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Reflection of the russian-Ukrainian War in the projects of Graphic Design Students at the “Universum” College of Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University

The russian-Ukrainian War 2014 – 2024 changes the context of perception of art in Ukraine. The consequences that Ukraine faced in the de-occupied and war-affected territories pervade the students’ projects. Most of the students’ works reflect the environment they encounter every day, their experiences, pain, and desire to convey their feelings to others.

The article presents several student projects completed over the past two years. Historical events, feelings, and stories of individual people are reflected in the works of artists, writers, cinematographers, and designers. Many works of art speak the language of history or contemporary events. Art resonates, finds a response in people’s souls, and touches places, where facts and complex texts are powerless.

Students of “Universum” College of Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University are no exception. No. 4 (2022) of the magazine Grinchenko-Seton presented the works of college students, talking about the first months of the war, and their reflection on what they experienced and saw with their own eyes.

Time passes, circumstances change, many have returned home, and the war has moved to another stage, these are our everyday lives that must be taken into account. New thoughts, ideas, and needs influence the creative thinking of teachers and students, and new projects appear.

Many countries of the world are concerned about environmental problems and the conservation of natural resources. Ukraine is no exception. Third-year Graphic Design students were tasked with creating a series of #Think_green posters. The main goal of the project was to find out how our daily lives affect the ecology of the world.

Among the received projects, it is worth noting the work of students Miroslava Orzhekhovska and Anastasia Maslyuk, who mentioned the de-occupied territories of the Kyiv region. It turned out that not all areas are accessible for living because they need demining. Today in Ukraine, much attention is paid to this problem, introductory lectures are held, animated videos and online courses are created, but this is not the only thing that people face.

The girls decided to investigate how military actions affect the ecology of a private home, what people see when they return home, and what problems they face.

They decided to convey the results of their research in the format of the comic book “Two Views”. The story combines the perspective of a woman returning home and an environmental expert who helps investigate and clean up pollution. Pollution can include chemical spills, clogged wells, and clogged areas around the house, that affect a person’s ability to function in their own home.

In the comic book, a mother returns with her young son, who may get into trouble while walking in the yard, and therefore needs care and more attention to the area around the house.



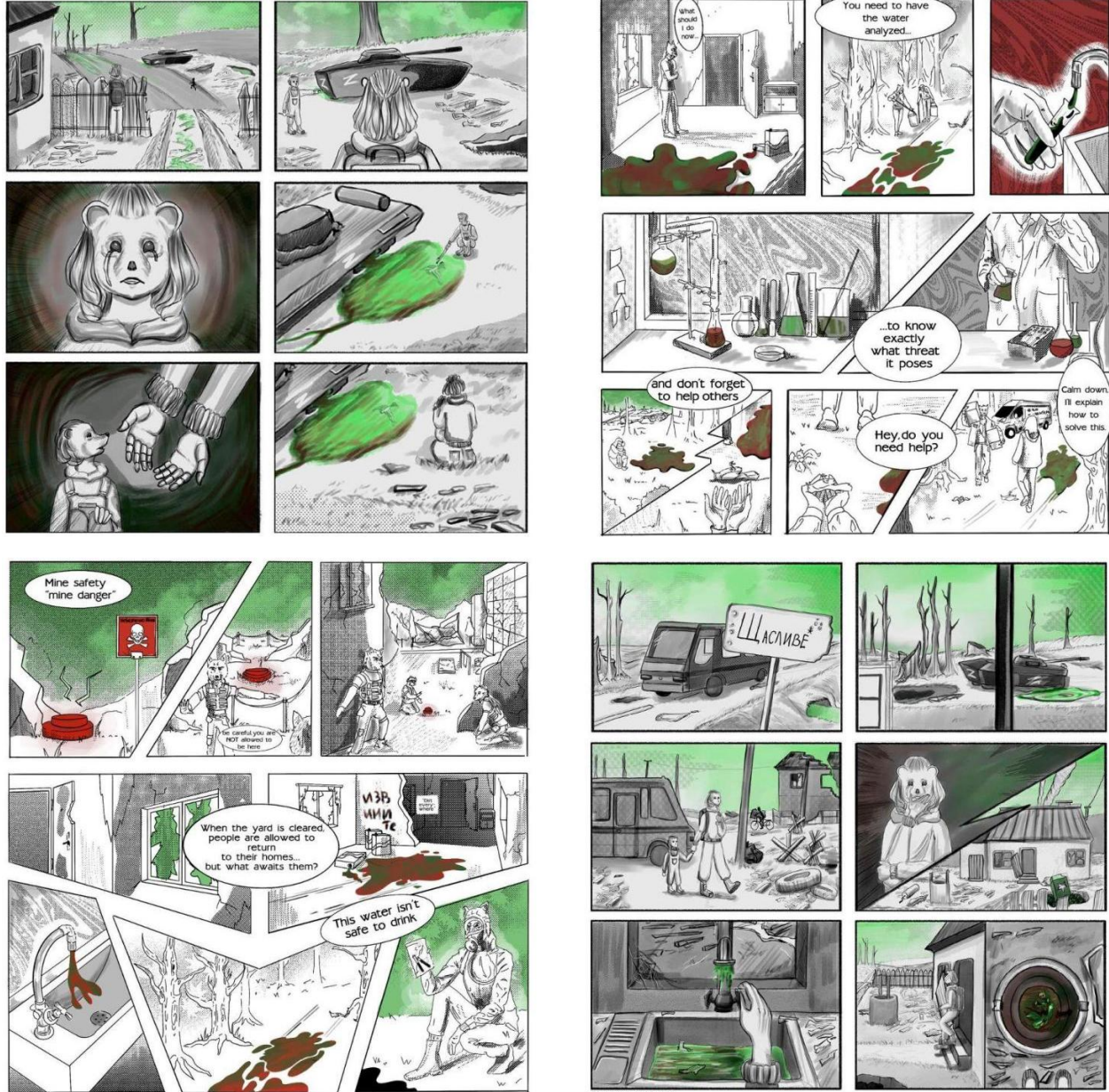
”Two views” by Miroslava Orzhekhovska and Anastasia Maslyuk

The proposed story is, first of all, a work of art, so the heroes are not people, but animals. The owners of the house, a mother and her little son, are hedgehogs, and the professional ecologist trying to help them is a wolf who cares about the environment, takes samples of soil and water to analyze their suitability for use, and helps to understand the causes of pollution of the yard and the environment.

The environmental impact of war and its consequences is very important and relevant, especially when such projects are created during the events themselves, and not reproduced based on historical research. Today, Ukraine has many problems that need to be solved first. However, the environmental problem exists somewhere nearby.

People do not have time to understand how harmful the consequences of this war are. The explosion of the Kakhovka Reservoir vividly showed how military actions could damage not only

the place where such disasters occur, but also affect many other areas, affecting the ecosystem of the Black Sea and its coast.



“Two views” by Miroslava Orzhekhovska and Anastasia Maslyuk

Preparing events for the second year of the full-scale invasion of Russian troops on the territory of Ukraine, teachers of the “Universum” College visited the town of Borodyanka, which

is known to the whole world for the shot Taras Shevchenko monument and the destroyed high-rise buildings.

From February 24, 2022, the enemy made his way to the capital of Ukraine, Kyiv, through the central street of Borodyanka.

The aggressor mercilessly attacked peaceful houses, shelling them with tanks, rocket launchers, and artillery.

At that time, peaceful residents who did not have time to leave their homes and did not expect such actions from their “brothers” occupied the apartments.

Two years have passed. Borodyanka continues to live its life. The wounds received in the first days of the invasion are slowly healing. Many of them are no longer possible to cure, as well as to return those who died under the rubble.

When tourists from all over the world come to Ukraine, they must visit the towns of Kyiv region that suffered during the occupation.

Borodyanka is among them. Today, on the streets of Borodyanka, you are used to hearing both the Ukrainian language and the languages of different countries.

Not indifferent to the grief of Ukrainians, people are trying to become part of this city.

Famous graffiti masters Banksy and Christian Gami, known under the pseudonym C215, left their drawings on the walls of houses.

Today, these images create a unique exhibition that attracts new tourists to the town. College teachers visited Borodyanka and brought a series of their own photos.

Second-year students Krasun Anna, Khlebnikova Margarita, and Starynets Daryna, after looking at these photos, tried to recreate their emotions related to the present-day half-destroyed town.

The project “Borodyanka Two Years Later” is a story about what a person sees after visiting a destroyed neighborhood and burnt buildings.

What do the abandoned things, furniture, apartments, and walls tell?

About the amazing feeling when life rages next to mutilated houses.

The ghost quarter, located at the entrance to Borodyanka, tells its own stories, which the girls tried to find and tell in their project.



“With Faith in Victory” by Elena Kazimirenko



“Retur” by Elena Kazimirenko



“Children” by Daryna Starynets



“Lost in Time” by Anna Krasun and Margarita Khlebnikova



“Lost in Time” by Anna Krasun and Margarita Khlebnikova

The main message that Ukrainians are trying to convey today is that today, along with ruined houses and people's souls, in cities where it is normal to see a person in uniform and with a machine gun, life continues. Like many artists in our country, college teachers and students decorate shell casings with their wonderful designs.

Such projects show how military paraphernalia becomes a work of art, begins to speak the language of artists, and expresses the emotions and thoughts of authors.

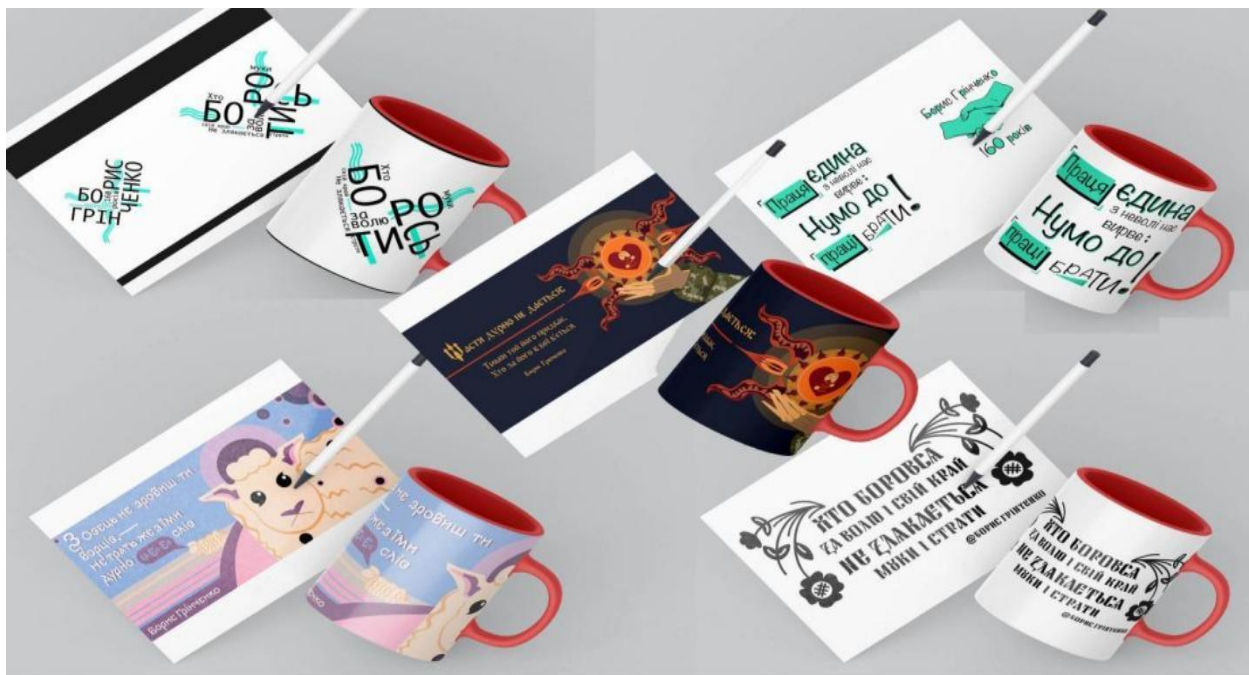
In addition to the creative and emotional component, such exhibits can become excellent decorations for offices, cafes, and other places, they are sold at auctions to transfer the received money to the needs of the military.

Borys Grinchenko, whose name Grinchenko University is honored to bear, in the 20th century called to fight for Ukraine. The relevance of his statements was studied by female students in the process of preparing for the University competition of design projects “Image of Borys Grinchenko”. The task of the competition was to create illustrations for corporate cups of Grinchenko University.

The sayings of Borys Grinchenko were chosen as the main idea of the illustrations: “Only work will free us from slavery: work, brothers!”, “Whoever fought for freedom and his land will not be afraid of torment and execution”, “You cannot make fighters out of sheep - do not waste stupid words on them”, “Happiness is not given for nothing: only the one who fights for it in battle will acquire it”.



Creative projects of painting tubes from shells by teachers and students of the college



Cups “Image of Borys Grinchenko’s sayings” from students Tetyana Kulyk and Eleonora Grechyshkina, Miroslava Orzhekhovska, Maria Kovalchuk

Illustrations of the competition winners were printed on cups, which anyone could buy during a charity auction, and the money received was donated to the needs of the military.

The presented projects represent a reflection of the Russian-Ukrainian war in a relatively calm and one of the most protected cities in Ukraine. At the same time, Kyiv itself is the central city, the occupiers tried to reach the capital at the beginning of the invasion, and even now, no city in the country can completely protect itself from rocket fire.

Artists and designers of the capital's educational institutions leave an emotional memory that is preserved in their works. Young designers are concerned about the future because it is on their shoulders that the rebuilding of the country, its movement towards a better life, and the creation of high-quality social conditions for every person will fall.

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