

Alexandra de Viveiros gallery

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Booth 24

Viktor & Sergiy Kochetov, Oleksandr Suprun,
Vladyslav Krasnoshchok, Sergiy Lebedynskyy

Kharkiv School, Ukraine

Experiments in photography from 70s till now

In the continuity of a long-standing commitment, Alexandra de Viveiros gallery is privileged to present at Photo Basel 2023 Art Fair five artists belonging to the Kharkiv School of Photography, Ukraine and seeks to highlight their profoundly experimental approach to treating the medium. Since the mid-70s, the artists of the movement treat the medium in an unconventional way, developing a personal aesthetic by defying the taboos of the representation. Their experiments created an iconography that went against the codes of social realism glorifying the repressive state.

Oleksandr Suprun, one of the founders of the movement of Kharkiv School, is known for his analogue collages created in 1974-1997. Addressing the topics typical for Soviet iconography, he subverted them by depicting often vulnerable elders and children photographed secretly on the streets. Rare original cut-outs shall demonstrate the laborious nature of his technique.

Viktor and Sergiy Kochetov transgressed the reportage canon capturing uneventful scenes of daily life and accentuating them with deliberately naïve gesture of hand-colouring, the practice rooted in the local underground tradition called “luriki”.

Vladyslav Krasnoshchok and **Sergiy Lebedynskyy (Shilo group)** make ingenious use of photographic material that combines questioning the School’ heritage with the treatment of current subjects relating to their own experiences. Using anachronistic technique of homemade lith-print on expired paper, the artists revise the tradition of attentiveness to the materiality of the photography.

Oleksandr Suprun

(b. 1945, Berezivka, Kharkiv region, Ukraine)

Oleksandr Suprun belongs to the first generation of the Kharkiv school of photography. In 1962-1968 he studied at the Kharkiv Polytechnic Institute. In the mid-1960s, he became interested in photography and enrolled at the regional photoclub at the House of the Amateur Artists of Trade Unions in 1967. Suprun was a member of the famous *Vremia (Time)* group together with Boris Mikhailov, Juri Rupin and Evgeniy Pavlov. His first solo exhibition was organized in 1973, after which the author participated in numerous contests and salons of the International Federation of Photographic Art (FIAP). He was awarded with the distinction “Excellence FIAP” (EFIAP) in 1996.

During the first decade of his activity Suprun was concentrated mainly on straight documentary photography, in 1975 he became interested in the collage, which gradually replaced ‘pure’ shots. Those years collage was a laborious manual technique of cutting out and mounting of fragments. The personages were mostly elderly people and children, very vulnerable social groups, often placed against a sinister-looking urban background with dramatic high-contrast skies. As taking pictures of people in the street of the Soviet Union could lead to the accusation of spying, the author used a camera hidden in a shopping bag and operated by an ingenious device.

Since 1981, Suprun works as a professor of the Kharkiv Art and Industry Institute (now the Kharkiv State Academy of Design and Arts).

Photographs of Suprun belong to the important public collections such as the collection of **Centre Pompidou**, Paris, France.

They participated in exhibitions in the **Centre Pompidou**, Paris, France; **PinchukArtCentre**, Kyiv, Ukraine and were on presented on Photo London 2022 art fair.

Recently, the international press, such as **Monde Diplomatique** published his works.



Oleksandr Suprun, *Spring in Forest. Lilies of the Valley*, 1975, gelatin silver print, collage, vintage print by the artist

In the famous *Lilies of the Valley*, Suprun, using the same flower fifty-one times, creates a seemingly ideal landscape that, in reality, criticized the standardization of the Soviet youth.

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Oleksandr Suprun, *Dumbness of the desert*, 1967, gelatin silver print, collage, vintage print by the artist



Oleksandr Suprun, *Pegasus*, 1975, gelatin silver print, collage, vintage print by the artist

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Oleksandr Suprun, *Urbanist confession. Caress*, 1975, gelatin silver print, collage, vintage print by the artist



Oleksandr Suprun *Autumn of life*, 1987, gelatin silver print, collage, vintage print by the artist

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Oleksandr Suprun, *Morning Bows*, 1977, gelatin silver print, collage, original cut-out

Viktor Kochetov & Sergiy Kochetov

(1947-2021, Kharkiv, Ukraine, b. 1972, Kharkiv, Ukraine)

Viktor Kochetov has unfinished musical and engineering education. He became engaged in photography in 1968. For over 40 years he has been working as a professional photographer in film and photo laboratories. A significant part of his body of work was created together with the son Sergiy Kochetov.

The Kochetov's art is based on cooperation and mutual exchange of ideas. Their approach was shaped in the dialectic confrontation with the authors' photojournalist background: on the one hand, it's the "craft" of making images that would catch the eye of news agencies in the highly competitive atmosphere; on the other hand, it's a desire to get away from the faked images of welfare and censorship of official reportages. Viktor and Sergiy Kochetov have shifted the focus to the scenes of bold, non staged reality of the late Soviet - Post-Soviet times. The authors are well-known for the extensive usage of the method of hand-colouring of black and white prints, which is rooted in the tradition of "luriki" — enlarged, retouched and often tinted photographic portraits. It was a common practice that evolved into the embodiment of kitsch and image of an average soviet person. Viktor and Sergiy Kochetov experienced different modalities of the method, varying intensity of colouring and formats. A large number of prints are single or double panoramas featuring sceneries of Kharkiv, its outskirts and other locations to which the photographers were sent on assignments. The "fauvistic" colors of their works don't veil but intensify the plainness of the reality, at the same time revealing the lyrical side of mundane subjects.

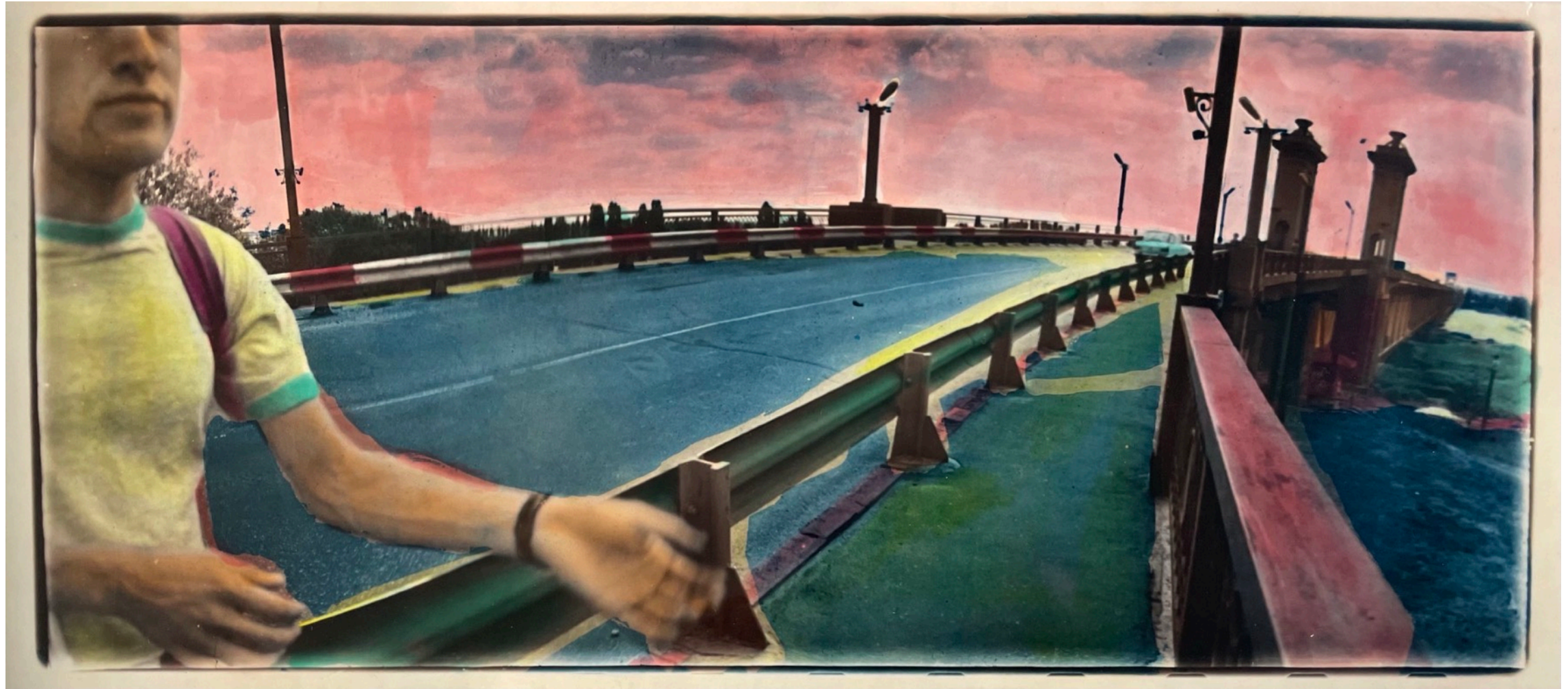
Works of Kochetov belong to the important collections such as the collection of **Centre Pompidou**, Paris, France.

They participated in exhibitions in **Centre Pompidou**, Paris, France; **PinchukArtCentre**, Kyiv, Ukraine; the art center **Apollonia Cultural Exchange**, Strasbourg, France and in international festivals: **FotoFest Biennial**, Houston, USA; Noordelicht International Photo Festival, Groningen, Netherlands; International Festival of Photography PIP, Pingyao, China. The gallery presented the works of Kochetov on Paris Photo 2022 and Photo London 2022 art fairs.

Recently, the international press, such as **Le Monde**, **The Guardian**, **Figaro Magazine**, **The Art Newspaper**, **British Journal of Photography** devoted to the artists numerous articles and published their works.



Viktor & Sergiy Kochetov, *Kharkiv, Marlboro, advertising*, 1990 / 1995, gelatin silver print, toned and hand-coloured



Viktor & Sergiy Kochetov, *Bridge over Dnipro*, 1995, gelatin silver print, toned and hand-coloured



Viktor & Sergiy Kochetov, *Kharkiv, Timurovtsev street. Girl bought bread*, 1998, gelatin silver print, toned and hand-coloured



Viktor & Sergiy Kochetov, *Passing in the village*, 1990, gelatin silver print, toned and hand-coloured

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Viktor & Sergiy Kochetov, Untitled, 1984, gelatin silver print, toned and hand-coloured

Shilo Group: Sergiy Lebedynskyy and Vladyslav Krasnoshchok

Sergiy Lebedynskyy

(b. 1982, Kharkiv, Ukraine)

Lebedynskyy has an engineering background. He has been engaged in photography since 2007. Together with Vladyslav Krasnoshchok, Vadim Trykoz and Oleksiy Sobolev, he co-founded a group *Shilo* in 2010. The artist's manner is defined by the fusion of documentality, variety of technological manipulations and performativity.

Lebedynskyy is also a curator and a collector of Ukrainian and East-European photographs. His collection became the core of the Museum of Kharkiv School of Photography (MOKSOP) founded in 2018.

Vladyslav Krasnoshchok

(b.1980, Kharkiv, Ukraine)

Vladyslav Krasnoshchok studied in Kharkiv Medical University in 1997-2002. He has been actively practicing photography since 2008. He is a member of *Shilo* group since 2010.

The artist has a recognizable style of monochrome documentary shots: they are aesthetically transformed using different technical manipulations. Those manipulations result in the anachronistic effect of vague grained surface and form a "screen" that amplifies the experience of contemporaneity. The author is interested in showing the harshness of daily life, choosing the insider's position, as in the *Bolnichka* series taken at Kharkiv state emergency hospital, where Vladyslav has been working for 10 years.

The works of both artists belong to important public collections such as the collection of **Centre Pompidou**, Paris, France (which owns about 40 of their oeuvres); Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, USA; Kiyosato Museum of Photographic Arts, Hokuto, Yamanashi, Japan; Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

The artists participated in the exhibitions in **Centre Pompidou**, Paris, France; PHOXXI House of Photography, Hambourg, Germany; **Institut of National Art History**, Paris France; **PinchukArtCentre**, Kyiv, Ukraine; Tokyo Photographic Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan; **National Museum of Art**, Riga, Latvia and in international festivals such as: **Les Rencontres de la Photographie d'Arles**, France; **FotoFest Biennial**, Houston, USA; Noordelicht International Photo Festival, Groningen, Netherlands; International Festival of Photography PIP, Pingyao, China. The gallery presented their works on Paris Photo 2021, 2022 and Photo London 2022 art fairs.

Recently, the international press, such as **Le Monde**, **The Guardian**, **Polka Magazine**, Liberation, L'Oeil de la Photographie, 1000 Worlds, Harper's, Aperture, devoted to the artists articles and published their works.

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Night/ Psychedelic Walk series

"We were born in the USSR. Ukraine became independent when we entered schooling. ... We started to photograph *Night* in Kharkiv a few years ago. Photography we made visually fell out from the context of the time; they left the feeling of something already seen in the past. This apparent repeat of the history showed the present time in a surrealistic way. The research we make by means of photography has a goal – we are looking for the self-identification, we are looking for our homeland." Krasnoshchok, Lebedynskyy



Sergiy Lebedynskyy, Untitled, *Night* series, 2010, gelatin silver print, lith-print



Sergiy Lebedynskyy, Untitled, *Night* series, 2010, gelatin silver print, lith-print



Vladyslav Krasnoshchok, Untitled, *Psychedelic Walk* series, 2011, gelatin silver print, lith-print

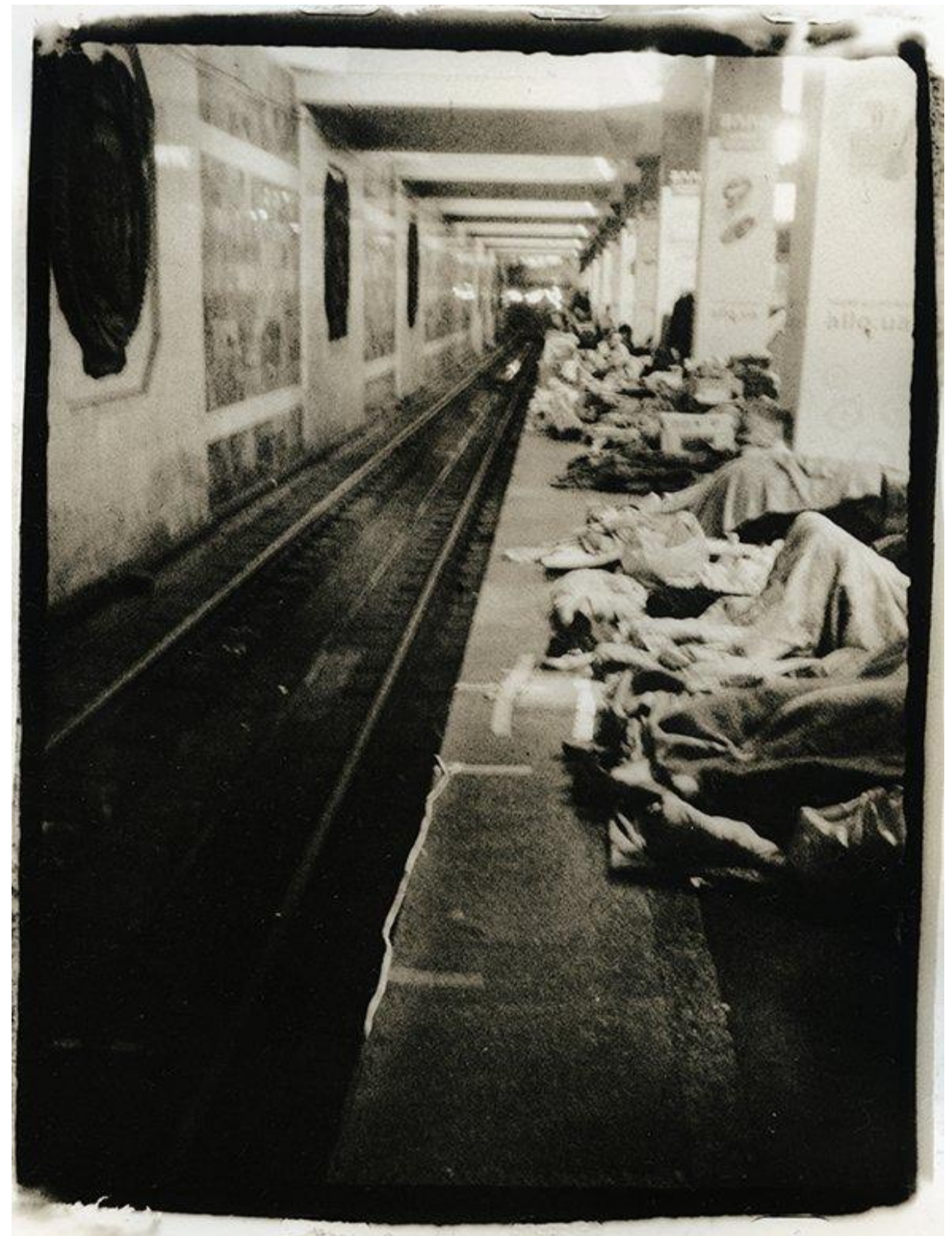
Vladyslav Krasnoshchok, Sergiy Lebedynskyy, *War series*, 2022, ongoing

The series was started after the beginning of the military attack on Ukraine by Russia. Kharkiv, the second largest urban centre of the country, and the artists's hometown, is under daily shelling. Since spring Krasnoshchok has been photographing his city and travelling to other regions of Ukraine particularly affected by the war, like Bucha, Irpin, Borodyanka, Izium, to document the new reality with its rapid and brutal changes.

The deceptively static and aestheticized compositions make the reception of the terrible consequences of the war even more excruciating. Distancing from traditional reportage focus on the momentum and veracity, the artist invests documentality with subjectivity of altered photographs. Expired soviet paper and homemade lith developer add the dimension of materiality to the images, contrasting with a uniform flow of digital shots in mass media. Every photograph is printed by the artist himself at his home, during air raid alerts and missile attacks, as a part of his contribution to the testimonies of the war crimes.

The project contains also works by Vladyslav's fellow photographer from Shilo Group - Sergiy Lebedynskyy, which were made during his visits of Kharkiv.

Vladyslav Krasnoshchok, Untitled, *War series*, 2022, gelatin silver print, lith. print





Vladyslav Krasnoshchok, Untitled. *War* series, 2022, gelatin silver print, lith. print

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Vladyslav Krasnoshchok, Untitled. *War* series, 2022, gelatin silver print, lith. print



Vladyslav Krasnoshchok, Untitled, *War* series, 2022, gelatin silver print, lith. print

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Sergiy Lebedynskyy, Untitled, *War* series, 2022, gelatin silver print, lith. print

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Sergiy Lebedynskyy, Untitled, *War* series, 2022, gelatin silver print, lith. print