aspect of the aesthetic experience is understanding the authors' intentions and delineating their works' aesthetic and universal significance.

The role of art is transforming reality into a world of imaginary phenomena; it distils the problematic experience of war and, at the same time, does not devalue the experiences but endows them with qualitatively new features, creating prerequisites for the formation of artistic, aesthetic and general cultural values. In addition, in times of war, art also plays an essential existential role: it helps to survive and not lose one's own identity.

It is worth noting that Ukrainian art is not going through its best times today because of the war. However, many Ukrainian artists continue to do their work – they write paintings, poems, music, scripts for theatre performances, etc. Their works are an artistic and figurative embodiment of the first reaction to the events of the war, which became a considerable challenge and shock for society. Therefore, they perform an essential mission of understanding the experiences that are close to all Ukrainians, and in addition, they help document and preserve the experience of the war.

Nowadays in Ukraine, it is evident that the focus of the artists' attention is mainly tragic images, but there are also many bright ones. As an aesthetic subject, the works of Ukrainian artists often feature tragic pages of war (defence and occupation of Mariupol and Kherson, genocide in Bucha and other cities and towns of the country). These people are at the epicentre of events: defenders, soldiers, doctors, volunteers, railway workers, refugees, and ordinary Ukrainians. Children who have become victims of war or have had a painful experience in connection with war are a compassionate image. Common aesthetic subjects today are animals, nature (Ukrainian landscapes), cities that resist or have undergone significant destruction, and even military equipment – everything that willy-nilly participated in the war. As an aesthetic object, Ukrainian artists also actively use symbols: traditional symbols of Ukrainian unity and struggle – viburnum, flag, coat of arms; signs-images and symbols of this war (the inscription "*Дему*" (Children) in front of the Mariupol Drama

Theater, the manicured hand of a tortured woman in Buch, a rooster-jug on a miraculously preserved kitchen cabinet in a destroyed house in Borodyanka, etc.), as well as images using the abbreviation "ЗСУ" (Ukrainian Military Forces), "ППО" (Missile Defense System) as a sign of support and thanks to defenders.

Analyzing formal and substantive aspects of works of art shows that Ukrainian artists combine different styles, genres, and techniques. Sometimes, they even combine different types of art among themselves and actively experiment. Their work is characterized by the search for new forms, expansion of the subject matter, creativity, originality of ideas and embodied images, and a combination of artistic, psychological, and socio-cultural perspectives. In particular, the strengthening of the ideological component in creativity is noted. Today, many artists have realized their mission – an artistic and figurative reflection of the war, the creative and symbolic space favorable for the formation of modern Ukrainians. All this testifies to modern Ukrainian art's development despite the war's terrible challenges.

## 2. Performative Studies and Modern Aesthetics

Performativity is a postmodern situation: it requires evaluating any knowledge in terms of operational results (success of efficiency). The peculiarity of performativity is the ability to go beyond purely knowledge and, therefore, the ability to manage the entire sphere of public relations. The impact of performance and performativity on the contemporary situation was analyzed in detail by Jean-Francois Lyotard in his famous work *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*<sup>3</sup>.

The peculiarity of the field of cultural performance, notes Jon MacKenzie, is that it encompasses a variety of activities around the world: Theater (traditional and experimental), various rites and ceremonies, mass celebrations in the form of parades or festivals; dance; avant-garde performing arts; oral literature (public performances); folk rhapsodic and spoken traditions (story-telling); aesthetic daily practices such as entertainment or joint actions; political demonstrations and social movements. This list can be continued and supplemented. The main thing

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<sup>3</sup> See: 2. Lyotard J.-F. (1984). *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 110 p.

that can be summarized is that cultural performance is cultural in the broadest sense of the word and covers both "high" and "low" spheres<sup>4</sup>.

In general, cultural performance is defined as a certain operation with social norms. In other words, it is a system of actions that can maintain social conventions or, alternatively, change people and societies. According to McKenzie, over time, he realized that performance can successfully maintain existing structures and make people happy or healthy. At the same time, it should be understood that there is another (not so positive) side to performance, as there is also transgressive performance and resistance performance.

John Macaloon defines cultural performance as the moments when we, as culture or society, reflect on and define ourselves, when we play out our shared myths and our history, present an alternative version of ourselves, or change from certain angles to remain the same from others<sup>5</sup>.

In accordance with the above, we can derive three functions that researchers of cultural performance usually attribute to it:

- 1) social self-reflection and reflection as a result of dramatization or embodiment of symbolic forms;
- 2) presentation of alternative arrangements;
- 3) the possibility of preservation or transformation.

We can note a trend: under the influence of the performance imperative, theorists have focused on the transformative potential of performance.

The definition of performance is found in the book *Performance: Texts and Contexts*, a textbook and anthology for teaching academic courses in performance studies, edited by Carol Simpson Stern and Bruce Henderson, the performative act, interactive in nature, involving symbolic forms and living bodies, allows for the constitution of meaning and the reaffirmation of individual and cultural values<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> McKenzie J. (2001). *Perform or Else: from Discipline to Performance*. London and New York: Routledge, 2001, p. 29.

<sup>5</sup> MacAloon, John. ed. (1984). *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle. Rehearsals Toward a Theory of Cultural Performance*. Philadelphia: A Publication of the Institute for the Study of Human Issues, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Stern C. S., Henderson B. (1993). *Performance : texts and contexts*. New York and London: Longman, p. 3.

It can be noted that Macaloon, Stern, and Henderson define performance through its social functions: establishing meanings and confirming value. These researchers also name two forms of performance: symbolic and corporeal. It should be noted that these two functions and two forms can be found in other performance researchers.

In the anthology *Critical Theory and Performance*, Janelle Reinelt and Joseph Roach attribute to performative analysis, which grew out of critical theory, an inseparable political character: it revises existing meanings, reformulates them, analyzes them, challenges them, and sometimes condemns them<sup>7</sup>.

Performance art has drawn from many different disciplines: anthropology, ethnography and ethnology, philology, philosophy, history, art history, dance history, linguistics, literary criticism, cultural studies, media studies, political science, sociology, theater studies, and even zoology.

An important aspect of the performance is the combination of aesthetics and politics. Today, it is sometimes difficult to separate these components in the works of performative art. It is impossible to distinguish between an artistic performance embodied in an action happening and a political act itself. The combination of aesthetic and socio-political aspects is also a feature of works of plastic art, which are characterized by performativity. In particular, in the works of Ukrainian graphic artists and illustrators (Nikita Titov, Andrii Yermolenko, Yurii Zhuravel, Mari Kinovych, etc.), muralists (Kostyantyn Kachanovskyi, Mykyta Kravtsov, Oleksiy Kyslov) and authors of various installations (using national symbols, elements of military equipment, fragments of missiles, chevrons and camouflage, etc.) the aesthetic form expresses the socio-political content. And there is nothing strange here. As Jacques Rancière pointed out, such seemingly incompatible discourses as aesthetic and political are based on the same way of thinking: if aesthetics aims to establish the relationship between what can be seen and what is said, then politics aims to develop the relationship between what is done and what can be done<sup>8</sup>. That's why performance art and creativity using performatives combine

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<sup>7</sup> Reinelt J., Roach J. (1992). *Critical Theory and Performance*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> See: Rancière, Jacques (2007). *Dzielenie postrzeganego. Estetyka i polityka*. Kraków: Ha!art, 192 s.

these approaches most effectively today. According to Franklin Ankersmit, reality does not exist until its representation appears<sup>9</sup>. This is the meaning of the effect of the combination of aesthetic and political discourses (in performative art in particular).

### 3. Aesthetics of war: art and violence

One of the ways to understand the perception of war is to analyze the art that represents war reality. As Daniel Rothbart writes, "War has been a favorite subject of artists since classical antiquity. What distinguishes the futurists is their fascination with the technology of modern warfare. World War I ushered in a host of new weapons including tanks, machine guns, flame-throwers and poison gases. On the battlefield these inventions presented a complex spectacle of color, sounds, and vibrations, captivating artists of largely rural Italy. There is a lurid beauty in newsreel footage of the time that is akin to coverage of the present day American bombings of Afghanistan."<sup>10</sup>

The aesthetics of war can be represented in the following aspects:

- artistic representation (artists across history have depicted war scenes that are visually stunning – epic landscapes of battle, heroic figures, dramatic moments – even though the subject is horror itself);
- glorification and propaganda (governments have often used the aestheticization of war to make it seem noble, glorious, or even beautiful, to rally support or justify violence (think of grandiose war posters, triumphal arches, victory parades);
- philosophy and critique (philosophers like Walter Benjamin pointed out that fascism, in particular, tends to aestheticize politics – and by extension, war – turning death and violence into something "beautiful" for mass consumption).

The aesthetics of war raises the problem of the relationship between art and violence. As Martin Seel notes in his book *Aesthetics of Appearing*, in many situations violence is now a triadic relationship, as violence is used, violence is experienced, and violence is viewed. In this triangle, perpetrators, victims, and spectators jointly realize violence. The triadic

<sup>9</sup> See: Ankersmit F. R. (1996). *Aesthetic Politics. Political Philosophy Beyond Fact and Value*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 415 p.

<sup>10</sup> Rothbart, Daniel (2001). The Aesthetics of War, <https://danielrothbart.org/the-aesthetics-of-war/>.

connection is not related to the media provision of the viewer's position. The media presentation results only in a doubling of the observer's point of view. Observation through the medium of the media (television in particular) is observation through the medium of those to whom it is directed. Here, too, the scene of violence is defined by a triangle: perpetrator – victim – spectator<sup>11</sup>.

Martin Seel's remark is extremely important, recognizing the fact that works of art that address the topic of violence are in some way a source of violence themselves<sup>12</sup>. In fact, the specificity of such works is the representation of scenes of violence reproduced in reality, which can be comprehended here and now, from a short distance - quite sufficient to achieve fullness of sensations, but at the same time safe for viewing, and therefore the author's conclusion is obvious. At the same time, Seel notes that violence in art introduces the aforementioned triadic situation, but represents, albeit a significant one, only a certain variant of the relation of a real act of violence. In particular, Seel's observations that performers can be spectators, or as performers, they can become spectators, and spectators can become victims of violence, or as spectators, they can be victims of a presentation containing violence, are very fruitful; in extreme cases, a participant can take all these positions (performer, victim, and spectator) simultaneously.

It is also important to note the following fact: the connection between violence and reality is contained in the nature of the thing itself. For example, violence and sexuality are two extreme forms of bodily encounter between people, which takes place as a brutal or sensual, one-sided or mutual entry into the bodily sphere of another person – the interaction here takes place as direct contact and is not just an interaction of gesture and word. Instead, if we talk about violence and art, we can recall the statement of Bruce Nauman, which is considered the most brutal of the formulated metaphors on the topic of violence in art: "At first, I tried to create art that could affect people, and that would speak with full force at once."<sup>13</sup>

Art can approach the edge of pain for its recipients, but it always leaves the possibility of evading it. Therefore, violence in art must serve to dominate the opposite party, and is always only metaphorical violence.

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<sup>11</sup> Seel M. (2005). *Aesthetics of Appearing*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, p. 187.

<sup>12</sup> Ibidem, p. 188.

<sup>13</sup> Nauman B. (1996). *Interviews 1967-1988*. Dresden, p. 149.

With a certain exaggeration, it can be argued that in this sense the moment of violence is inherent in any art. Works of art cause the public to leave (even for a short time) their state of self-confidence and bodily and spiritual orientation and thus introduce a desired distortion in their experience and understanding. In this sense, every aesthetic is an aesthetic of violence: an interpretation of the force with which works reveal a reality that evokes the life reality of their recipients.

This performative power of artworks can develop independently of any representation of events that take the form of violence. However, the metaphorical violence of works of art becomes especially important when they make acts of violence the content of their presentations. The presentation of violence here is amplified by the violence of artistic presentation. Only this dependence allows us to understand the potential of artistic interpretation of the phenomenon of violence<sup>14</sup>.

Another very significant aspect of the study of the relationship between art and violence is the fact that today, more and more art that represents violence competes with the real facts of violence, firstly, and secondly, with the presentation of these phenomena in the contexts of information and infotainment. In this way, artistic realization introduces publicity into the imitation of violence.

#### **4. Performance and performativity in Ukrainian wartime culture**

One of the fairly common phenomena in modern artistic practice in Ukraine is performance. Many Ukrainian artists today actively use performative art and performativism in their work. This is not surprising since the implementation of performance is related to aspects such as interactivity, intersubjectivity, presence, potentiality, and corporeality, which are extremely important when experiencing the experience of war.

Performance has various forms of embodiment: theater (traditional and experimental), rites and ceremonies, mass celebrations in the form of parades or festivals, dance; avant-garde performative art; oral transmission of literature (public speeches); folk rhapsodic and conversational traditions (story-telling); aesthetic daily practices – entertainment or joint actions; political manifestations and social movements. Therefore, performative art is an immense field for realizing various creative and original ideas of

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<sup>14</sup> Seel M. (2005). *Aesthetics of Appearing*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, p. 187.

Ukrainian artists, and thanks to intersubjectivity and interactivity, it is accessible in perception, which is essential for all participants of the action (both for authors and recipients).

The cultural significance of performance lies in its contribution to the maintenance of social order and, if necessary, in the ability to change people and societies through social resistance (performance of resistance – Ukrainian Maidan as an example<sup>15</sup>). The performance also contributes to the creation of identity and self-reflection of culture and society due to the embodiment of symbolic forms, which provides the possibility of alternatives and transformation. In addition, because performance is interactive, it involves symbolic forms and living bodies and thus enables the constitution of meaning and the affirmation of individual and cultural values.

Even the art of photography today acquires features of performativity. A clear example is the photographs of Dmytro Kozatskyi (*Orest*), which testified to the whole world about the war, the defense and encirclement of Mariupol by the enemy and the capture of the defenders of Mariupol. Exhibitions of Dmytro's works took place even during his stay in Russian captivity to draw attention to the problems of the "Azov" defenders and prisoners of war, which contributed to the liberation from captivity. Dmytro Kozatskyi's photos have received several awards, and in 2022, he was included in the "30 under 30: Face of the Future" rating by "Forbes". Dmytro Kozatskyi's well-known photo work, in which a ray of light pouring down from above is a sign of hope, is highly insightful.

Performative street art has become a phenomenon, consisting of the public presentation by the author of his poetic or prose works, testimonies about the war, often combined with music, singing, dancing, theatrical art scenes, etc. Many authors also organize charity collections in this way (mainly for the benefit of the Armed Forces of Ukraine). Since the first days of the war, Serhiy Zhadan has been holding such actions during literary evenings or performances of his musical band. Andriy Permyakov started the *Iron Evacuation* campaign – a literary performance at train stations in Ukrainian cities and embodied the war experiences. In addition, *Iron Evacuation* is a chronicle of the events of the first months of the war, related

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<sup>15</sup> Shevchuk, Dmytro, Karpovets, Maksym. (2020). The Performative Practices in Politics: The Ukrainian Maidan and its Carnivalization. *Symposion*, Volume 7, Issue 1. p. 85-97.

to the organization of the evacuation by rail of the flow of Ukrainian refugees and displaced persons, which has gained significant scale since the beginning of the Russian invasion.

Ukrainian artists pay attention to the need for final decolonization. It should be noted that several artists (Lina Kostenko, Yuriy Andruhovych, Yuriy Vynnychuk, Tamara Hundorova, Oksana Zabuzhko, Serhiy Zhadan, etc.) analyzed the issue of Russian imperialist meta-narratives, which from the submission of the propaganda machine of the Russian Federation flooded the entire information space far long before the full-scale war. The key to success in promoting pro-Russian myths, both in the world and in Ukraine, was, in particular, Russian literature (which at one time became the core of the formation of the narrative about the *great Russian culture*), in the light of which Ukrainian literature (as well as the literature of all peoples of the former Soviet colony) was presented as something less valuable, secondary. At the same time, the achievements of Ukrainians were often appropriated by the empire, the Ukrainian origin of their authors was erased, and the work was presented under the cliché *Russian art*, instead the artists themselves were labeled with the addition of the delineation - *Russian (artist/writer)*. This is precisely what happened in the case of Russia's appropriation of Kazimir Malevich, David Burlyuk, Ilya Repin, Maria Bashkirtseva, and other Ukrainian artists.

To decolonize the Ukrainian cultural space, Serhiy Zhadan held action performances near Aleksander Pushkin monuments in Ukrainian cities in the spring and summer of 2023. And then it happened that these monuments were demolished. If the Russian Empire marked the space with the help of these monuments, then Zhadan, by visiting and publishing photos and videos from this event on social networks, indicated places that needed to be cleaned of the remnants of colonialism. This happened in most cases immediately after the performances.

The exhibition *Own Names* is dedicated to decolonization problems and will be held in Kharkiv's Poetry Square (10 Sumska St.) until October 25, 2023. The authors of the exhibition invite us to reflect on the example of Kharkiv about how the Russian Empire, and later the Soviet Union, marked the space to make it their own eventually: until 2016, the names of Ukrainian artists were half as many as those of Russian artists in the names of streets in Kharkiv, and Shevchenko Street was the only large a street located close to the center and named after a representative of Ukrainian culture. However, as the organizers note, despite numerous attempts to

erase and rewrite our cultural memory, ours remained with us. The world of Pushkin, Tolstoy, and Dostoyevsky can be turned into the world of Kulish and Kurbas, Skovoroda and Kharkiv romantics.

Theatrical art, performative in nature, is also focused on understanding the aesthetic experience of war. A clear example is the documentary performance of the Kherson Regional Academic Music and Drama Theater named after Mykola Kulish *It is (not) possible to stay...* (stage director Yevhenii Reznichenko) about Kherson and the people of Kherson, which reproduces the events of the first weeks and months of the full-scale war in Kherson: mass anti-war actions on the streets of the city (*Khersonsky Maidan*), the occupation of Kherson. In accordance with the author's plan, the play features the voices of actual participants in those events who share their war experiences in the first person.

Signs of performativity can also be found in the mini-sculpture *Kyivska skladanka*, which was opened in May of 2023 on Desyatynnay Street in Kyiv. This sculpture is dedicated to the unity, stability, and mutual assistance of the people of Kyiv and everyone for whom Kyiv has become a home in difficult times. Skladanka is the Ukrainian equivalent of the word "puzzle". In general, the theme of mutual support of each other became one of the key ones in artistic practice, as it embodied the image of unity, stability, and resistance of Ukrainians. Since the beginning of the full-scale war, almost all Ukrainians have joined in volunteering in one way or another. Oleksiy Kustovskyi's illustration, *The hands of a volunteer*, is dedicated to volunteering. A mural dedicated to volunteers was created as part of the "Support" art project.

After the devastating shelling of Lviv at the beginning of July 2023, an action performance was held with a combination of street art and illustrations by Andriy Yermolenko, "Ти цілий?" - "Ми усі цілі." (It can be translated as: Are you survived? – We are all survived?). It should be noticed that the Ukrainian phrase "Ти цілий?" (Are you ) is a close equivalent of the English expression – How are you?, which at the same time refers to the "target" as the goal of a missile attack on the Russians. The phrase "ми усі цілі," on the other hand, emphasizes that there is currently no place in Ukraine where you can feel safe.

Numerous performances have been held in Ukraine since the first days of the full-scale war: in the squares of Ukrainian cities, near the Russian embassy in Kyiv (burning an effigy of Putin, dousing the Russian flag with blood, etc.). Many anti-war art actions and performances occurred

worldwide (Poland, Great Britain, USA, Lithuania, Estonia, Germany, Spain, France, Austria). In particular, in the spring of 2022, an event was held in Berlin in memory of those tortured in Buch. Later in Berlin and other European cities (in Warsaw, Vilnius, Tallinn), anti-war performances were held, in which women smeared with red paint took part – as the image of blood-soaked Ukraine, but also in support of Ukrainian women, victims of rape by the Russian military. In particular, in Vilnius, artists painted a lake with red paint, and a famous athlete swam across it; in Tallinn, women stood with their hands tied in underwear smeared with red paint. During this year's Cannes International Film Festival, Ukrainian blogger Ilona Chernobay, originally from Kramatorsk, took to the red carpet in a dress in the colors of the Ukrainian flag and doused herself in red paint. With her performance, she wanted to draw the attention of the world community to the war in Ukraine. It is worth reminding that the festival was visited by many Russians, and it was opened with a film, where among the co-producers is Konstantin Elkin, who continues to work in Russia.

Graffiti, drawings, and murals in support of Ukraine became very common in many countries of the world (Czech Republic, Poland, Latvia, France, USA, Lithuania, Great Britain) – with inscriptions *StopPutler*, with Ukrainian symbols, using blue-yellow color (the color of our flag), with images of children. In a park, artists created a sculpture in Barcelona with the image of bloody Putin. Celebrities from all over the world expressed support for Ukrainians from the first days of the full-scale war.

Several performances in Ukraine and around the world took place on the anniversary of the enemy's deliberate terrorist attack on the "Azov" prisoners of war in Olenivka to publicize and draw the attention of the world community to the enemy's inhumane policy, which is carried out in violation of all international norms (one of them was the action *Olenivka – neues Auschwitz...*, was held by activists of the Unlimited Democracy organization at the end of July 2023 in the center of Vienna (50 improvised bodies were laid out, which symbolized the dead Ukrainian soldiers in a terrorist attack organized by the Russians against Ukrainian prisoners of war).

An example of the combination of the use of object art and political performance can be created by the Ukrainian artist Vitaly Shuplyak, who lives in Berlin, a sculpture called *Potentially Unacceptable Content Monument*, which is essentially a mirror directed towards the Russian Embassy of the

Russian Federation in Berlin. The art object reminds us of the aggression of Russia, which creates this “potentially unacceptable content”.

Since the beginning of the war, shell casings and parts of missiles that hit Ukrainian territory have been actively used as artefacts. Various installations are created using the remains of destroyed Russian equipment from the de-occupied territories of Kyiv region, Chernihiv region, Kharkiv region, etc. Recently, in Kharkiv, local artist Ilya Chornomaz created a giant sculpture in the form of a human figure from the fragments of missiles used by the Russian army to bombard the Kharkiv region and gave it the telling name *Крилата ракета* (*The Winged Missile*). Such works testify to the horrors of war, but they are also a symbol of the resilience and unity of the Ukrainian people, who bravely resist the enemy.

A combination of the power of words, artistic creativity, and violence often characterizes performance in times of war. And this is not surprising since war is a space of embodied violence in the variety of its manifestations: murder, torture, rape of people; destruction, destruction – of buildings, cities, landscape, soil, industrial and infrastructure facilities; direct or indirect destruction (as a result of shelling, occupation of territories or destructive intervention in the environment) of animals, destruction of zoos and shelters for animals; destruction of cultural values, etc. Therefore, the concepts of genocide, ecocide, and cultural genocide – due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine – have become widespread today.

## **Conclusion**

Modern performatives focus on combining language, art, and violence. The war provides a huge amount of material for analysis. In Plato's *Republic*, the natural urge inherent in man to contemplate violence and its aesthetic experience is analyzed. In particular, there is described a scene of contemplation of violence (the story of Leontius) as the result of a person's natural curiosity, which gives pleasure as a result of the aesthetic experience of violence and also opens up the possibility of forming based on this experience such an aesthetic value as beautiful. The image of violence in works of art is a means of tension in and of itself; it is not only evidence of an actual conflict but also itself. Violence in art is thus able to combine the real and the imaginary. At the same time, unlike the manifestation of violence in other spheres (terrorist attacks, scenes of violence, or some official military actions), the demonstration of violence in

art does not seek to impress with violence but with the phenomenon of violence. This is the goal primarily pursued by Ukrainian artists, who depict scenes of violence in their works that have shocked Ukrainians and the whole world since the beginning of the full-scale war. Therefore, the artist's hands embody the voice/cry of the war victims and the Ukrainian people.

Most performatives are statements that simultaneously perform specific actions and exercise binding power (Judith Butler's theory of performativity, John Austin's concept of performativity of speech acts). For example, expressions that became signs and symbols of the Russo-Ukrainian war thanks to the work of graphic artists, illustrators, and representatives of poster art have a performative power: "Crimea is Ukraine", "Kherson is Ukraine", "I am Borodyanka", "I am Bucha", "Azov-steel", "StandWithUkraine", "PrayForUkraine". They express the unity and solidarity of the Ukrainian people, help mark the space, give meaning to our struggle, and testify to our support from the entire democratic world. What is the meaning of the saying, which became popular from the first days of the war: "Russian warship, go..." because it aptly embodied the message of the entire Ukrainian people to the aggressor. Subsequently, as is known, the Ukrainian Post produced such a postage stamp.

Modern Ukrainian art, which is an aesthetic experience of the realities of war, plays a substantial transformative role: rethinking the tragic experience of war opens up the possibility of mastering existence, inspires hope for better times after the end of the war, and strengthens faith in our future victory.

Paraphrasing the saying of Jon McKenzie, who believed that performance is a paradigm of modern culture: "Perform or disappear", Ukrainian artists create relevant for us: "Perform to survive", "Perform to be a witness to the war", "Perform to win!".

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