

Paweł Leszkowicz

Queer Ukraine

Images, Ideas, Struggles

Paweł Leszkowicz: Queer Ukraine. Images, Ideas, Struggles

In: Kilian Heck und Aleksandra Lipińska (Hrsg.): Als der Krieg kam ... Neue Beiträge zur Kunst in der Ukraine, Heidelberg: arthistoricum 2023, S. 134–160.

<https://doi.org/10.11588/arthistoricum.1227.c17107>

In the text I would like to present a queer angle on the current war, to draw attention to recent developments in LGBTQ+ art and activism in Ukraine, on the basis of a contextual analysis of selected artworks by Ukrainian artists. I will present a minoritarian, queer perspective on the invasion, along with some historical perspective on the queer history and art of Ukraine in the twenty-first century.

We Were Here (2018) by Anton Shebetko (Ukr. Антон Шебетко) is a series of photographic portraits highlighting the role played in the war against the Russians since 2014 by queer soldiers in the Ukrainian army (Fig. 1a–c). The series consists of photos, prints on textiles, videos, and audio interviews. It was created as part of the art residency project *Coming Out of Isolation: Through Art to Visibility* organized by the IZOLYATSIYA (Ukr. Ізоляція) cultural center and the NGO Kyiv Pride with the support of the German foundation EVZ. The *EVZ-Stiftung (Erinnerung, Verantwortung und Zukunft)*, founded in memory of the victims of National Socialism, works to promote human rights and understanding between peoples. The purpose of the project “Coming Out of Isolation” was to raise and counter the issue of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in Ukraine through art.¹

We Were Here is a series of photographs of mostly masked and camouflaged Ukrainian queer soldiers and volunteer fighters, both men and women, engaged in the anti-terrorist operation in eastern Ukraine. When the portraits were taken in 2018, the soldiers were participating in the Joint Forces Operation. The portraits are intended to reflect both the conflict itself and the soldiers’ own reconciliation between their identities on the one hand as Ukrainian soldiers fighting in the war against the Russians, and on the other as queer individuals who are heroes but at the same time are forced to conceal their identity due to the danger of homophobic reactions from and trouble within the army, with its rigidly masculine structure. Many of the soldiers have to remain in the closet not only during their military service, but also in civilian life.² In this project about visibility, they are out, but humorously, sometimes grotesquely masked. The portraits conceal their identities by means of their military uniforms, composition, poses, and a variety of facial coverings, and sometimes with impastos of rainbow paint and colors. Some of the portraits are serious, others playful. They are accompa-

1 IZOLYATSIYA (2018).

2 SHEBETKO (2018).



Fig. 1 a–c. Anton Shebetko, *We Were Here* (2018), photographs copyright A. Shebetko



Fig. 1b



Fig. 1c

nied by interviews with the soldiers; there are headphones next to the photos. The visual strategy of concealment that partially hides the soldiers' identities is not unique to Ukraine. Similar influential photographic projects have been organized in the West over the last 20 years, particularly in the US as part of the political discussion on accepting openly queer soldiers in the army.

When the far right opposed the queer movement in Ukraine, especially the Equality (Pride) Marches in Kyiv (Ukr. Київ) between 2013 and 2019, its opponents used the arguments that the country was at war in the east and events like those were neither appropriate nor patriotic, and that homosexuality was a threat to national security. The artist's intention here was thus to show the queer fighters in the war – those who were there and taking an active part in combat, but were forced into invisibility and hence not acknowledged. Shebetko's goal was to counter the far right's nationalistic gender ideology which claims that queer people, above all gay men, do not contribute to the defense of their country.

In 2018, the exhibition provided the impulse for the self-organization of queer soldiers and veterans into a supportive network. The idea was even mooted to organize a gay unit in the army, and an NGO promoting equal rights for LGBTQ+ military personnel was established.³ The frontman of this movement is Viktor Pylypenko (Ukr. Віктор Пилипенко), the only person whose face is fully visible on the textile print strip of portraits hanging from the ceiling. There is also a video interview with him. Pylypenko visited the US as a soldier and was inspired by queer activism in the American army.

Many cultural spaces in Kyiv have featured LGBTQ+ artists, one of them being the Visual Culture Research Center or "Dzherelo" (Ukr. Джерело). Shebetko's exhibition was organized by the queer-friendly space IZOLYATSIYA Platform for Cultural Initiatives, whose own history incorporates connections with both the Ukrainian east and with the war. IZOLYATSIYA, a non-profit, non-governmental cultural platform, was established in a post-industrial space in Donetsk in 2010. In 2014, the region was seized by the self-proclaimed pro-Russian 'Donetsk People's Republic,' and IZOLYATSIYA had to move to Kyiv. It established a new space in an industrial shipyard district in the capital. In 2018, in the context of its project 'Coming Out of Isolation' several resident artists worked on

3 CHORNOKODRATENKO (2021)

LGBTQ-related projects; Shebetko was one of them. Let us consider the broader context. Since *Euromaidan* (Ukr. Євромайдан) in 2013/14, there have been significant legal, social, and cultural advances in queer rights in Ukraine. The Revolution of Dignity opened up the prospect of dignity for queer people. There was even a march organized by gay rights activists as part of the successful Euromaidan protests. Some queer activists who saw active combat in the Euromaidan struggle are now joining the *Territorial Defense Forces* (Ukr. Війська територіальної оборони) or seeking paramedic training. Ukraine's articulation of its wish to join the EU has strongly contributed to its opening up to LGBTQ rights, and this, in turn, has fueled a readiness among its gay citizens to help defend the democratizing country, and to fight for freedom against the homophobic Putin's Russia.⁴

Support for Ukrainian sovereignty also means support for LGBTQ+ rights and human rights more broadly. In 2015, discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation was banned in the workplace.⁵ Volodymyr Zelenskyy (Ukr. Володимир Зеленський), elected in 2019, became the first president to acknowledge LGBTQ+ citizens and publicly state his willingness to do more for equality.⁶ In 2020, his government tabled hate crime legislation that included protections for LGBTQ+ people, despite strong opposition from religious groups.

Before the current war, large numbers of queer people from Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and even some African countries migrated to Ukraine to escape discrimination in their own lands. Ukraine has no repressive laws like those in Russia, where the 2013 law on so-called 'gay propaganda' prohibits Pride parades and makes it almost impossible to publicly show or address queerness in culture and public life. Thus, there is the very real fear that if Russia wins the war, LGBTQ+ people in Ukraine would lose everything that they have gained with great difficulty in recent years. This minority has already been actively persecuted in the separatist Russian-controlled area of Donbas (Ukr. Донбас) and in Crimea (Ukr. Крим). In interviews, many of those involved in activism who decided to join the combat as soldiers or providers of medical or food aid emphasize that they are fighting not only for the freedom of their country but also for

4 GARCIA (2022).

5 KUMAR (2022).

6 CASEY (2022).

the free world, for liberal democracy, and for human rights and queer rights. Viktor Pylypenko, the out soldier says, 'We are confronting a tyrannical, homophobic enemy!'⁷ And they are.

Yet the story is in fact more dramatic, ambivalent, and difficult still: homophobia also exists inside Ukraine; it is not only Russian. Ukraine legalized gay sex in 1991, but conservative activists and politicians regularly target the rights and livelihood of LGBTQ+ people. A war against queer rights and images has been raging in Ukraine for years, backed by the Eastern Orthodox Church and Russian-funded extremist groups, politicians, and oligarchs. There is strong internal political and religious opposition to the advancement of queer rights and culture. The increased queer visibility has prompted a conservative backlash. The artists and activists behind the Pride Festival have been 'soldiers' on the barricades of this internal anti-queer war for a long time. Homophobic images play a significant role here, especially in the anti-Pride movement. Among these have been billboards with slogans such as 'Association with the EU means same-sex marriage'; while protesters against closer links with the EU brandish signs showing stick figures engaged in anal sex and chant slogans 'Go to Europe through the ass. Homophobic violence and hate crimes are rife.'⁸ LGBTQ+ events and community centers have frequently been attacked by far-right groups and require heavy police protection. There have been a number of attacks against exhibitions and film screenings, in which art works have been destroyed. Cultural events advertised as LGBTQ+ have to be planned well in advance and incorporate rigorous security measures. They have caused riots in Kyiv, Odesa (Ukr. Одеса) and Kharkiv (Ukr. Харків). Yet the queer scene has continued to grow, despite and in defiance of those attacks.⁹ The Kyiv Pride inspired anarcho-feminist marches and a dedicated movement; in addition to Pride, there is a Women's March, and feminist campaigns are highly visible. Hence, the progressive, pro-European movement has a strong queer feminist component, and contemporary art plays an important role in it.¹⁰ Artists have been the main force creating powerful images to counter the far-right campaigns of hatred and den-

7 COOPER (2022).

8 ILGA (2021).

9 SCHNEIDER (2019).

10 ZYCHOWICZ (2020).

igration. This visual resistance and dissidence in Ukraine testify to the power of queer art. Some of the most prominent artists and visual activists working with queer themes are Eugen Korshunov (Ukr. Євген Коршунів), Yan/a Bachynska/i (Ukr. Ян/а Бачинські/а), Kateryna Semchuk (Ukr. Катерина Семчук), Kateryna Yermolaeva (Катерина Єрмолаєва), Vadim Yakovlev (Ukr. Вадим Яковлев), Alina Kleytman (Ukr. Алина Клейтман), Zhenya Tramvai (Ukr. Женя Трамвай), Bogdan Moroz (Ukr. Богдан Мороз), Kinder Limo, Tetiana Kornieieva (Ukr. Тетяна Корнєєва), Anatoly Belov (Ukr. Анатолий Белов), Jan/Yana Bachynski, Anita Nemet (Ukr. Аніта Немет), Antigon Staff, Mikhail Koptev (Ukr. Михаил Коптев) and Nikita Kadan (Ukr. Нікіта Кадан).

For many years, Ukraine has been at the forefront of queer rights, curating, and art in Eastern Europe. In 2012, Natalia Chermalych (Ukr. Наталія Чермалич), who specializes in feminist and queer projects, curated an exhibition entitled *A Room of My Own*, which featured photographs by Yevgenia Belorusets (Ukr. Євгенія Марківна Белорусець) portraying the precarious lives of gay and lesbian couples across Ukraine (Fig. 2a–d). It was organized in the Visual Culture Research Center (Ukr. Центр візуальної культури) at the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (ukr. Національний університет Києво-Могилянська академія) as part of the First International Contemporary Art Biennale ARSENALE 2012. The show was supported by Insight NGO, the Heinrich Böll Foundation, and the Ukrainian Women's Fund. The *Visual Culture Research Center* had previously hosted other anti-homophobia events which were targeted by threats. *A Room of My Own* was attacked as well, and some of the photographs were destroyed; the exhibition was censored by violence.¹¹

Yevgenia Belorusets is a famous Ukrainian artist, and her work *A Room of My Own* (2012) is documentary in character. She photographed real same-sex couples, sometimes with children, in their modest Ukrainian apartments, creating a series of double portraits and testimonies. The texts accompanying the pictures, which are based on interviews with the sitters, are an integral part of the exhibition. There is the suggestion that queer couples are confined to their private spaces because the public sphere is hostile to their presence and rights. The Virginia Woolf-inspired title thus suggests that they can find security and happiness only in secluded domestic settings where they can cultivate their love and

11 HEINRICH-BÖLL-STIFTUNG (2012).



Fig. 2 a–d. Yevgenia Belorusets, *A Room of My Own* (2012), photographs copyright Y. Belorusets



Fig. 2b



Fig. 2c



Fig. 2d

families invisible to others, protected from the inhospitable society. The attack on the exhibition in 2012 and the destruction of the images are evidence of the hostility towards sexual diversity in Ukrainian society and prove the need for queer people to have a 'room of their own.' These prejudiced attitudes impose severe limitations on their personal freedoms, including exclusion from public space, and the art project was a call for acceptance and change.

The images are poignant: we see two young men embracing in their kitchen, which also serves as an office. A female couple with a small child and a dog pose in a beautiful colorful interior. Two older men are hugging and smiling on a balcony. Two young women are lying on a bed. All these people have let the artist with a camera inside their precious private space. In many of the photographs, the urban aura of the post-Soviet blocks of flats is striking. We know that the photographs were taken in several Ukrainian cities, and they look very different from the perspective of the current war, when we are seeing scenes of ruined towns and buildings daily on the television. What happened to their rooms of their own under the Russian siege? Are they now refugees who lost everything? It now becomes clear how precious such a safe oasis of privacy is, even though previously it might have seemed like an enclosure. In Ukraine, private homes were places of queer sanctuary.

Belorusets calls her subjects heroes and heroines who have the courage to show their personal stories and what lies behind the thick curtain which ordinarily separates their private lives from their public identities. She states that her artistic and political intention was to make the invisible visible, by giving voice and visibility to LGBTQ+ families in Ukraine. By revealing that which is normally hidden, she wanted to overcome alienation in order to uncover the closed-off world in which her subjects have found themselves against their will, marginalized by widespread homophobia.¹²

As art critic Oksana Semenik (Ukr. Оксана Семенік) says, queer art in Ukraine is mostly about people who are invisible in society, who dream of equal rights and safety, yet find that even such a basic wish is seen as provocation.¹³ Thus, artists often use the strategy of affirmative portraiture to restore people's dignity and discover an alternative beauty. I would like to call this visual movement

¹² BELORUSETS (2011).

¹³ SCHNEIDER (2019).

‘portraiture of intimate dignity.’ Just as Beloruset’s *A Room of My Own* (2012) is a series of intimate portraits of couples, Shebetko’s *We Were Here* (2018) likewise comprises masked playful or dramatic portraits of male and female queer soldiers, with just one brave fully out gay macho image, that of Pylypenko. Portraiture is also one way in which artists familiarize society with the transgender individuals who live in Ukraine. One pioneering project here, *Analysis of Beauty* (2007), is the work of photographer Anastasia Mikhno (Ukr. Анастасія Міхно), who with immense aesthetic sensitivity captures the beauty and spirituality of an androgynous man and woman (Fig. 3a–b). These two non-binary people posed for the artist with an uncanny fragility, conveying a powerful alternative vision of gender. The most recent transgender project is the multimedia *Genderprism* (2019) by Nikita Karimov (Ukr. Нікіта Каримов). This series of extended portraits, inspired by social media, showcases young trans people and their lives and families in photographs, films, texts, and music.¹⁴ Like Mikhno’s, Karimov’s camera is very generous toward his non-binary models, and shows them in beautiful light and colours, happy and self-possessed, meeting the viewer’s eye and narrating their stories openly. This is definitely a project about empowerment and the power of visibility in an increasingly democratic and modern society. In 2020, a Trans March took place in Kyiv; it passed without incident, but was heavily guarded by the police. The protection testifies to the changing attitudes of the state, which started to treat its queer citizens with care.

For Russia, all these progressive changes may in fact have been one of the stimuli for the invasion, as they are evidence that Ukraine is deviating increasingly from the path that Russia would have it follow. In 2021, Putin called gender fluidity a crime against humanity.¹⁵ In Eastern Europe, sexual politics play a significant role in the new East-West divide, between free and authoritarian societies.

The Russian Orthodox Church supports Putin’s war. The head of the church, patriarch Kirill (rus. Владимир Михайлович Гундяев, Wladimir Michailowitsch Gundjajew), averred in one sermon that Russia’s invasion of Ukraine is being waged against non-traditional Western values; that the war is about which side humanity will take: that of the Western governments which support the

¹⁴ KARIMOV (2019).

¹⁵ KUMAR (2022).



Fig. 3 a–b. Anastasia Mikhno, *Analysis of Beauty* (2007), photographs copyright A. Mikhno



Fig. 3b

Pride marches, or that of their opponents. He argued that the Pride parades were a test of loyalty to the West. Hence, they were fundamentally rejected by the separatist republics in eastern Ukraine. He called the war against Ukraine more important than politics: a war against sin; a spiritual combat.¹⁶ Is it a holy war for these men?

For years, Russia has been supporting anti-gay sentiment in Ukraine in an effort to hold back the EU's eastward expansion. Using rigid opposition to queer rights, Putin presents his Russia as the champion of traditional values and religion in the global culture war against the West. Ukraine and its LGBTQ+ community are the battlefield on which this conflict is being fought. Just before the invasion, in late February 2022, queer activists spray-painted the phrase 'Your Dancefloor is Putin's Battleground' on the streets of Kyiv to shake up the local and international community that has developed around Kyiv's incredibly vibrant rave scene, including queer raves. The purpose of this graffiti was to evoke global solidarity, a collective cry for queer resistance against the authoritarian invasion. It is hard to believe how quickly the Eastern European rave capital turned into a besieged capital of war.

Many queer Ukrainians serve in the army. Military service for men is compulsory; homosexuality is not grounds for exemption. Times of crisis such as war show how much gender matters in a society. War amplifies gender divisions, inequalities, and violence, including sexual violence. All men aged 18–60 have been ordered to remain in the country and must register and be ready to fight. They have no choice. This strictly-enforced rule has left many trans women and non-binary people stranded, with LGBTQ+ organizations in neighboring countries Hungary and Poland working to find ways to get them out.

The call to fight and the patriotic sentiments behind it are not the only side of the queer community in Ukraine. Many gay men try to avoid military service; many young queer people would prefer to flee and escape the nightmare of war or Russian occupation.¹⁷ The pressure of patriotism is incredibly strong, but there are dissenting voices and positions, and my text does not take sides. Many queer activists from the LGBTQ organization Insight led by Olena Shevchenko

¹⁶ THE MOSCOW TIMES (2022).

¹⁷ ANARTE (2022).

(Ukr. Олена Шевченко) decided to stay in Ukraine and assist the endangered minority.¹⁸

The LGBTQ+ movement in Ukraine is currently one of the most developed activist movements in the civil society there. According to Kyiv Pride Program Coordinator Anna Sharyhina (Ukr. Анна Шаригіна), in its diversity, it has both right and left wings, and world views ranging from homonationalism to queer anarchism.¹⁹ The raves were organized by the cosmopolitan queer anarchist movement, which leverages the dancefloor as a forum for not only queer liberation and pleasure, but also revolution. Another group of activists, Rebel Queers, works with street art and graffiti to reclaim the right to the public space of the city and support the LGBTQ+ community in Kyiv. They cover the city walls with slogans such as: 'Gay sex and class war,' 'Be queer, do crime,' 'Love Satan,' 'Hate cops,' 'Be queer, do crime, hail Satan,' 'The queer revolution is coming,' 'Protect trans kids,' 'Be queer, get revenge,' 'Abortions are healthcare,' 'Suck my clit,' and finally 'Your dancefloor is Putin's battleground.' They are queer feminist radicals who advocate liberation and affirmation of sexual and gender otherness and recognize the intersection of homophobia and other forms of injustice, such as classism. Rather than asking politely for inclusion, they see queerness as anti-normative revolt. The fact that the texts are in English shows their transnational attitude, their distance from nationalism, and an international solidarity among revolutionaries against oppression.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, Shebetko's patriotic project grapples with homonationalism. The photo series *We Were Here* and the patriotic participation of LGBTQ+ Ukrainians in the fight against Russia inspires a rethinking of the topical Western concept of homonationalism used by critical queer theory.

Homonationalism is the alliance between a nationalist ideology and LGBTQ+ people or their rights. The term was introduced by Jasbir K. Puar in 2007 to refer to the strategies by which some political factions in the U.S. support the LGBTQ+ community in order to justify racist, xenophobic politics, against Muslims in particular. These factions appeal to the prejudices that migrant people are homophobic and that Western society is egalitarian. Homonationalism is used to distinguish 'properly hetero,' and now 'properly homo,' U.S. patriots from per-

18 FEDER (2022).

19 SHARYNINA (2018).

versely sexualized and racialized terrorists, who are set apart for detention and deportation. In this way, sexual diversity and LGBTQ+ rights are used to sustain political repressions against immigration, an argument also increasingly common among far-right parties in Western Europe.²⁰ The concept of homonationalism has also been applied critically to the EU policy which holds that protecting queer rights is a requirement of accession for new member states. Tellingly, the American theory of homonationalism is inapplicable to the majority of Eastern Europe, where strict heteronationalism rules.²¹

The queer patriotic position in the Ukrainian war additionally problematizes homonationalism, as we could look at it as a means of queer survival and resistance in one's own country under invasion by a far worse homophobic dictatorship. Hence, I propose a different, individual and psychological understanding of homonationalism, not as a cunning right-wing political strategy of exclusion, but as a perplexing pressure felt by queer people in what are still homophobic countries. Homonationalism is a psychological condition which negotiates the queer subject's relationship to national identity under a strictly heteronormative construct of the nation. Homonationalism refers here to an unresolved and difficult conflict between patriotism, queerness, and subjectivity.

Such conflictual internal homonationalism is perfectly exemplified in another artwork by Shebetko. This is a photo performance, *Self-portrait/Ukraine* (2020). The artist poses with a flag which represents both his identities: Ukrainian and queer (Fig. 4a–c). The flag is sewn from six separate pieces of fabric, which make up a rainbow flag. Two strips of the flag are longer, the blue and the yellow, the colors of the Ukrainian flag. His flag combines national and queer symbolism; on the one hand he supports it, but on the other he is overloaded by it, burdened – almost pierced.

It is a personal work about Ukrainian queer identity and the artist's position; his body becomes the foundation for a country that is both 'elevating and destroying the queer subject.'²² This description by the artist refers to the duality of recent history, with the rise and visibility of LGBTQ+ rights, and the persistence of homophobia and violence in the nationalist far-right movement. Both exist in

20 PUAR (2007).

21 MOSS (2014), 217.

22 <https://antonshebetko.com/Self-portrait-Ukraine>



Fig. 4 a-c. Anton Shebetko, *Self-portrait/Ukraine* (2020), performance, photographs copyright A. Shebetko



Fig. 4b



Fig. 4c

parallel in Ukraine. Which flag to choose is a tragic dilemma for LGBTQ+ Ukrainians. It is as though they are fighting two wars: a civil war being waged against them as queers, and the other, Russian war against them as Ukrainians.

Shebetko's performance shows how the intersectionality of national and sexual identities can be an oppressive condition in certain dramatic contexts. The self-portrait is also a powerful work about queer masculinity, and prophetically presents how gay men now have no choice but to embrace or surrender to both flags and identities. This is chosen or enforced homonationalism with the undertones of a Greek tragedy.

I would like to acknowledge the inspiration of my Ukrainian students at Adam Mickiewicz University (pol. Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu) in Poznan: Dominique Volkovynska and Yurii Polishchuk.

Afterword

The text was written in the first months of the war. From the perspective of 2023, when the volume will be published, there are a number of developments worth mentioning. According to a 2022 report on the LGBTQ community and the war by the Nash Svit Center, the testimonies of openly queer service personnel indicate that attitudes towards them in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, especially on the frontline, are mostly tolerant. There are only isolated cases of homophobic abuse, and military staff try to prevent them. At the same time, the vast majority of both queer soldiers and queer people in Ukrainian society in general, prefer not to disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity outside a narrow circle of trusted individuals. The chaos and lawlessness of war have increased the risk of violence and exploitation of all vulnerable and minority groups. However, there has been a significant increase in positive attitudes towards LGBTQ+ rights and more public support since the Russian invasion, including parliamentary debates on legalizing same-sex partnerships. Ukrainians clearly understand that homophobia is an element of Putin's ideology, especially as Russian soldiers have deliberately targeted LGBTQ+ individuals in the occupied areas. The prominent role of many queer people in the military since February 2022 may be another facet in the liberalization of attitudes.

Bibliography

- 'A Room of My Own' at the *Centre for Visual Cultural Research*, Kiev, 2012, <https://www.boell.de/en/navigation/europe-north-america-a-room-of-my-own-exhibition-yevgenia-belorusets-attacked-14665.html> (10. 07. 2022).
- ANARTE, Enrique: *Trans and non-binary people trapped in war-torn Ukraine*, 2022, <https://news.trust.org/item/20220304182133-8fjhu/> (30. 04. 2022).
- BASKA, Maggie: *Warlord who helped oversee Chechnya's brutal 'gay purge' killed in Ukraine*, 2022, <https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2022/02/28/russia-chechnya-ukraine-magomed-tushayev/> (24. 04. 2022).
- BELORUSETS, Yevgenia: *A room of my own*, 2011–2012, <https://belorusets.com/work/a-room-of-my-own> (28. 04. 2022).
- CASEY, John: *Zelensky's Bravery Is Nothing New to the LGBTQ+ Community*, 2022, <https://www.advocate.com/commentary/2022/3/11/zelenskyys-bravery-nothing-new-lgbtq-community> (30. 04. 2022).
- CHORNOKONDRATENKO, Margaryta: *Gay war veteran speaks out for equal rights in Ukraine's military*, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/gay-war-veteran-speaks-out-equal-rights-ukraines-military-2021-09-17/> (10. 07. 2022).
- COOPER, Alex: *Russian Solders Reportedly Captured by LGBTQ+ Ukrainians*, 2022, <https://www.advocate.com/world/2022/3/02/russian-soldiers-reportedly-captured-lgbtq-ukrainians> (30. 04. 2022).
- DOLINSKA-RYDZEK, Magda/BERG Mariecke, van den: *'Gays as a Weapon of the Antichrist': Religious Nationalism, Homosexuality and the Antichrist on the Russian Internet*. In: DERKS, Marco/BERG, Mariecke van den (eds.): *Public Discourses About Homosexuality and Religion in Europe and Beyond*, Cham 2020.
- FEDER, Lester: *The Russian Plot to Take Back Eastern Europe at the Expense of Gay Rights*, 2013, <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/lesterfeder/russia-exports-homosexual-propaganda-law-in-effort-to-fight> (30. 04. 2022).
- FEDER, Lester: *"People Are Not Coming Back to the Closet": The Fight for Ukraine Is Also a Fight for LGBTQ Rights*, 2022, <https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2022/03/the-fight-for-ukraine-is-also-a-fight-for-lgbtq-rights> (30. 04. 2022).

- GARCIA, Horaci: *Ukraine's 'unicorn' LGBTQ soldiers head for war*, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/ukraines-unicorn-lgbtq-soldiers-head-war-2022-05-31/> (10. 07. 2022)
- ILGA (The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association): *Annual Review of the Human Rights Situation of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex People in the Ukraine*, 2021, <http://www.ilga-europe.org/sites/default/files/2022/ukraine.pdf> (30. 04. 2022).
- IZOLATSYA: *Coming Out of Isolation: Through Art to Visibility*. In: *Izolatsya. Platform for Cultural Initiatives*, 2018, <https://izolyatsia.org/en/project/coming-out-of-isolation> (30. 04. 2022).
- KARIMOV, Nikita: *Genderprism*, 2019, <https://genderprism.info/en#rec232299576> (28. 04. 2022).
- KRAVCHUK, Andrii/ZINCHENKOV, Oleksandr/LYASHCHENKO, Oleh: *LGBTQ and war. A report on the specific problems of the Ukrainian LGBTQ community since the beginning of the Russian invasion's new phase*, Nash Svit Center, Kyiv, 2022.
- KUMAR, Ankush: *Ukraine's Gay Combat Volunteers Are Ready to Fight for Their Lives Against Anti-LGBTQ Putin*, 2022, <https://www.thedailybeast.com/ukraines-gay-combat-volunteers-are-ready-to-fight-for-their-lives-against-anti-lgbtq-vladimir-putin> (30. 04. 2022).
- MOSS, Kevin: *Split Europe: Homonationalism and Homophobia in Croatia*. In: AYOUB, Phillip/PATERNOTTE, David (eds.): *LGBT Activism and the Making of Europe. A Rainbow Europe?*, Houndmills, Basingstoke 2014, pp. 212–232.
- PUAR, Jasbir K.: *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*, Durham 2007.
- SHARYNINA, Ann: *LGBT movement in Ukraine: From homonationalism to queer anarchism*, 2018, <https://izolyatsia.org/en/project/coming-out-of-isolation/lgbt-movement/>, accessed 30.04. 2022
- SHEBETKO, Anton: *We Were Here*, 2018, <https://antonshebetko.com/We-Were-Here>, accessed 30. 04. 2022.
- SCHNEIDER, Norma: *New Normalities: Queer art in Ukraine creates visibility and challenges common perceptions*, 2019, <https://genderz.org.ua/new-normalities-queer-art-in-ukraine-creates-visibility-and-challenges-common-perceptions/> (29. 04. 2022).
- ZYCHOWICZ, Jessica: *Superfluous Women: Art, Feminism, and Revolution in Twenty-first-century Ukraine*, Toronto 2020.

Russian Church Leader Appears to Blame Gay Pride Parades for Ukraine War.

In: The Moscow Times, 3.07. 2022, <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/03/07/russian-church-leader-appears-to-blame-gay-pride-parades-for-ukraine-war-a76803> (30. 04. 2022).

Павел Лешкович

Queere Ukraine. Образи, ідеї, боротьба

АНОТАЦІЯ У своєму тексті я звертаюся до останніх події в ЛГБТК+ мистецтво а також активізмі в Україні, особливо під час у 2022 році розпочатої Росією війни, на основі контекстуального аналізу вибраних творів українських митців. Я представляю квір-погляд меншини на вторгнення разом з історичним поглядом на квір-історію та-мистецтво України у 21 столітті. В центрі мого аналізу дослідження знаходиться твір *We Were Here* (2018) Антона Шебетка – серія фотопортретів, яка висвітлює роль квір-солдатів в українській армії у війні проти росіян з 2014 року. Як зазначила критик мистецтва Оксана Семеник, квір-мистецтво в Україні – це здебільшого непомітні в суспільстві люди, які прагнуть рівноправ'я і безпеки, але навіть ці елементарні потреби сприймаються як провокація. Тому митці застосовують часто стратегію т.з. позитивного портрету, який повертає цим людям їх гідність і показує алтернативну красу. Я стверджую, що портрет і автопортрет відіграють центральну роль в українському квір-мистецтві і відображають соціальну ситуацію ЛГБТК+меншина, яка змінюється у 21 столітті, також під час нинішнього вторгнення.