



# the pain of others

artists responding  
to the impacts of  
war + conflict

artwork by Ilya Sprindzhuk







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# foreword

In this collection, 'the pain of others,' we embark on a profound journey, exploring diverse perspectives and artistic expressions that unveil the intricate relationship between art and our response to the aftermath of conflict. Beyond mere visual allure, the artworks within these pages act as poignant messengers, delivering urgent pleas for systemic reform, the preservation of connections in conflict-affected communities, and a collective appeal for humanity in the face of unspeakable atrocities. Influenced by Susan Sontag's work, we emphasize the significance of art representation and authentic engagement as essential tools for processing the complexities of warfare. We firmly believe, echoing Sontag's insights, that art carries a duty to effectively understand and communicate the pressing need to safeguard our global community. This collection encourages reflection on the profound impact of conflict on our shared humanity.



acknowledging  
suffering

# acknowledging suffering

Art possesses a unique power to transcend language barriers and establish connections on an emotional level. In this chapter, artists across various mediums leverage their creations to capture a pivotal aspect of Susan Sontag's philosophy: the understanding that when using images to depict pain, it is crucial to recognize that the viewer's perspective profoundly influences their response to the depiction. Mere portrayal of the general horrors of war does not elicit a singular, predictable reaction, especially when the depiction involves another person's suffering rather than one's own.

In this context, art becomes a cultivated tool, a means to more effectively engage with the atrocities and vulnerabilities inherent in war. The artists in this chapter aspire to delve into these complexities by exploring vulnerability, authenticity, and subjectivity, offering a genuine glimpse into the horrific impacts of conflict.

"Photographs of the  
suffering and  
martyrdom of a  
people are more than  
reminders of death,  
of failure, of  
victimization. They  
invoke the miracle of  
survival"

Susan Sontag



Staines, Rima. (2023). The Hands of Death and Life, [pencil on paper]



Rima Staines, based in Devon, UK, crafts an otherworldly realm through myth, magical realism, and folk arts. She brings profound emotion to her creations, as seen in "The Hands of Death and Life" (2023), a poignant response to the strife in Palestine and Israel. Through pencil on paper, she questions power dynamics, illustrating trauma's cyclical nature. Staines, showcased globally, channels her fascination with the liminal into a visual chapel of misfits and magicians. A finalist in the 'Best Artist' category at the 2018 World Fantasy awards, her work transcends boundaries, offering a glimpse into an ethereal iconography that seeks to heal and connect.



Morgaine, Manuela. (2021).  
"FOR WAAD," [Film Stills].



Morgaine, Manuela. (2021).  
"FOR WAAD," [Film Stills].



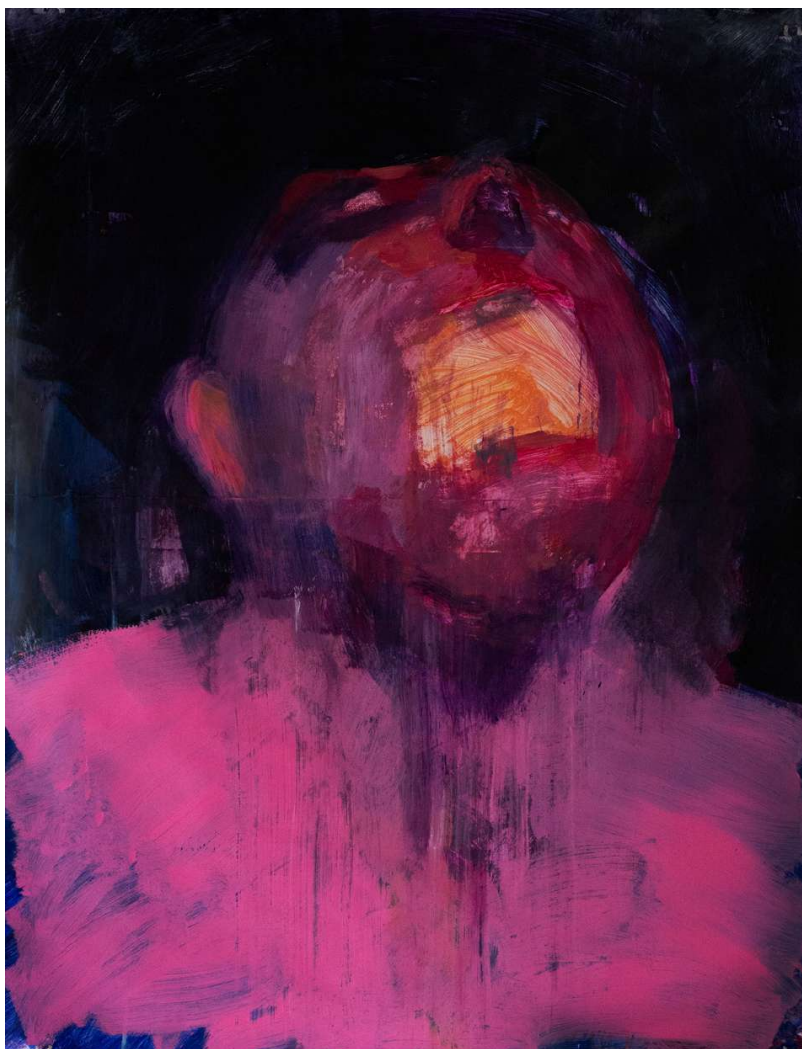
Morgaine, Manuela. (2021).  
"FOR WAAD," [Film Stills].



Morgaine, Manuela. (2021).  
"FOR WAAD," [Film Stills].

Manuela Morgaine, a Prix de Rome recipient in scenography, is a versatile artist. As a writer, visual artist, and film director, she leads the Envers Company, focusing on multidisciplinary works since 1991. Her extensive portfolio includes literature, radio creations, and internationally recognized films like "Foudre." "FOR WAAD" is a cinematic letter echoing the film POUR SAMA by Waad Al Kateab, capturing pre-war Syria. Composed of archives from 2005-2007, it juxtaposes traumatic scenes with the living and cultural heritage. A cinematic transplant, it seeks to revive cities and their inhabitants frozen in time, bridging the abyss carved by a decade-long war.

Full Video: <http://www.enverscompagnie.com/>



Sprindzhuk, Ilya. (2022). "Divine," [acrylic on glued paper].

Ilya Sprindzhuk, from Warsaw, Poland, delves into the complexities of presence, insecurity, and the right to be heard through his captivating artworks. Originally recognized for his aesthetically pleasing canvases in the Belarusian art community, Ilya experienced a transformative shift. The 2022 piece "Divine," an acrylic on glued paper measuring 140x100 cm, exemplifies this evolution. Departing from conventional beauty, Ilya's work now challenges norms, leaving ontological traces within social frameworks. Studying New Media Art at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts, he explores new media practices and installations, reflecting a profound departure from his earlier focus and exploration of deeper, more meaningful artistic expression.





Muñoz, Lola. (2023). "The Cosmic Traveler"  
[Collage and Oil on Wood].

Artist Lola Muñoz, based in Valencia, Spain, intertwines nature and mythology to create captivating artworks. With a deep connection to indigenous cultures and a focus on personal healing, Lola's art celebrates the beauty and interconnectedness of the natural world. Her 2023 piece, "The Cosmic Traveler," elegantly blends collage and oil paint on wood. It calls for introspection, urging viewers to seek inner peace as a means to transform our world of conflict into one of love and empathy. Lola's work inspires us to embrace the sacred connection with our land and to find resilience in our lives by looking within.



Sagel. (2023). "Praying" [oil on linen canvas].

Kazakhstan artist Sagel's painting "Praying," captures the silent strength of women worldwide, using oil on linen canvas to symbolize their prayerful resistance against the fragility of life in times of war and conflict. Her large-format canvases act as portals into a realm shaped by spiritual, occult, esoteric, pagan, philosophical, and psychological influences—a continuous journey of self-reflection and exploration.



Del Vedova, Liliana. (2023). "Soul Connections," [Large Format 4x5, Ferricyanide].

Artist Lola Muñoz, based in Valencia, Spain, intertwines nature and mythology to create captivating artworks. With a deep connection to indigenous cultures and a focus on personal healing, Lola's art celebrates the beauty and interconnectedness of the natural world. Her 2023 piece, "The Cosmic Traveler," elegantly blends collage and oil paint on wood. It calls for introspection, urging viewers to seek inner peace as a means to transform our world of conflict into one of love and empathy. Lola's work inspires us to embrace the sacred connection with our land and to find resilience in our lives by looking within.

"to remember  
everything is a form of  
madness."

Brian Friel from  
*Translations*



Ganaj, Vladimír. (2023). Refugees (Top), Mass Murder (Bottom) [Pencil on Paper, A4].



Vladimír Ganaj, hailing from Prešov, Slovakia, delves into the profound interactions between characters, portraying them in dramatic and intense poses. Through his pencil on paper artworks like the explores the primal themes of sex , brutality and combat, highlighting their intertwined nature. This revelation draws from both formal visual similarity and internal connections, reflecting the intensity and purpose behind these interactions. Ganaj's work resonates with Erich Fromm's insights, emphasizing the link between male self-assertive aggression and relationships.



Alabbadi, Ahmed. (2023). Memories for Sale,  
[Digital].

Ahmed Alabbadi, an emerging experimental photographer from Aden, Yemen, explores the profound impact of war in his project "Memories for Sale." His work serves as a visual journey through the hidden stories of conflict, depicting personal and societal struggles. With two years of experience as a fashion photographer for GLOBAL BRAND 361, Ahmed blends experimentation and poignant storytelling in his work. Born in 2004, he is not only a skilled artist but also an art project manager and freelancer, offering a unique perspective on the intersection of art and personal experience.



Clennell, Lynette. (2016). "Pietà," [Collage].

Alynette Clennell, is a South African Italian Collage artist, who merges her passion for art and peace activism in "Pietà" (2016). This collage, featuring Raphael's Madonna embracing a child from Eisenstein's anti-war film, underscores Clennell's commitment to social commentary. The poppy symbolism, covering one eye, signifies the cost of conflict. Inspired by Dada, Clennell's work aligns with her role as an art teacher, promoting dialogue on peace.



Satura, Pink. (2023). Liberty, [Analog Collage,  
30x40 cm].

In "Liberty," Pink Satura explores the dichotomy of civilization constructed upon a foundation of bones. The analog collage technique becomes a visual metaphor, piecing together fragments of existence to unveil the underlying structure of our societal framework. Pink Satura, hailing from Kaliningrad, Russia, embarked on the artistic journey in 2020, with a background in art school. After years away from the art scene, 2020 marked a return for Satura, whose style is characterized by a fusion of pop art and pop surrealism. "Liberty" serves as a striking commentary on the complex and often unsettling underpinnings of human civilization.



Butenop, Olga. (2023). Isle of The Dead,  
[Painting].



Olga Butenop's 2023 "Isle of The Dead" starkly addresses the pain and loss surrounding the immense scale of death in the current warfare states. Her work captures the suffering, emotional toll and the burden countless people are facing globally. Olga Butenop is a Russian artist. She was born in Moscow, Soviet Union. Now Olga lives and works in Tbilisi, Georgia and her artistic narratives both explore her reflection of her homeland and a universal call for awareness.



Vorona, Iryna. (2023). Life is Eternal, [Paper, Charcoal Pencil, 100x75 cm]

In her evocative series, Iryna Vorona explores the fragility of daily life amid the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. As a forced migrant, currently residing in Germany, Vorona's work delves into the impact of war on ordinary individuals. Through collective portraits, she symbolizes unity and indomitability, portraying the strength of spirit and love that propels people forward in their struggle. Born in Ukraine, Vorona holds a Ph.D. in Culture and Art, and her multidisciplinary practice includes video documentation, books, and international exhibitions. Her art serves as a powerful reflection on the resilience of the human spirit amid adversity.

"perhaps the only people with the right to look at images of suffering ... are those who could do something to alleviate it. ... The rest of us are voyeurs, whether or not we mean to be"

Susan Sontag

A surrealist painting of a human face. The eye is replaced by a window with white bars. The mouth is a red comb with teeth. The background is a dense, textured pattern of colors. The text 'reflections on conflict management' is centered over the face.

reflections  
on conflict  
management

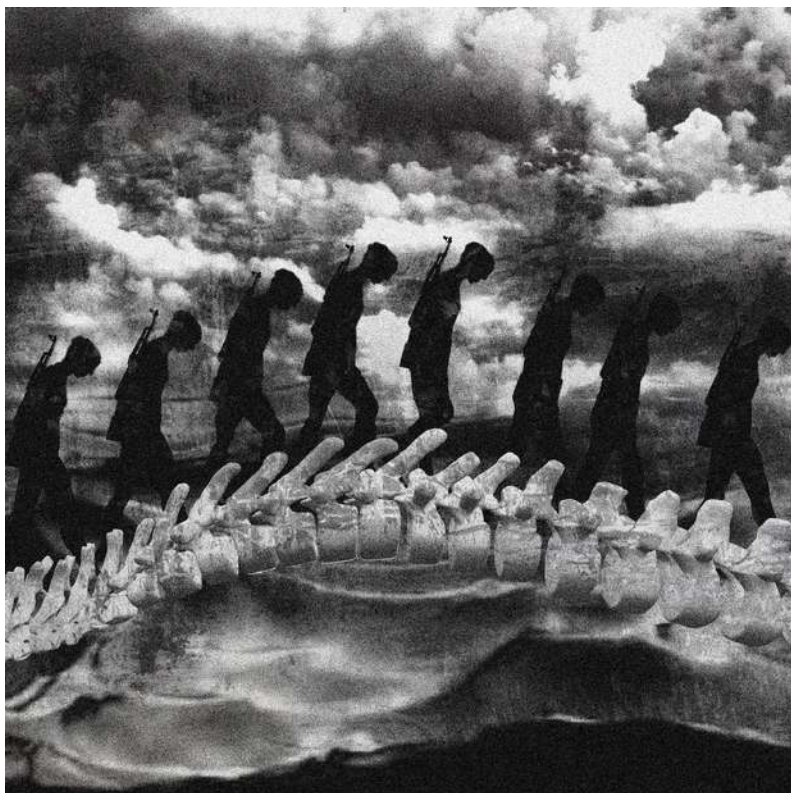
# reflections on conflict management

In considering the role of art as a tool for conflict management reflection, Susan Sontag's perspective offers a nuanced examination of the power dynamics embedded in visual representations of war. We foster the belief that artists can underscore the importance of approaching conflict with a critical eye. Art can evoke empathy and understanding, it also carries the risk of aestheticizing or sanitizing the harsh realities of conflict.

Examining how artists navigate the delicate balance between raising awareness and potentially exploiting the subject matter is crucial. Art, a double-edged sword, can foster dialogue and introspection while also being susceptible to manipulation and oversimplification. This chapter examines international artists' works through the lens of their exploration of the relationship between art and conflict. Their insights contribute to contemporary discussions on using creative expression to foster reflection, understanding, and effective conflict management.

"War is elective.  
It is not an inevitable  
state of affairs.  
War is not the weather."

Susan Sontag



Butenop, Olga. (2023). #NoWar, [Film Still:  
Digitally Animated film, 10:18].





Butenop, Olga. (2023). #NoWar, [Film Still:  
Digitally Animated film, 10:18].

Olga Butenop's 2023 digitally animated film, "#NoWar," starkly addresses the devastating impact of conflict, inspired by Russia's aggression against Ukraine. As a powerful commentary on the suppression of free expression in Russia, the title itself challenges oppressive restrictions, revealing the harsh reality that even advocating for peace can lead to imprisonment. By reversing Soviet military songs, Butenop transforms symbols of victory into a haunting soundtrack for a world grappling with the repetition of war. The film captures the disheartening journey from darkness to darkness, highlighting the ongoing cycle of war. Butenop's artistic narrative is both a personal reflection on her homeland and a universal call for awareness.

Full Video: <https://youtu.be/ozIWGu1hLko>



"Against Hatred," Kolyshkina, Maria. (2000). Etching, 40/50.

Maria Kolyshkina, a graphic artist and illustrator based in Saint-Petersburg, uses original printing techniques to convey powerful messages in her work. Focusing on the impact of historical events, particularly the start of World War II, her art serves as a bridge between cultures, fostering dialogue and unity. Through pieces like "Against Hatred," Kolyshkina aims to transform the 1st of September, historically a symbol of division, into a day of reconciliation and understanding. Kolyshkina's works, including illustrations for impactful projects like the Mercedes-Benz unique field guide, reside in private collections and prestigious institutions worldwide.

"something becomes real - to those who are elsewhere, following it as 'news' - by being photographed. But a catastrophe that is experienced will often seem eerily like its representation"

Susan Sontag



Rabkina, Elena. (2023). "Belarusian Dream," [Acrylic on porcelain].

Elena Rabkina, a Belarusian artist and activist currently based in Europe, combines her diverse background in art, journalism, and psychology to craft impactful works of social illustration and public art. Focused on themes like ecology, urbanism, social justice, migration, and activism, Rabkina's art serves as a powerful tool for social commentary. Her acclaimed piece, "Belarusian Dream" (2023), captures the tumultuous 2020 protests in Belarus, symbolizing the nation's collective yearning for change. The shattered porcelain plate, a cultural symbol of good fortune, reflects Rabkina's hope for a renewed Belarus amidst political upheaval, a sentiment intensified by her personal journey as a political refugee.



Cavanagh, Sandra. (2023). "Drawings of War 4," [Pen and ink on paper, 51 x 36 cm; 20 x 14 in].





Cavanagh, Sandra. (2023). "The Death of Hector," [Oil on canvas, 152.5 x 183 cm; 60 x 72 x 1.5 in].



Cavanagh, Sandra. (2023). "Death of Hector II," [Oil on canvas, 183 x 183 cm; 72 x 72 in].

Brooklyn-based artist Sandra Cavanagh creates powerful works like "The Death of Hector" (2023) that examine vibrant and deeply saturated conceptual narratives that explore sociopolitical events, pain and suffering during warfare, and loss of innocence in transgenerational stories. Cavanagh's urgent series, like "Drawings of War" further visually annotate visceral reactions to memories and current concerns. The dramatic fusion of form and message in pieces reflects her intent to showcase the severity and the intensity of the impacts of conflict through thought-provoking works.



Tettamanti, Ádám. (2023). Incursion, [Acrylic on Canvas, 140 x 200 cm].

Tettamanti Ádám's "Incursion" unveils a surreal (post)apocalyptic realm, intertwining everyday actions with bizarre, absurd elements. These paintings transcend spatial and temporal boundaries, portraying the last days of a parallel world or the collapse of familiar civilization. Mythical creatures intermittently emerge, evoking a return to primordial chaos. Ádám, educated at the Hungarian University of Fine Arts, has exhibited extensively in group and solo shows, earning the Rékassy Csaba Award in 2007. His latest solo exhibition, "Terra Cognita," at Klauzál13 Gallery, showcases his captivating exploration of imaginative landscapes and speculative futures.



Karpachova, Tatsiana. (2022). Protect Your Woman from Your Darkness, [Paper, Colour Pencils, 43 x 30 cm].

Tatsiana Karpachova, born in Minsk, Belarus, graduated from the Belarusian Academy of Arts in 2017. A recipient of the Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation grant in 2018 and 2020, she participated in Artist-in-Residence programs globally. Her art serve as a diary exploring vulnerability amid emigration, psychotherapy, and the impact of brutal wars on the artist's family. Tatsiana Karpachova weaves personal and transpersonal elements, inspired by Judith Lewis Herman's concept of mourning as the only just response to loss. The artwork on mourning is a poignant contribution to the collective experience of trauma, urging empathy and action.



Ilyashenka, Sviatlana (2022).  
"Unbreakable Ukraine! Without light, but  
without you! (without Russian fascists)"  
[Gouache, 21cm x 30cm].



Sviatlana Ilyashenka, a talented artist from Belarus now residing in Poland, creates emotionally charged artworks that blend colors and techniques to convey feelings and moods. Her preferred mediums are gouache and oil, used on paper and canvas. Sviatlana's art is deeply inspired by her travels and explores architecture and landscapes. Her work reflects a commitment to supporting social causes, with pieces dedicated to Ukraine and the struggle for freedom in Belarus. Sviatlana's paintings have earned recognition in international competitions, including the prestigious "Golden Bee." Her art not only captivates with its beauty but also carries a powerful message of resilience and solidarity.



Hussein, Sarah. (2023). The Dream  
[Oil Painting].

Sarah Hussein is an Egyptian artist, known for her captivating blend of reality and imagination in her works. "The Dream," a 2023 oil painting on canvas, measures 100x70 and portrays a giant woman peacefully asleep in a surreal land. This work explores the challenges of finding refuge and the flux of homes during conflict. Sarah's art has earned recognition on the international stage, with exhibitions and awards in Italy, Egypt, India, Taiwan, UAE, and the USA. Her art has been shortlisted for the Alpine Fellowship Visual Art Prize (2022), and she has received awards in various competitions, demonstrating her exceptional talent and creative vision. Sarah's work invites viewers to explore the concepts of home and safety through this surreal imagery and dreamlike world, leaving a lasting impression.



Cox, Arica. (2022). "La Casa,"  
[Acrylic on Canvas, 9 x 7].

Arica Cox, a visual artist with seven years of experience, explores profound societal issues through her work. In "La Casa" (2022), Cox delves into the concepts of home and suffering in conflict aftermath, particularly the impact on children. The piece sheds light on the neglect of crucial issues such as disrupted education and trauma, perpetuating a cycle of neglect in the post-war scenario. Cox's art also addresses the pervasive chaos among the younger generation due to society's increasing reliance on virtual platforms, emphasizing the detrimental effects on real-life experiences, social interactions, mental health, and personal development. With a background in vibrant acrylic paintings and intricate drawings, Cox's immersive artworks provoke thought and evoke emotions, reflecting her dedication to merging culture, creativity, and social impact.



Cvejić, Ana. (2023). "Democracy" [Mix media on paper, 110 x 86 cm].

Ana Cvejić, a Serbian artist hailing from Belgrade, uses her creations to champion the marginalized, giving voice to those often unheard. Her art serves as a testament to the diminishing rights and freedoms in society, with a particular focus on the plight of the "little people." Cvejić's artistic journey includes residencies in Barcelona, Belgium, and the United Arab Emirates, and she's also participated in six art colonies. Cvejić's artistic pursuits are a testament to her commitment to amplifying the voices of the unheard and underserved.



Loprete, Mario. (2022). Ukrainian Ice Cream  
[Concrete Sculpture].



Mario Loprete, based in Catanzaro, Italy, at 55 years old, is a passionate artist who shares his notable work, "Ukrainian Ice Cream". It is a 2022 concrete sculpture of real-size proportions, encapsulating the melting flag colours and fragile state of the nation, surrounded by permanent concrete. Loprete's art journey is an intricate dance between painting and sculpture, where each medium represents a different facet of his creative expression. His concrete sculptures serve as repositories of his memories and experiences.



Dumina, Iryna (2023r). "Peace for Ukraine" [Drawing].

Artist Iryna Dumina, a teacher and passionate artist from Ukraine, uses her work to advocate for peace and freedom. Her drawing, "Peace for Ukraine," originally intended to convey peace, has a powerful message. Iryna's artwork "Peace and Freedom for Palestine" serves as a heartfelt response to the ongoing conflict in Palestine. With a strong belief in non-violent conflict resolution, she calls for an end to the Palestinian suffering and emphasizes the importance of peace and freedom. Iryna's art reflects her commitment to global harmony and empathy for those affected by conflict, including her homeland, Ukraine. She joins the exhibition to express solidarity and support for those experiencing hardship, both in Ukraine and Palestine.



Rofi, (2021). Blockade  
[Mixed media on Canvas].

Rofi, a mixed-media artist, presents "Blockade" (2021) in his portfolio. This striking 122 x 153 cm canvas embodies the struggles faced during the COVID pandemic, drawing poignant parallels with global conflicts. The artwork metaphorically depicts how conflicts, like a blockade, sever connections, restrict resources, and disrupt lives. Rofi's work serves as a powerful reminder of the enduring hardships faced by those trapped in perpetual struggle, highlighting the need for empathy and understanding in a world where adversity is not evenly distributed.



Solza, Irca. (2014-2023). "Bureaucracy of Miracle," [interactive virtual installation].

Irca Solza, is an artist-researcher, and feminist based in Almaty, Kazakhstan, presents "Bureaucracy of Miracle" (2014-2023). This piece challenges conventional narratives through its synthetic bureaucratic horror project, offering a virtual exploration of existential dimensions often overlooked in discussions about war, power, and miracles. By intertwining poetic texts with visual elements, she disrupts the linearity of time, allowing for illogical transactions at various points. Solza's unique approach combines corporeal and metaphorical situations, as seen in her engagement with propaganda stories that intertwine with the symbolic destruction of influential apparatuses.

"To the militant,  
identity is  
everything."

Susan Sontag





protesting  
suffering

# protesting suffering

In contemplating art as a tool and its role in activism to protest suffering, Susan Sontag's perspective provides valuable insights. Sontag recognized for her discerning analyses at the intersection of aesthetics and socio-political issues, would likely emphasize the potential of art as a potent instrument for societal critique and change. Thus, when wielded thoughtfully, art serves as a dynamic means to amplify marginalized voices, drawing attention to human suffering and injustices.

The artists in this chapter engage in activism with sincerity & and highlight the ethical responsibility of individuals, government officials and communities to contribute meaningfully to societal awareness and change-making. Their works illuminate the dynamics of art activism in the context of protesting human suffering. Simply stating it 'art ignites change'.



Ludwig, Eva. (2022). "The Critical Mass" [Oil on Canvas, 65x100 cm].

Eva Ludwig, a versatile artist from Bonn, Germany, utilizes both oil painting and experimental animated film to explore profound societal themes. Her artwork, "The Critical Mass," delves into the stark disparity between authoritarian rulers and their governed masses. It powerfully illustrates the unyielding control wielded by these leaders, who stifle personal freedoms, manipulate information, and employ military might to showcase their dominance. Eva condemns their misogyny, corruption, and warmongering tendencies, highlighting the profound impact they have on global peace, freedom, and individuality.



van Boeckel, Pat. (2023). "Tinnen Soldaat"  
[Video Still].

Pat van Boeckel, a Dutch artist, transitioned from a distinguished career in documentary filmmaking to create thought-provoking video art. With documentaries broadcasted on Dutch public television and festival showcases, he has covered diverse topics, often with a philosophical touch. Van Boeckel's video installation explore the intricate relationship between humanity and the impacts of conflict through the 'building of" soliders, emphasizing lost values and identity for larger political beliefs in contemporary life. He crafts simplicity amid today's visual chaos, centering on the experience of time and place in his works. Notably, he projects his art onto objects and buildings, adding layers of depth and subverting expectations. Van Boeckel's fusion of documentary techniques and video art results in visually stunning, contemplative pieces.

Full Video: <https://vimeo.com/697019373>



Melnikov, Valery. (2020). Paradise Lost,  
[Photography].



Melnikov, Valery. (2020). Paradise Lost,  
[Photography].

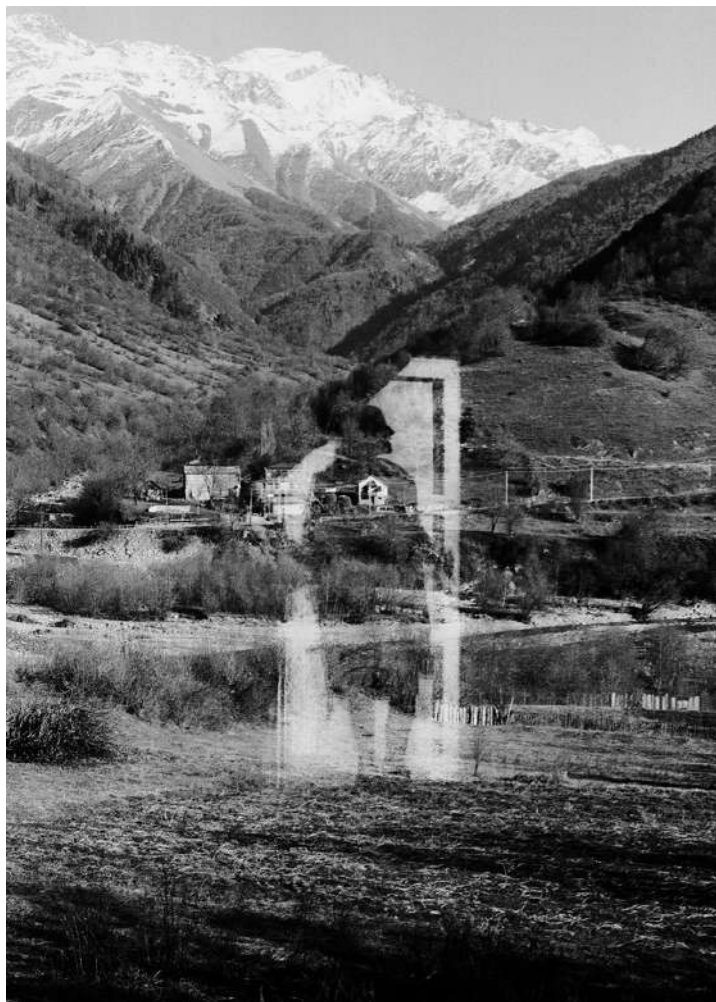


In this poignant photographic series, Valery Melnikov captures the aftermath of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, exploring the fragile nature of peace and the enduring impact of war. His work, "Paradise Lost," serves as a documentary testament to the historical upheaval in the region, drawing parallels with the biblical myth of paradise lost. Melnikov, an independent photographer with a career spanning conflict zones worldwide, skillfully navigates the complexities of war-torn societies. His commitment to capturing the human experience in the face of conflict is evident in the numerous awards he has received. "Paradise Lost" stands as a powerful reminder of the ease with which harmony can be shattered and the daunting challenge of rebuilding what has been lost.



Najafi, Farzaneh. (2023). "Stop The War,"  
[Performance (Video, Photography)].

Farzaneh Najafi, an Iranian artist, addresses the echoes of war in her poignant performance, "Stop the War" (2023). Born amidst the Iran-Iraq conflict, Najafi draws a painful connection to current events in Ukraine. Inspired by Chinese artist Zhang Huan, she orchestrates a two-hour and forty-minute plea for peace. Her students meticulously inscribe "Stop the War" using various brushes and black ink, creating a powerful visual statement. Through this artistic act, Najafi transcends personal history, advocating for a universal message against the ravages of war, fostering solidarity, and urging the world to unite in a collective call for an end to conflict.



Smykova, Diana. (2022-2023). "Emma"  
from the 'Postcards Home' project,  
[Digital/analogue photographs].



Smykova, Diana. (2022-2023). "Mubara!"  
from the 'Postcards Home' project,  
[Digital/analogue photographs].



Smykova, Diana. (2022-2023). "Veronika"  
from the 'Postcards Home' project,  
[Digital/analogue photographs].

Diana Smykova, an innovative visual artist, seamlessly blends documentary and fine art photography, enriching her projects with video and text. Hailing from the Far Russian North, Smykova delves into the Arkhangelsk region's culture and her own identity, capturing intimate stories of locals. Now a nomadic creator, she draws inspiration from her travels, exploring the theme of home across borders. Her latest series, "Postcards Home," unravels diverse narratives of migration, identity, and trauma, questioning the essence of home. Smykova, a member of Women Photograph and the Russian Union of Photographers, skillfully addresses social issues through introspective contemplation and personal narratives.



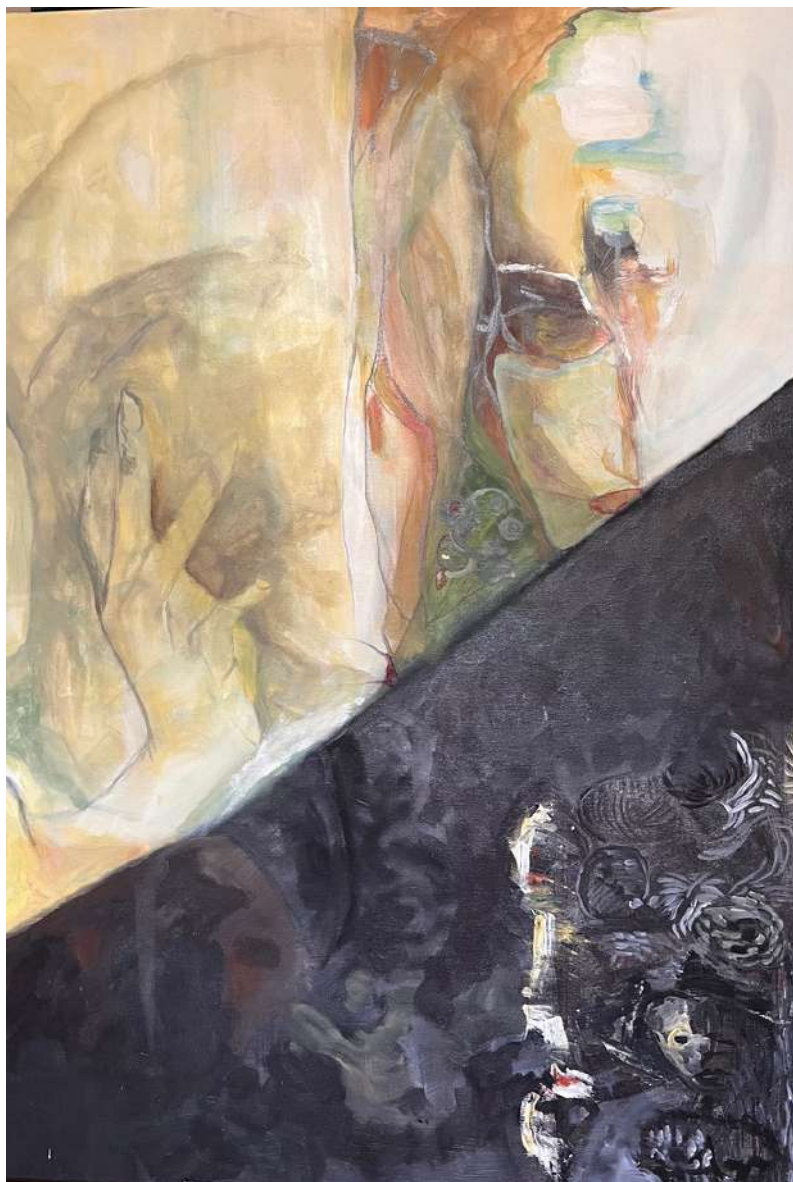
Ruksha, Katsiaryna. (2023). "Watching my life turning into ruins," [Digital collage].



Katsiaryna Ruksha a Belarusian artist currently residing in Poland, brings forth "Watching my life turning into ruins" (2023), a poignant digital collage. Inspired by the distressing missile attacks on Ukraine, this artwork serves as a cathartic expression of the artist's struggle to comprehend the profound emotions surrounding the tragedy. Through the lens of a woman witnessing her world crumble, the piece conveys the visceral impact of conflict on individuals and humanity. Ruksha, an emerging collage artist, explores both analog and digital mediums, infusing contemporary elements like fashion and graffiti into her works. With a portfolio showcased in various online exhibitions, she captures the dynamic nuances of modern existence, creating pieces that reflect the vibrant energy and diversity of our rapidly changing world.

"violence turns  
anybody subjected to  
it into a thing"

Simone Weil



Airam, Ica. (2023). Pulsand Distant un Microb pe Versant, [acrylic, charcoal, silver leaf on canvas, 120x110cm].



Airam, Ica. (2022). Meanwhile on the Field, [acrylic on canvas, 101x76cm].

Ica Airam, an artist based in Montreal since 1996, weaves a powerful narrative through her evocative paintings. Her recent series, "Indigenous State of Pain," is a poignant tribute to the resilience of those fighting for indigenous rights and land. Through acrylic on canvas, she explores the multifaceted nature of global atrocities, prompting viewers to confront systemic injustices and question the possibility of justice and change. Airam's extensive exhibition history, including notable shows like "Cocorico" and "Northern Lights," reflects her commitment to social commentary. Her art serves as a catalyst for conversations, encouraging reflection and action towards a more equitable future.



The Party of the Dead. (2023). Children's  
Day of the Dead, [Series of Photos  
(Documentation of a street action)].

In this powerful series, The Party of the Dead, an art activist group originating from Russia, presents "Children's Day of the Dead." Documenting a street action dedicated to International Children's Day, the work delves into the core of war, highlighting infanticide as both a harsh reality and a symbolic justification. Originally referencing the Russian military invasion of Ukraine, the art speaks universally to the suffering of children in all conflicts. Founded by artist and philosopher Maxim Evstropov in 2017, The Party of the Dead engages in "necro-activism," challenging political and cultural necrophilia while addressing the abuse of the dead by those in power.



Berg, Jeffrey. (2023). The Consequences of War, [Drawing].



Jeffrey Berg, an accomplished artist with a lifelong dedication to drawing, presents "The Consequences of War" to explore the enduring human impact of conflict. Based at the 52 "O" Street Studios, Berg's poignant drawing, measuring 27" x 39", delves into the emotional and physical scars left by war. His extensive artistic journey includes exhibitions in Washington, DC, reflecting a rich tapestry of the human experience. Beyond his artistic pursuits, Berg's diverse educational background and professional roles in community development and mental health counseling underscore his commitment to intertwining art with societal reflection and service.

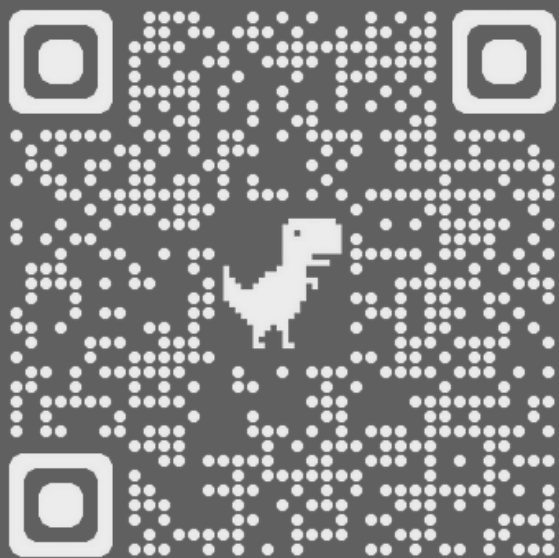
"We can't imagine how dreadful, how terrifying war is; and how normal it becomes. Can't understand, can't imagine. That's what every soldier, and every journalist and aid worker and independent observer who has put in time under fire, and had the luck to elude the death that struck down others nearby, stubbornly feels. And they are right."

Susan Sontag

"...the war goes on  
an ache in the bones  
an ache in the gut  
an ache in the heart."

Susan Sontag

visit the  
exhibition



ArtSteps: The Pain of Others

[starvingartist.cargo.site/  
the-pain-of-others](http://starvingartist.cargo.site/the-pain-of-others)

# concluding remarks

In 'the pain of others,' the amalgamation of diverse perspectives and artistic prowess provides a compelling vantage point to explore the intricate relationship between art and our connection to the repercussions of conflict. Beyond the captivating visual appeal of their creations, it is the poignant messages embedded within them that carry the most profound significance. Through the lens of these artists, a collective yearning emerges to articulate their experiences of trauma and a pressing call for immediate systemic reform, underscoring the paramount importance of preserving our ties to communities and leaders affected by conflict in our complex world.

The artworks stand as more than just aesthetically impactful; they serve as a resounding testament to the imperative of humanity in the face of atrocious acts. They urgently highlight the need to safeguard our global community, emphasizing the importance of protecting and nurturing connections amidst the relentless challenges posed by conflict.

# featured artists

Ica Airam | Montreal, Canada

Olga Butenop | Tbilisi, Georgia

Vladimír Ganaj | Prešov, Slovakia

Sarah Hussein | Damietta, Egypt

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Rima Staines | Devon, UK

Lynette Clennell | Italy

Arica Cox | Yangon, Myanmar

Farzaneh Najafi | Tehran, Iran

Elena Rabkina | Belarus

# featured artists

Liliana Del Vedova | Ottawa, Canada

Ilya Sprindzhuk | Warsaw, Poland

Pat van Boeckel | Netherlands

Maria Kolyshkina | Russia

Sandra Cavanagh | Brooklyn, USA

Katsiaryna Ruksha | Belarus

Irca Solza | Almaty, Kazakhstan

Diana Smykova | Cairo, Egypt

Jeffrey Berg | Washington DC, USA

Ahmed Alabbadi | Aden, Yemen

Vetka Kirillova | Tbilisi, Georgia

Iryna Vorona | Kyiv, Ukraine

Adam Tettamanti | Budapest, Hungary

Pink Satura | Kaliningrad, Russia

Tatsiana Karpachova | Tbilisi, Georgia

Valery Melnikov | Moscow, Russia

# contributors + project supporters

The Starving Artist team would like to extend heartfelt thanks to our invaluable contributors, artists, and cover art artist **Ilya Sprindzhuk**. Your unwavering dedication and contributions have been instrumental in shaping this platform into a powerful force for change.

To our **artists**, your work transcends visuals or words; it is a profound reflection of lived experiences, unfiltered emotions, and a deep commitment to spark change. Through your art, you have given a voice to marginalized narratives and ignited essential conversations that challenge existing systems.

In closing, for us it is not just about art; it is about empowerment, connection, and change. Together, we aim to encourage individuals to explore art as a systematic tool for peace activism and civic reform. We are truly united in our commitment to driving transformation within our society.

Thank you all!

Ally Zlatar and The Starving Artist Team



# the starving artist



The Starving Artist Initiative is a platform that empowers individuals through the creative arts, emphasizing personal experiences. Our mission is to foster authentic and open conversations, aiming to drive change within existing systems. We particularly strive to support emerging voices in the creative arts, encouraging people to explore and express their experiences creatively. Our topics span various issues, including well-being, gender rights, migrant experiences, and climate action. Through artistic expressions, exhibitions, publications, workshops, and collaborative efforts, we connect artists, individuals, and stakeholders to ignite systemic reform.

For more information visit:  
<https://starvingartist.cargo.site/>





"War tears, rends.  
War rips open,  
eviscerates.  
War scorches.  
War dismembers.  
War ruins."

Susan Sontag