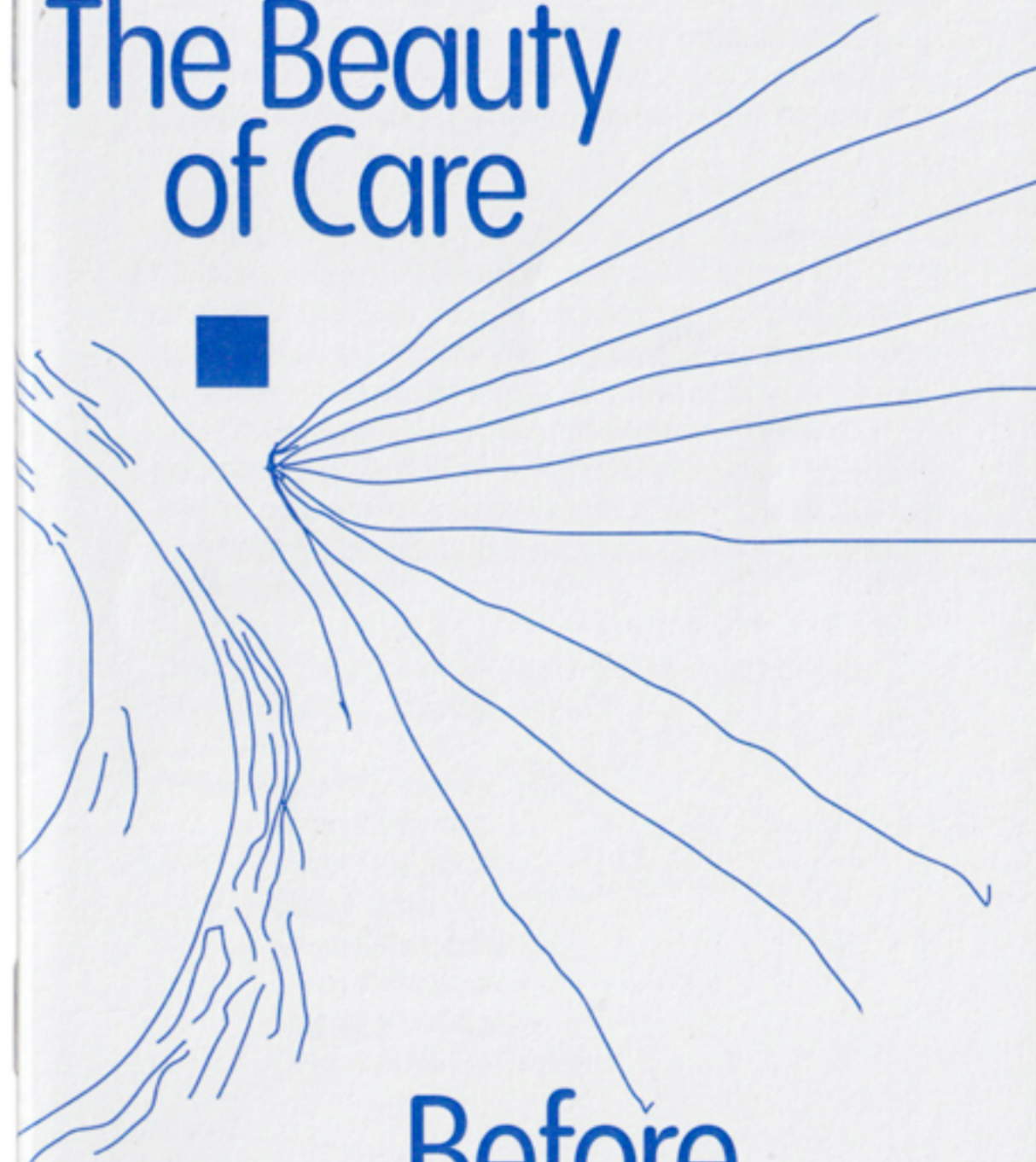


La Biennale di Venezia

18. Mostra Internazionale di Architettura
Partecipazioni Nazionali

The Beauty of Care



The Pavilion of Ukraine

the

Before Future

Arsenale, Sale d'Armi, building A
Spazio Esedra at the Giardini

Before the Future The Pavilion of Ukraine

The structures created by the curators of the Pavilion of Ukraine are spaces for Ukrainian architects and practitioners from various fields to raise questions—questions about telling stories during wartime, about the value of collective action in the face of threat, about the multitude of topics that unite architects in Ukraine today, about questions that must be asked today—before the future.

Over a period of four months during the Biennale, five temporary collectives create a program of changing exhibitions in both locations of the Pavilion. Comprising over thirty participants, the collectives produce statements about reconstruction, ecology, care, commemoration, and the future. These discourses originate from within the Ukrainian context and involve a wide range of participants, with the aim of creating spaces and dialogues fostering mutual understanding.

This booklet accompanies the statement of the third collective, [The Beauty of Care](#).

Collective participants:

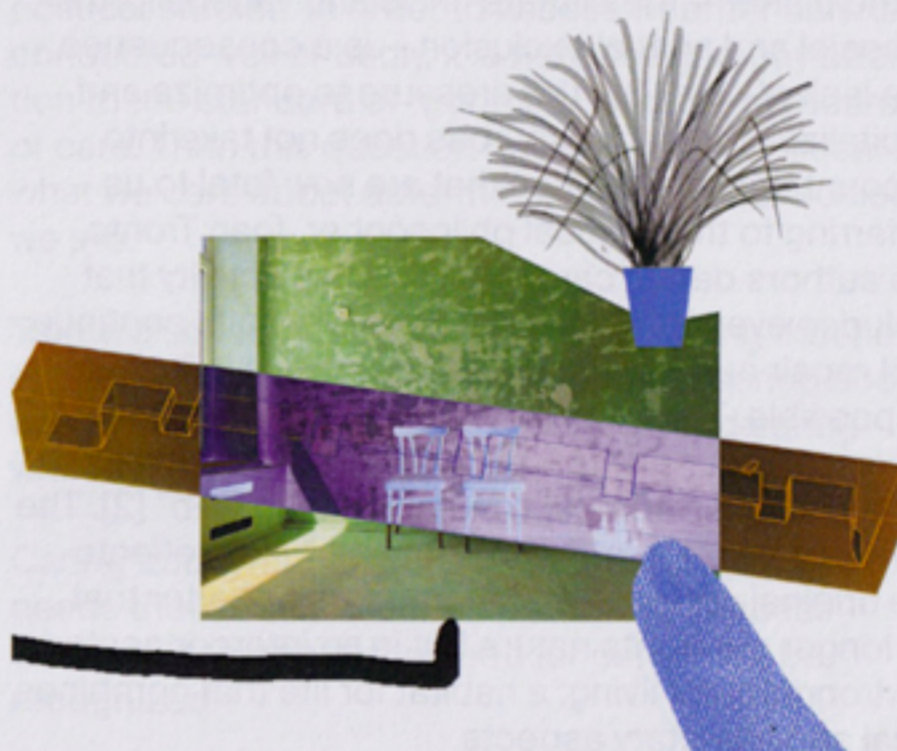
Anna Dobrova
Yuliia Holiuk
Elena Orap
Anna Pashynska
Tania Pashynska
Dasha Podoltseva
Oleksandra Sakharuk

The Beauty of Care

The action of caring is an integral part of architecture, the primary purpose of which is to create protection from external threats. In the situation of Russia's war against Ukraine, everything around us has become vulnerable. To respond to this challenge quickly and adequately, we need a new coordinate system with new agents of change.

The **The Beauty of Care** project aims to tell the stories about creating spaces of care through both collective projects and personal actions by Ukrainians. These are stories about initiatives converting abandoned buildings in relatively safe regions into housing for internally displaced persons, preserving cultural heritage from destruction, creating communities around territorial defense checkpoints, rethinking one's own housing and relationships with neighbors for joint survival, and collectively rebuilding destroyed buildings.

What do these actions have in common? What are the reasons and values behind these projects?



Dasha Podoltseva, *The Beauty of Care*, 2023, Collage, ©Dasha Podoltseva.
With the kind permission of the artist

In their book *Critical Care: Architecture and Urbanism for a Broken Planet* [1], curators Elke Krasny and Angelika Fitz argue that the current state of the planet – the climate crisis and various forms of social and spatial exclusion – is a consequence of a lack of care. But the pressure to optimize and capitalize time and resources does not take into account the externalities that are now fatal to us. Referring to the political philosopher Joan Tronto, the authors define care as “a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our ‘world’ so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, our selves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web” [2]. The notion of this “life-affirming network” also reflects the original notion of architecture as a shelter that no longer confronts nature but is an interconnected environment for living; a habitat for life that combines local and planetary aspects.



Every society shows care according to its standards of living and its understanding of “the best,” according to Tronto [3], who is a professor of women’s and political studies. In order to assess whether care is conducted well or badly, it is necessary to pay attention to the standard of “good life” and the standard of care. Then this question becomes very political – what we care about determines what kind of society we are.

Tronto also identifies five aspects of caring that help explain the nature of this phenomenon: **caring about**, **caring for**, **care giving**, **care receiving**, and **caring with**.

Caring about means that we are attentive to the needs that need to be met. Before the process of caring can begin, the need for care must be recognized.

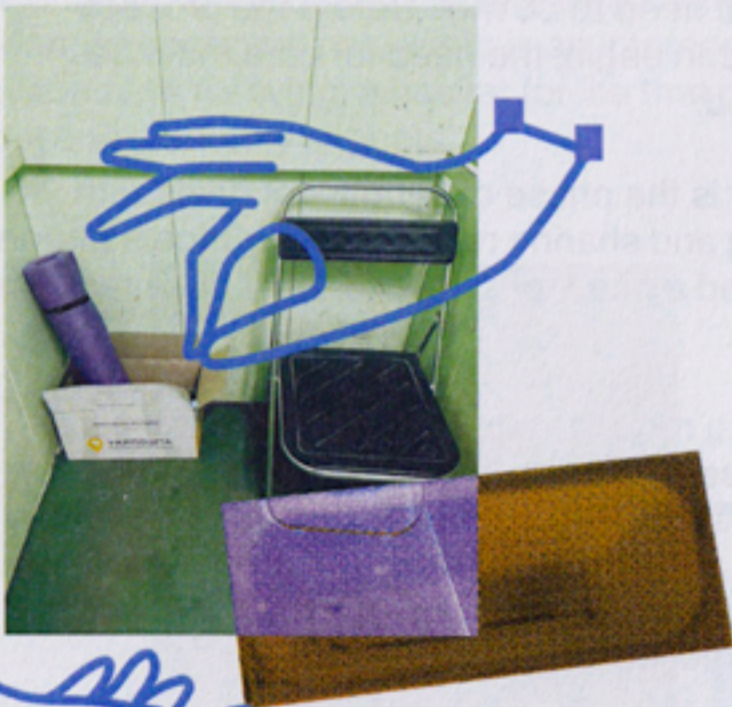
Caring for is the phase of caring that deals with accepting and sharing responsibility. Once someone has noticed a need for care, they must take responsibility for it.

Care giving requires attention to the acts of care themselves. For example, if a building is intended to serve as a shelter, how does it do so? How are materials and workers selected, transported, and used? Are workers protected and cared for during the construction process?

Care receiving. What happens next when care is completed? Because care processes are ongoing, everyone involved is affected and transformed in some way during the process. How well have the needs that started the change been met?

Caring with. Caregiving in all its forms creates a safe environment. When care needs are reliably met, over time, people may feel grateful to those around them who provide this ongoing care. In such cases, it becomes a way to strengthen solidarity and trust between people. Over time, caring can become the norm in society.

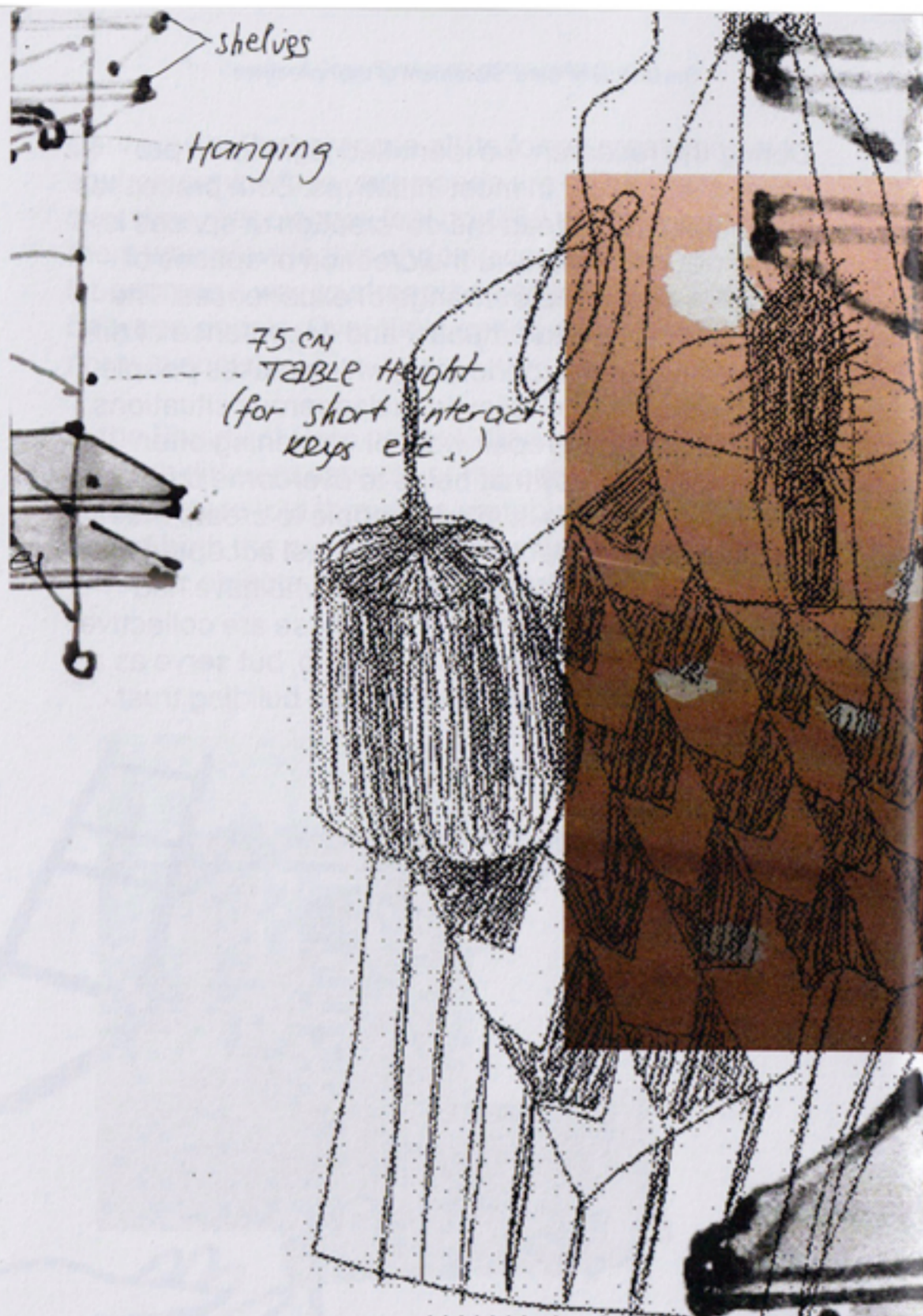
In the **Beauty of Care** project, stories are revealed through different aspects of the phenomenon of care, and are told through a metaphorical reproduction of both the processes that unite them and the symbolic objects that appear in individual projects.



During the research, we identified significant processes that occur in most initiatives. Both processes show how widespread the co-creation of spaces is, which not only results in the creation of spaces of care, but also in the exchange of experiences. The latter contributes to empathy and acceptance of different views and experiences, which makes people feel supported and relieved in dangerous situations. For example, joint repair work or gardening often becomes a therapy that helps to overcome difficulties during wartime. It allows people to create their own idea of a "tribe" in which they feel accepted, and not judged, in a collective of those who have had similar or different experiences. These are collective efforts that do not require leadership, but serve as a mental construct for meditation and building trust.



Above and previous page: Dasha Podoltseva, *The Beauty of Care*, 2023, Collage. ©Dasha Podoltseva. With the kind permission of the artist



- [1] "Critical Care: Architecture and Urbanism for a Broken Planet." Ed. by A. Fitz, E. Krasny, Architectzentrum Wien. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2019.
- [2] Tronto J. C., Fisher B. "Toward a Feminist Theory of Caring. Circles of Care." 1990. P. 36-54.
- [3] Tronto J. C. "Caring Architecture. Critical Care." Ed. by A. Fitz, E. Krasny, Architectzentrum Wien. Cambridge, 2019.



Dasha Podoltseva, The Beauty of Care, 2023, Collage, ©Dasha Podoltseva. With the kind permission of the artist



Above: Yuliia Rusylo, a fragment of embroidery with stories for a tablecloth, 2023, ©METALAB. With the kind permission of the artist and METALAB
Next page: Tania Pashynska, a prototype of a plate with stories, 2023, ©METALAB. With the kind permission of the artist and METALAB

In the safe space between the defensive walls (the installation of the Ukrainian Pavilion in the Giardini della Biennale), a long table for lunch is laid out. It is symbolic of traditional joint actions to share knowledge and experience, which have their roots in many traditions. The stories collected in this way will be embroidered on the tablecloth, uniting the entire installation. The symbolic traditional long tablecloth tells the story of what has happened, and its infinity points to the present in which new stories continue to be created. Plants are planted on the walls as a representation of acts of gardening and farming. The placement of the symbolic garden among the safe and protected area between the walls in the Giardini della Biennale symbolizes the care for a common space, which is both an effective therapy and a means of care, providing beauty and food for the community.



Using a dark room, we show the process of transforming an uncomfortable but safe space in which you have to stay or hide from a threat. Here we apply our skills and observations from the war, taking care of the space and making it livable. Groups of familiar objects recreate spatial situations that were lived or created by various initiatives and individuals, and tell the stories behind them. This scenographic method created a living room with conventional elements (table and chair, bed with curtain, taped-over window, communal table with chandelier), which contain stories about different types and forms of care.



A unique moment in which to augment, change, or re-tell a story, whose audience and impact is felt far beyond the physical walls and spaces that hold it. What we say publicly matters because it is the ground on which change is built, in tiny increments as well as giant leaps.

Lesley Lokko

Beauty of Care focuses less on the results and more on the process of creating protection. And this process of care has its own beauty. Caring means recognizing a challenge, taking responsibility and daring to act. Through stories of ideas, actions, and solutions, we want to show the world different ways of creating spaces of care, in order to remind us of the fundamental purpose of architecture and to broaden the understanding of the role of architects in society – even beyond war.

How does war affect the role of architects and how does it transform people into architects? What principles and motives are manifested in the architecture of care? How can care in architecture become our new normal? How can we find beauty in spaces of care?

To find answers to these questions, we made participation in our project open to anyone, inviting them to tell their story about spaces of care and the people in them. We received responses from members of large volunteer groups and organizations that had formed during the war, as well as from individuals, each telling us about their new lives and care for their own or other people's spaces.

Through the categorization of the term **care** proposed by Joan Tronto, we try to highlight the different aspects of care that are currently manifested in the Ukrainian reality. Here you will find the stories of a soldier arranging his space; a volunteer helping evacuate people from frontline areas; a member of a group bringing together hundreds of people to reconstruct and restore destroyed buildings; and architects renovating abandoned buildings for IDPs. There are also many individual stories, from artists, volunteers, and activists, analyzing different aspects of care and the new roles that have emerged in their practices.

Our goal is not only to record and tell these stories, but also to draw the attention of communities in Ukraine, and the attention of the international community in general, to social projects, and to help those in need find support.

For this reason, we have added descriptions and QR codes to some of the stories, where you can support initiatives that continue to work and take care of spaces for society.



Tania Pashynska, donated plants, 2022 ©Tania Pashynska.
With the kind permission of the artist

Victoria, co-founder of the Repair Together initiative

When the Velyke Divnytstvo [English: Great Girl's Gathering] project started, we, the founders of Repair Together, were the ones who were very active at the sites. We came to the village for two weeks in the winter and it turned out that the female volunteers were not very active yet – there were only one or two of them. Sometimes Dasha (co-founder) and I would work all day in the cold together. We didn't have a permanent foreman. But the project was important to us, not only because of the object we worked on itself. **We wanted to stand up for our project to draw attention to the problem of how women are treated in construction.** When we first told the foreman about the idea, he was supportive, but he was sure that we would get bored with it in a week and he wouldn't need to spend time telling us everything, teaching us and explaining stuff. There were a lot of jokes about manicures and so on.

We were looking for a female professional builder, but we didn't find one – it was as if they simply didn't exist. And men didn't take us seriously. So it was difficult: every day we just had to defend our rights, to be heard at all, to be able to say something to someone. There was constant sabotage from men. **But we did not give up. We continued to come and go to the construction site, to clear the ice there and start to build.** At first, our results were a failure.

Today, Velyke Divnytstvo is an ongoing project of Repair Together, which takes place as often as tolokas [1]. Dozens of women come and build houses.

[1] [Ukr. толока] Communal construction events held by Repair Together. The term is used in general for any volunteer gathering in which people work on something together because it is much easier and faster to achieve with joint efforts or communal help.



Mykyta Abramov, Repair Together, 2022 ©Mykyta Abramov. With the kind permission of the photographer

Anna, former curator of the Asortymentna Kimnata gallery

On the first day of the war, the lines at the military registration and enlistment offices were long, so my friend Alyona wrote to me: “Maybe we should do something we are more qualified for?” Then we decided to evacuate artworks from territories that were in danger. We launched an open call for all artists, regardless of where they were from or what they practiced. We started collecting applications and deciding on the fly how to help them, and looking for people who were at sites.

Our colleagues were quite skeptical: “You’re evacuating material things, not people?” But we were also filling our cars with humanitarian aid when we drove there, and invited artists to evacuate along with their works. We received a lot of requests, sometimes the circumstances changed hourly: around February 26, we received a message from Mariupol, and while we were looking for a car, it was canceled: “Don’t go, the city is closed”. We had a call from an artist from Bucha, who, while hiding from shelling, explained how to open her studio to pick up her works.

The paintings were stored in an improvised storage facility, a coffee shop that was no longer in operation. The owners just gave us the keys. Over time, we installed an alarm system and humidity meters, which are necessary for storing artworks.

When I think about care, I think about our drivers who were out on these dangerous roads. It was difficult to find them and get them to agree to evacuate the art. One of the drivers worked with us through the whole initiative, he is a biochemist by occupation, a very skilled scientist... I also think about how we were packing artworks together. **The Working Room residency just started in our gallery, and there were a**

lot of people there, everyone wanted to join in. So the residency turned into a packaging workshop – a joint act of care for our art.



From the archives of the Asortymentna Kimnata gallery team, 2022
©Asortymentna Kimnata. With the kind permission of the curators

Varvara, architect, researcher, and member of the independent agency Urban Curators and the NGO METALAB

We began working on the book *Studies of the Architecture of Eastern Ukraine* when a journalist friend of mine asked if there were any studies of architecture from the settlements that would have to be restored. My colleagues and I began to think that we ourselves could initiate a study of the “vulnerable” areas that needed it. And we received a grant from the IZOLYATSIA Foundation.

This is a spatial-based study that deals with the appearance, forms, material, details, and with a bit of historical context. Everything that architects might need so that they don't have to invest time in pre-project research of the territory. This book suggests how to make a “home” design that is woven into the history of the region, and will be familiar to people who have left their homes.

We had one day for the expedition. We went in April 2023. In fact, we didn't know what the results would be, what to expect, whether they would give us permission to take pictures... Although we got permission, there were a lot of military people there. But it turned out to be very productive: local activists took us to different places, and we found and recorded a lot of things. We tried to photograph the remaining houses as inspiringly as possible, taking into account the light and various nuances. And it was very important to me that we show this kind of attention, so that local residents could look at these photos and see the value of their native places. Our goal wasn't to find “pearls”, like it would be for tourist or historical publications. The goal was to understand the space. What the neighborhoods, private houses, apartment buildings look like... And to emphasize this with historical photos for context.

For me, this topic is generally about care: so that people, those who have left their homes and now have no sense of home, feel like “this is my city” upon returning to their native places. Because recovery without spatial memory will feel tragic. I understand this because I am from Donetsk. I'm glad that activists have recently recognized the publication and have already passed copies along to the mayor and governor.



Kostiantyn Huzenko, for the research project “Architectural Identity of Eastern Ukraine” by Varvara Yahnyshcheva, 2023 ©Kostiantyn Huzenko. With the kind permission of the photographer



Oleksandra Onopriienko, Protection of stained glass windows of the funicular in Kyiv, 2022 ©Oleksandra Onopriienko. With the kind permission of the photographer

Dasha, co-founder of the Kyiv-based NGO Renovation Map

Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, the Renovation Map team has implemented several projects dedicated to the protection and preservation of architectural heritage. One is for the protection of the valuable stained-glass windows in the two stations of the Kyiv funicular (in partnership with the Solomiansky Kotyky Charitable Foundation and Kyiv residents). The stained glass windows were created by Ukrainian monumental artists. Ivan-Valentyn Zadorozhnyi created twelve stained-glass windows in the upper station, and Mykola Shkaraputa created three stained-glass windows in the lower station.

The main task was to install protective wooden shields to cover the stained-glass windows from shock waves and small flying fragments. The shields were made of thick pine boards covered with galvanized steel sheets for fire resistance. A team of coordinators, architects, climbers, and a designer worked on strengthening the stained-glass windows of the funicular. The installation lasted 3 months. The community paid for the materials and the work of the climbers with their donations.

The shields are still protecting the stained glass windows. There have been several cases when Russian missiles hit nearby. So this protection has fully justified itself.

Anatolii, Ukrainian director and choreographer, speaking about the village of Kalynivske, Kherson region, which suffered 9 months of occupation, 80 flooded farms, and hundreds of hectares of mined land

Anatolii came to Kherson the day after the Russians blew up the Kakhovka hydroelectric power station, with his own motorboat and two additional inflatable boats. Kherson was crowded that day, so he was advised to go up the Inhulets River, a place where humanitarian organizations had not yet reached.

Anatolii went up the Inhulets River to Kalynivske. He took a boat to the "islands" that had people on them. The boats were loaded with the most necessary things – water and food. He gave it all to the people he met on the way. That's how he met Natalia, the couple Serhiy and Lyuda, and Tolik. In conversations with the locals, he asked about their needs and the next time he returned to Kalynivske, he came with everything they had asked for.

On his third trip, Anatolii and I go to the village together. On the way to Kalynivske, we buy some tools and supplies for repair work.

In Kalynivske, Anatolii is welcomed as one of their own: they hug him, and are happy to see him and share the latest news. The couple Lyuda and Serhiy invite us for lunch.

Lyuda sets the table. Borsch with sour cream and meat, wheat porridge with gravy, salad, tea with biscuits. During lunch, Serhiy brings a page from the family album and shows a photo of his wife when she was 22. He says: "We are doing fine. People on the right bank have it worse."



Anatolii Sachivko, House of Culture in the village of Kalynivske after the de-occupation of the Kherson region, 2023 ©Anatolii Sachivko. With the kind permission of the photographer



Mariana Baran, House of Culture in the village of Kalynivske after the de-occupation of the Kherson region, 2023 ©Mariana Baran. With the kind permission of the photographer

Caring for

In the center of the village there is a large Palace of Culture. Before the war, it was the center of the community's cultural life, with dance and singing classes and concerts. During the occupation, it was used as a headquarters by the Russians: at the entrance, we step over scattered shell casings, walk around the boots left by the Russian soldiers, food boxes, mountains of garbage and alcohol bottles, and in the library we take out classics of Ukrainian literature from a pile of books that have been thrown down and sometimes shot through.

Anatolii organized a toloka with volunteers. Together, they cleaned the place up, organized the library, and preserved the building to restore it when they get around to it. Meanwhile, the community is working together to restore residential and critical infrastructure facilities after the occupation and flooding. They get up at five am and work until late at night.

Before we leave, we say goodbye to the head of the military administration, Maksym Yuriyovych, and hug him. He is exhausted, barely able to stand after a hard day, and says: "Come to us one day just to relax, it's so nice here."

A soldier from a base of one of the battalions in eastern Ukraine

At war, you have to take care of yourself first, because your life directly depends on it. Safety comes first. If you dig a trench, dig it good and deep. The deeper, the better.

Otherwise, people are very adaptable. Any space that a person occupies, on average, begins to look like his home in two or three weeks. First you dig, then you connect it to the water and electricity supply, then you bring a chair from an abandoned house, a floorboard, put a mat down. You don't treat your place of residence as temporary, but immediately take care of it. You treat it like a home.

People have spent over a year and a half in trenches. Many hang drawings from schoolchildren. I put up a picture of Ganesha. The most important thing is that the ceiling doesn't leak. In a year and a half, our temporary basement ended up with a refrigerator, comfortable chairs, a playstation, linoleum, and a gym.

You invest in order to arrange your life. You have time, and you need to stay occupied with something. And it's an interesting activity.



From the private archive of a soldier in one of the battalions in eastern Ukraine, 2023. With the kind permission of the author



From the private archive of a soldier in one of the battalions in eastern Ukraine, 2023. With the kind permission of the author



From the private archive of a soldier in one of the battalions in eastern Ukraine, 2023. With the kind permission of the author

Victoria, co-founder of the Repair Together initiative

At the beginning, we did everything manually, without any equipment, because we had no money for it. We used to dismantle construction waste, bricks, etc. with our hands. But after just a few tolokas, it became clear that actually this is exactly how we should be doing it. That we wouldn't be using bulldozers, even if we had the money. Because when the yard and the house are already destroyed, a bulldozer that comes and demolishes everything psychologically traumatizes the owners.

There is a difference when two or three hundred young people come from the capital to your village and dedicate a weekend to helping you in some way. They spend two days with you, dismantling your house. They bring you the intact jugs and other things they found: whatever didn't melt or burn. **They bring you all this because they understand that this is your home, your life, right here in the ruins. A bulldozer can't do that.**

And this is important for us. As this is not just a technical task, these are living people who have faced a tragedy that they did not expect and did not deserve. And here, I think, you cannot dismantle houses without psychological support. Very often, volunteers communicate with the owners during tolokas, support them, ask them what their problems are. Thanks to this communication, they can then provide focused assistance. Because you already established some kind of connection, a responsibility for the person.

In fact, that's how we started constructing, because at first it was just cleanup, cleanup, cleanup. It's good. But over and over, from one toloka to another, volunteers were coming up to us and asking: "Well, we did the demolition. Great, what's next?"



Mykyta Abramov, Repair Together, 2022 ©Mykyta Abramov.
With the kind permission of the photographer

Tetiana, co-founder of the CO-HATY HOUSING project by the NGO METALAB.

We tried to provide food and drinks for everyone during tolokas and at construction sites. We had lunch at the construction sites, on the streets, and got together for picnics. From time to time, we had special dinners with candles and flowers. These joint meals turned out to be the most valuable part of what we were doing for people later. Because it was the moment when we could share our stories of war and life. And this is what created both our team and the community as a whole. **This care for each other is the main console on which everything rests. And CO-HATY is about caring just because you love to and want to.**

Anxiety can develop into aggression, or it can be converted into care. At the beginning of the full-scale invasion, for example, money seemed to have lost its value. At Promprylad [2], we were cooking for free, we worked, we had food, everyone hugged each other, and that's it.

And we continue to share resources — as a team and with volunteers. The general practice is to just help each other. We used to paint the walls in our colleague's office together. The volunteer guys came and helped me with the renovation. We created a space of housing and care for them, and they created a space for us. And it becomes a process. It's not a one-time practice where you helped, they thanked you, and that's it. This care continues.

[2] Promprylad is an innovation center based on an old factory in Ivano-Frankivsk that works at the intersection of four areas of regional development: new economy and urbanism, contemporary art, and education.



Tania Pashynska, Volunteers' lunches at the construction site of CO-HATY, 2023, ©Tania Pashynska. With the kind permission of the author

Oleksandra, volunteer and co-founder of the NE SAMI project

Dozens of frontline towns and villages in Ukraine are under daily shelling. The front line is about 3,700 kilometers long. In many settlements, there is not a single surviving building left, but there are still people. Their homes are basements. They are supplied by aid drop points built by volunteers or local residents, where volunteers bring food, water, and hygiene products.

One of these stations is in Avdiivka. The city is under Ukrainian control and is located on the front line, 15 kilometers from Donetsk, which has been occupied since 2014. I've been here many times, because we stop by every time we go to evacuate people from Avdiivka.

Mrs. Franzivna and Maryna meet my colleague and me with smiles and hugs. They tell me what's new: "Here are a few fresh bouquets of flowers, these are wild flowers that an 83-year-old woman picked for us, and we put a fan on them because it's so hot." Mrs. Franzivna recounts the news and slices pears: "Sanka, it's the Apple Feast of the Saviour today, there are no apples, but someone brought some pears to the aid drop point, we need to eat them." She takes out the honey and puts it on the table. **I bite into the pear, the basement walls shake periodically and dust falls into my honey.** "Oh, this means that they are covering our square now, because the sound of the strikes is clearly audible even in the dungeon, despite the working generator," I think to myself.

Maryna asks me where I'm going to sleep; I always choose the sofa. While she makes up the beds for my colleague and me, Mrs. Franzivna and I organize a checkers tournament. They are on the bookshelf,



Oleksandra Sakharuk, Frontline cellars, 2023 ©Oleksandra Sakharuk.
With the kind permission of the author



Oleksandra Sakharuk, Frontline cellars, 2023 ©Oleksandra Sakharuk.
With the kind permission of the author

books and board games are brought here by locals and volunteers. You can bring them or take them away to read. I wash my face and brush my teeth before going to bed.

I need to go to the bathroom. There are a few options: use a bucket or run across the street to the building of a derelict shopping center. I don't want to use the bucket. I take a flashlight, put on a bulletproof vest and helmet and run. The doors are long gone, which is good – I can run faster. I return to the basement. Maryna is doing her evening routine: applying cream, looking in the mirror on the shelf next to her bed. We talk about the war in Syria, about Georgia, about the earthquakes in Turkey, about how we all began to show more empathy for world tragedies after the war came to us. The shelling starts again. You can hear them especially well at night, when the generator goes off. But you have already learned to accept the sounds of explosions as part of everyday life, like a mechanical clock that ticks loudly in your room before you go to sleep.

Yulia, editor, volunteer of the CO-HATY HOUSING project by the NGO METALAB

I returned to Frankivsk from the village. It was the first spring of the full-scale war. We hosted people from Kyiv at home, and I slept on the floor. There was an urgent need to occupy myself with something useful. I saw an open call: CO-HATY was looking for volunteers to work at their first facility. I went there the next day. Lots of people, all getting to know each other, moving around, sweeping, scrubbing the walls. I chose a room to work alone. An air-raid alert started. I put down the broom and decided to sing. I have always been afraid to sing if there is a chance that someone will hear – it's a very vulnerable state. But the feeling of death and uncertainty took away my fear.

In the Ukrainian tradition, springtime songs are loud and joyful – girls chased away the winter and drowned the snow with their voices, singing to the space with their strength and youth. I started singing while looking out the window. I turned around and it seemed that everyone who worked on the floor was looking into my room from the corridor. I felt at home, among my friends. Later on my friend and I went regularly there to volunteer and sing.



Yuliia Holiuk, volunteering at the CO-HATY project, 2023 ©Yuliia Holiuk.
With the kind permission of the author



Oleksandra Sakharuk, Chasiv Yar, 2023 ©Oleksandra Sakharuk.
With the kind permission of the author

Oleksandra, volunteer and co-founder of the NE SAMI project

We often evacuate people from frontline villages. We find new houses for them in safer areas. Usually, within a few weeks, the new homes already have gardens and farms. Let me tell you about our very first evacuation to such a hut. We received an application from Olha and Mykhailo from Chasiv Yar. This is a town near Bakhmut. When we arrived, they were living in their neighbors' house because theirs had already been destroyed by bombing. The family had a few bags of surviving belongings... and two bags with some seeds and seedlings.

We accommodated Olha and Mykhailo in a village in Cherkasy region. A week later, we came to see them, and Olha had already planted a vegetable garden, Mykhailo had chickens and created a space in one of the sheds to grow seedlings. Olha gave us a tour: "Here are peppers, cucumbers, and tomatoes, we brought them from Chasiv Yar." "And that whole area will be covered with potatoes," Mykhailo added, "It's a pity we didn't have time to plant tobacco, we had a lot of it in Chasiv Yar."

Nadiia, a resident of the village of Lukashivka who joined the volunteer organization Repair Together.

We came from time to time here, to Lukashivka. It was probably the fourth day of the toloka. As usual, many people were working at the construction sites. One day, an old woman named Nadiia saw it. She realized what was happening and started bringing us food: dumplings, pickles, etc. She brought us everything she could.

We asked her why she was doing this, because we were not rebuilding her house (it was still intact). And Nadiia said: "You've come to help the victims of the fire. They have nothing, they can't thank you. But I have an intact house and an undamaged cellar, so I can."

Now, Nadiia comes to the construction site almost every day. She offers food, takes away laundry, and if necessary, accommodates volunteers or journalists. The Repair Together team repays Nadiia's kindness by repairing the gate and shed that were damaged by shelling. And on her birthday, we went to Kyiv together and hung out there.



Oleksandra Sakharuk, personal archive from Repair Together events, 2023
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Mykyta Abramov, Repair Together, 2022 ©Mykyta Abramov.
With the kind permission of the photographer

Victoria, co-founder of the Repair Together initiative

I had a group of friends with whom we traveled around Ukraine, to cultural events or to spend time in nature. To Malanka, for example, or to the Carpathians, to Dzharylhach, the Kinburn Spit. We organized parties there and made a lot of acquaintances that way. So, when the full-scale war started, I thought: if there is such a community – an easy-going one, ready to take their backpacks and tents and go somewhere – then most likely these people are also ready to go somewhere in the countryside, but with a purpose. So I made a story on Instagram and invited my friends to the cleanup in Hostomel. That's how the project started; with each subsequent toloka, the number of people grew, and we added some cultural activities to the cleaning.

Everything we do is based solely on care, because we are not architects, we are not builders, we never planned to do that. We don't have any ambitions for architecture or anything like that. Our main motivation is to help and care for people. That's why we have to learn how to build and understand architectural projects. It's all about helping people. Let's call it a manifestation of care. This is a certain credo on which the community is built.

Vasyliisa, architect and illustrator from Kharkiv, currently living in Berlin

Last week I came to my native Kharkiv for the first time since 24 February. The last time I was in the city was in December 2021 with an urban project in Saltovka. We wanted to continue, but the war put everything on pause.

So when last week I met an energetic guy named Magran, who created a pop-up exhibition in the city in April 2023 and asked me to hold a workshop in their space, I immediately agreed. This is a story about the creative life of Kharkiv that is in full swing every day. To understand what Kharkiv is like now, imagine a plywood board with the inscription "We're open". The desire to live life here and now is the driving force. Being in the same city at the same time allowed this initiative to happen so spontaneously. After this accidental meeting, we came to the conclusion that we want to continue developing such workshops in Kharkiv. We are currently thinking about finding grants for support.



Vasyliisa Shchoholeva, "Kharkiv is a dream" artistic intervention, Kharkiv, 2023 © Vasyliisa Shchoholeva. With the kind permission of the artist

Organizations and initiatives whose participants shared their stories.

The description of these initiatives adds context to the stories themselves, and gives an idea of how caring is becoming the new normal in everyday life and in the architectural profession. This is a small glimpse of the volunteer movement in Ukraine. We encourage everyone interested to read more about the initiatives, as this is a unique opportunity to support grassroots projects directly.

Organizations and initiatives whose participants shared their stories.

1. REPAIR.TOGETHER is more than just a volunteering. This is a lifestyle. We are rebuilding communities affected by the Russian occupation and giving hope and faith to those who need it so much in these dark times. We have been rebuilding villages in the Chernihiv region of Ukraine since its liberation from Russian forces. Together with local residents, authorities and volunteers from Ukraine and around the world, we are trying to overcome the consequences of the war. Our team is constantly visiting the de-occupied communities to support them in this darkest time. Together with 2,500+ volunteers, we have already cleaned 120+ houses in 15 villages and prepared them for restoration. Also, with the help of our partners, we have already renovated 30 houses and built 7 new houses from scratch. These families returned to their homes. Our next goal is to build another 16 new homes. During our activity, we held 15 concerts and 3 raves with the participation of dozens of DJs and performers.

repair-together.com



Organizations and initiatives whose participants shared their stories.

2. CO-HATY – a project to create comfortable housing for internally displaced persons. As of 2023, the team has restored 4 abandoned buildings in western Ukraine, where more than 750 people were evacuated and now live.

Кохати / kohaty, a Ukrainian word meaning:

1) To love.

2) To grow carefully, nurture something, take care of something.

“CO-” is a prefix meaning “together”.

The project was initiated by the urban laboratory METALAB from Ivano-Frankivsk and members of the independent agency Urban Curators relocated from Kyiv. Later, other resettled professionals joined the team. With the support of our partners and the volunteer community, we restore buildings, creating housing with love and dignity.

metalab.space/co-haty-eng



Organizations and initiatives whose participants shared their stories.

3. NE SAMI is a Ukrainian NGO that provides quality and systematic assistance in evacuation and further adaptation. The NE SAMI program consists of 4 steps:

1) information work in frontline areas,

2) evacuation,

3) provision of permanent housing,

4) support in the process of adaptation.

In addition, NE SAMI engages in projects that develop a conscious civil society, destroy interregional stereotypes and prejudices, and promote the employment of IDPs.

instagram: [@nesami.ua](https://www.instagram.com/nesami.ua)



Organizations and initiatives whose participants shared their stories.

4. NGO Renovation Map is a community of concerned citizens who research and advocate for abandoned architectural heritage (from 200-year-old buildings to modernist monuments). The team initiates the assignment of protective statuses, cooperates with authorities and responsible businesses, defends buildings in courts, creates art and educational projects, implements architectural interventions and protects valuable objects from shelling. Over the years of its activity, the organization was able to raise the issue of cultural heritage protection to a new, socially significant level. In addition, it has preserved up to ten valuable Kyiv buildings, formed a powerful community of heritage defenders, and inspired ordinary citizens to research and advocate for valuable architectural buildings.

renovationmap.org



Organizations and initiatives whose participants shared their stories.

5. NGO Urban Curators is an independent agency and interdisciplinary team working in the field of urban planning, architecture and urban management.

urbancurators.com.ua



Organizations and initiatives whose participants shared their stories.

6. Asortymentna Kimnata is both a physical space in Ivano-Frankivsk and a scalable model of supportive formats for contemporary art on the “periphery”. During 5 years of community work in Frankivsk, Asortymentna Kimnata has gone through the formats of a classic white cube, a nomadic gallery, and is currently defining itself as project space. On 24 February, the Asortymentna kimnata team launched a program to support the evacuation of artistic materials of value and the preservation of works – primarily for the spaces and workshops of artists who were forced to leave their cities. We were able to relocate about 700 works from small local museums, private initiatives and family archives to secure storage. In addition, thanks to the support from our partners, we were able to send quick financial support to 25 artists to continue their practices. Among the works and archives that Asortymentna Kimnata helped to evacuate was the legacy of Fedir Tetyanich.

asortymentna-kimnata.space



Anna Dobrova. Has a background in architecture from the National Academy of Fine Arts in Kyiv, the Technical University of Vienna, and her experience in multiple architectural and urban planning firms including ФОРМА, Feld72, and bogner-cc. While living in Vienna, she became interested in socially-oriented architecture, which she practices through curation, educational workshops, art and urban interventions, and participatory action research. Since 2015 she has co-funded the NGO MistoDiya for urban interventions, research, and curatorial practices, and in 2018, she co-founded and curated Metalab.if, an urban laboratory in Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine. Since 2022 she has been living in Basel, CH, and is an active member of Swiss Network with Ukraine in ETH and the NGO Re-Win.



Yuliia Holiuk. Majored in publishing and editing at Borys Hrinchenko Kyiv University. She has worked with various text formats as an author and editor, and is passionate about educational projects, which she views as vital in a thriving civil society. She has partnered with LAURUS publishing house, and served as editor for a professional magazine for educators. She creates scripts for SAMI educational productions that address significant themes like human rights, history, public service growth, and digitalization. She is involved with content for Metalab urban laboratory. She is interested in Ukrainian traditional culture, and composes poetry and crafts zines that showcase arts and culture, authentic traditions in the urban context, as well as the war in Ukraine.



Elena Orap. Born Kyiv, Ukraine. She is an architect, researcher and artist. She studied architecture at the Academy of Fine Arts and Architecture and physics at Taras Shevchenko National University of Ukraine. She practices architecture and design in various forms, including designing spaces and objects, creating installations, and curating art exhibitions. She is interested in mass housing, maps and borders, and the architecture of emergency. She is a co-founder of the SERIA__ project, dedicated to Ukrainian panel mass housing. After the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, she fled to Switzerland and later joined EPFL with the research project Ukraine. Architecture of Emergency developed at ALICE lab, which investigates the agency of architecture in the current state of emergency in Ukraine, through readings of the buildings and structures that have appeared during the war.



Anna Pashynska. Co-founder and curator of the MetaLab Urban Laboratory, the Biennale City Scanning Session, and a makerspace in Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine. She is a project lead on a wide range of projects, specializing in spatial research and design, product design, community-led public space projects, and institutional planning. Today, with the Metalab team, she works supporting a socially equal, spatially comfortable, culturally rich, environmentally responsible, and economically balanced built environment. In order to reach these goals, Metalab aims to create a supportive environment and a field for experimentation, where the social and spatial potential of the city can be developed and tested in practice.



Tania Pashynska. Co-founder and architect of the Co-Haty project in Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine. She is an architect, stage designer, and 3D artist with over 10 years of working experience in Austria, Germany, and Ukraine. Through most of her architectural career she has focused on repurposing and planning residential buildings. She studied at technical universities of Lviv, Ukraine, and Vienna, Austria. Her design practice is based around hands-on experimentation and collaborations with local manufacturers and the community. Her background in dance influences her interest in designing spaces for performance and movement.



Dasha Podoltseva. Visual artist and graphic designer based in Kyiv. She is a graduate of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, and has studied academic drawing and painting in Oleksandr Titov's workshop, as well as Central Saint Martins/University of Arts London summer school, the Petr Bankov poster school, and the Canactions Studio 1 school of urban planning. She is a co-founder of the SERIA__ project, dedicated to Ukrainian brutalist mass housing. She works with subjects such as public space, the material world, and "temporary inconveniences". She creates installations and graphic works, and curates exhibitions. She was awarded the Golden Medal at the International Poster Biennale in Warsaw for the work (Unwanted) Harvest.



Oleksandra Sakharuk. Public figure and journalist. Since the beginning of the full-scale war in Ukraine, she has filmed the de-occupied and frontline territories while also creating an independent Ukrainian video magazine called Ikla, focused on communicating with Ukrainians in a language that resonates with them, and discussing important topics for society. The NGO NE SAMI was founded, following extensive conversations with local residents in frontline territories that identified the necessity to construct a comprehensive system to aid people in evacuating and adapting to new environments. The organization is dedicated to facilitating the comprehensive evacuation of civilians and developing projects that support their successful adaptation. Together with NE SAMI, she continues to conduct research on eastern and southern Ukraine. The organization's work also promotes Ukrainian culture, debunks myths, and addresses interregional prejudices that result from Russian propaganda.

Team

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Mariana Oleskiv,
State Agency for Tourism Development of Ukraine

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Gogola Agency

Moko Agency



Yuliia Rusylo, a fragment of embroidery with stories for a tablecloth, 2023,
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The Pavilion of Ukraine
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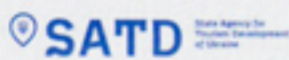
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<https://ukrainianpavilion.org>

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