

POLINA SHCHERBYNA ARTIST STATEMENT

Polina Shcherbyna born in Kyiv, Ukraine, in 16/08/93. From march 2023 based in Leipzig, Germany. In her visual practice, Polina works with the expansion of the concept and perception of painting, which she positions as an object. She creates double-sided works that grow into installations that sometimes include sound as an additional element of the spatial-auditory perception of the work.

Works that Polina creates on wooden boards in the techniques of drawing, carving and burning, is an allusion to the icon.

The artist interprets double-sided works as a double view of the world of the Anthropocene.

On the one hand, they are filled with horror and powerlessness before the dark side of humanity, but at the same time, they are filled with faith in the future.

A main material for the artist is an unprimed linen fabric glued with layers of gelatin, which fixes crumpled curves and torn edges of the fabric. Works are technically similar to a miraculous print, the artist creates a hand-made image with partial loss of information, this technical feature reminds of the illusory nature of time and memory is the imprint that history leaves behind.

Throughout the entire artistic practice, her works are related to corporeality and the use of anti-anatomy techniques.

From spring 2022, Polina explores corporeality in nature and reveals it through the form of a tree, reflecting on war and the figure of human in the circle of anthropological questions, and also draws our attention towards dark ecology.

The main themes of Polina's art works is - corporeality, deep ecology, body of the war, dark vitality, sacralization of death, suffering and sacrifice in the modern world through the prism of Christianity.

In 2018 Polina Shcherbyna graduated from the National Academy of Fine Arts and of architecture, in Kyiv. She studied at the workshop of monumental painting and temple culture named after M.A. Storozhenka.

CV

Solo exhibitions

- 2023 "LES ENFANTS VONT BIEN ", Idealfruhstuck, Paris, France
- 2023 "The fragility of the world", no name place, Chernivtsi , Ukraine
- 2023 "Tree of great height standing in the middle of the earth" Contemporary Art Center, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine
- 2022 "Living according to Sky" Šopa Gallery, Kosice, Slovakia
- 2020 "Destroyed Archive" American House in Kyiv, Kyiv, Ukraine
- 2019 "Living Beyond the Subconscious", MASLO.SPACE Art Center, Khmelnytsky, Ukraine

Selected group exhibitions

- 2023 "Et cetera pp" Begehungen Festival, Palase Lichtenstein, Germany
- 2023 «Goldnarben», Schloss Schönhausen, Berlin, Germany
- 2023 "One, Five, 9" A-Space gallery, Lisbon, Portugal
- 2023 "Records of Resistance" BIRUCHIY, Unterhause Gallery, Oberhausen, Germany
- 2023 "Women of Liberty" Salon Mondial, Basel, Swizerland
- 2022 BIRUCHIY- TRANSCARPATHIA 022 "Art war", House of Social Inovations, Warsaw, Poland 2022
- "FIRE and HOPE" NTK gallery, Prague, Czech Republic
- 2022 "Border" Korydor gallery, Uzhhorod, Ukraine
- 2022 "Pink zone" Swap gallery, Kyiv, Ukraine
- 2021 BIRUCHIY 021 "Time is lost" Tourist Information Center, Zaporizhia, Ukraine
- 2020 "Eternity Is Now", Istanbul Artist Residency Istanbul, Turkey
- 2020 "Art Palm Springs 2020" Palm Spring California, United States
- 2020 "Winter Art Show" Ukrainian Institute in America, New York, United States
- 2019 "Summer Art Show" Ukrainian Institute in America, New York, United States
- 2019 "Greenpoint Gallery Salon Show" Greenpoint Gallery, New York, United States
- 2019 KYIV ART FAIR / Kyiv Art Week 2019 "This Is Not A Competition" Toronto Business Center, Kyiv, Ukraine
- 2019 "NYA FAIR / New York Art Week 2019" TriBeCa 7 Franklin Place, New York, United States
- 2019 "Equinox" TriBeCa 7 Franklin Place, New York, United States
- 2019 "Grand Opening NYA Gallery Art Show 2019" TriBeCa 7 Franklin Place, New York, United States
- 2018 "The Next Step" GALLERY104, 373 Broadway, New York, United States
- 2018 "Introspection: discovering yourself" MASLO.SPACE Art Center, Khmelnytsky, Ukraine
- 2018 ARTT SEASONS / ART WINTER CONTEMPORARY M17 Contemporary Art Center, Kyiv, Ukraine
- 2017 "Imaginary Fixation" Taras Shevchenko National Museum, Kyiv, Ukraine
- 2017 "Cultural Code in the Ukrainian Landscape" Taras Shevchenko National Museum, Kyiv, Ukraine

Residences:

- 2023 Residency program Begehungen Festival, Palase Lichtenstein, Germany
- 2023 A-i-R Program Keibel Villa, The International Künstlerhaus, Schwandorf-Fronberg, Germany
- 2023 "Ukrainian Women Artists Residency" Quinta das Relvas & A-Space gallery , Branca, Portugal
- 2022 "Sorry no rooms available" , Uzhhorod, Ukraine
- 2022 BIRUCHIY "TRANS CARPATHIA" Chust, Ukraine
- 2022 "K.A.I.R-Kosice Artist Residence", Šopa Gallery, Kosice, Slovakia
- 2021 BIRUCHIY "Time that is not lost" Primorsk, Ukraine
- 2020 "Eternity Is Now", Istanbul Artist Residency Istanbul, Turkey
- 2018 "Introspection: discovering yourself" MASLO.SPACE Art Center, Khmelnytsky, Ukraine



Les enfants vont bien 2023

The columns of time stand motionless, guarding their square meter of earth, their cubic meter of air. The rammed plant strives to grow through the wounds that have already become the talismans of everyone who is able to feel. The plant can become a miracle cure or sharp blades, but only time will tell.

Before the time, humanity still remains helpless in its desire to know the future.

The legs of a giant is an irony over the finale of the Anthropocene, it is an exaggeration of the importance of a person who inspired humanity so much, it is an eternal wanderer who has lost himself in the time of a cyclical history of violence.

The paradigm of human existence is increasingly and for more and more people turning into a refugee camp where no rights are respected anymore. G. Agamben.*

People around the world, in large and small groups, are rebelling against the infringement of their rights and freedoms.

Any oppression for the "body of humanity" only causes more resistance.

But sometimes the "body of humanity" freezes, not wanting to be crippled, loses power over itself and the path to freedom becomes an invisible future or a long-forgotten past of a social slave.

And the price of freedom is just what haunts us.

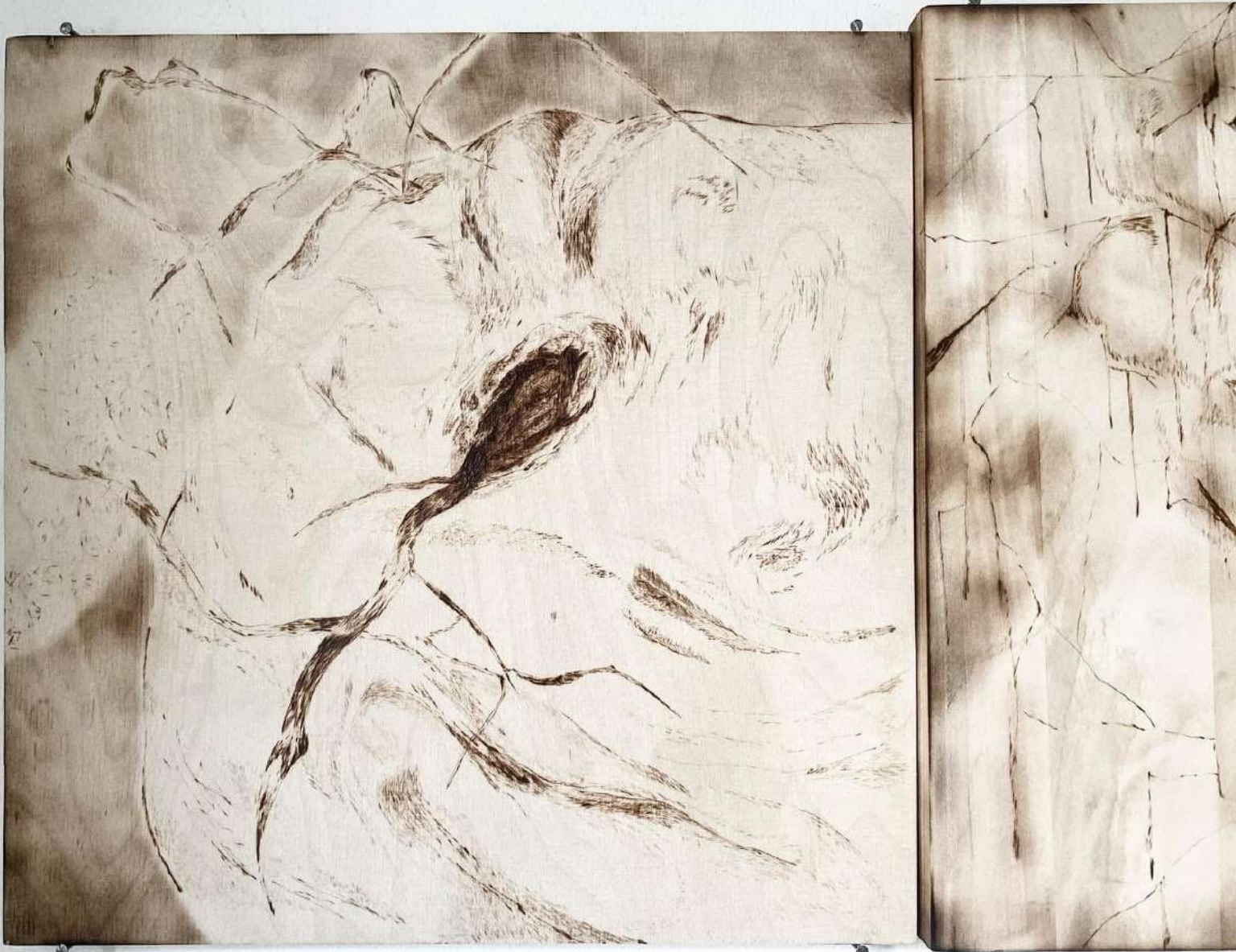
*What is the Contemporary?, Gorgio Agamben, 2007.

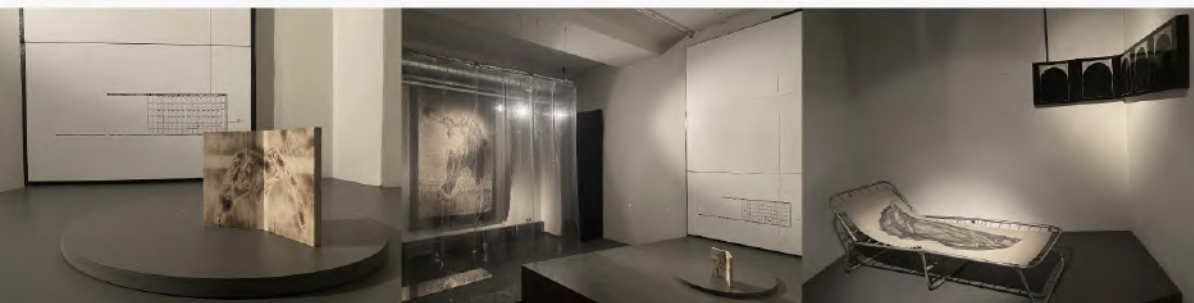
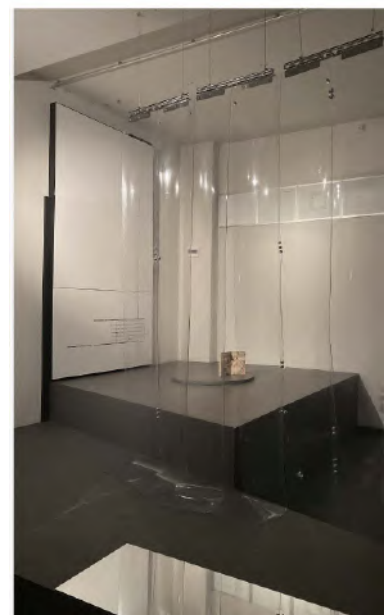


Solo exhibition "Les enfants vont bien" 2023
Artist Run Space IDEALFRUHSTUCK, Paris, France







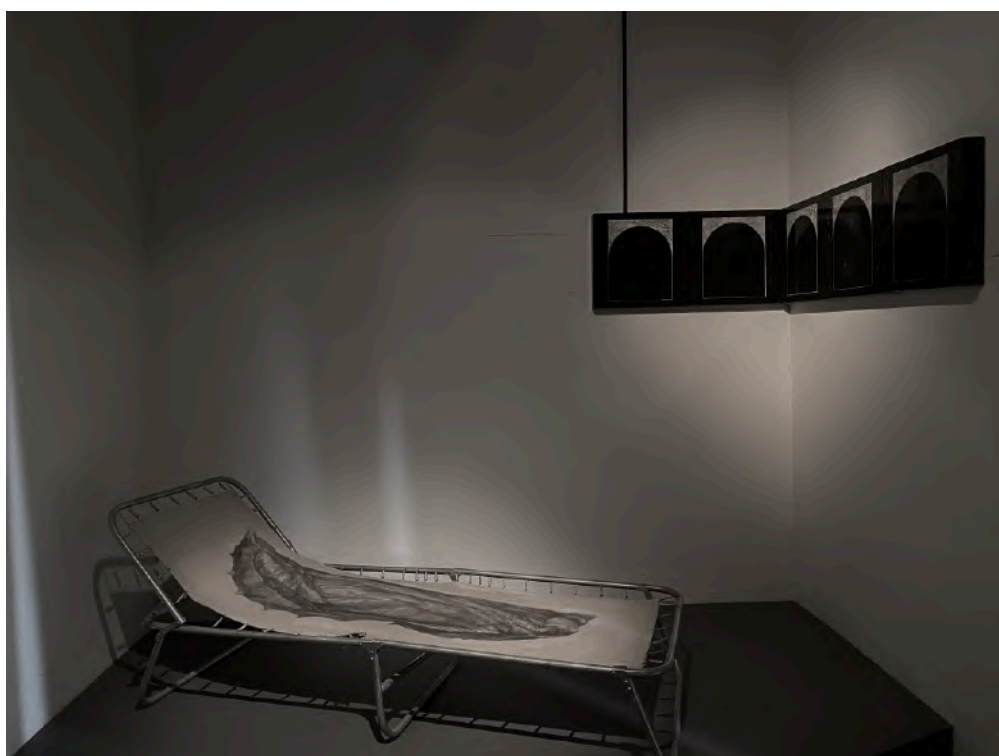


"CYCLE OF HISTORY" 2023

Project "CYCLE OF HISTORY" reflection on the tragedy of timelessness that humanity receives not for the first time. Its image of explore traces of suffocation of the socio-political machine that make us adapt to any pain. Perhaps in the awareness of cyclicity lies the way out of the circle of eternal repetitions in history.

In this project Polina Shcherbyna and Sofiia Yesakova create installation as an artists duo which works in painting as an object. Their artistic practice relates to different aspects of visual language of the tradition of Icone.

Through the layers of history they both use symbols and images that are borrowed of the past forms. With this system, they want one establishing a dialogue with the future that means standing the cyclical nature of events in world history.



"Something about a dead bird" 2023

In the visual basis of the "Something about a dead bird" series, I create images from photographs of dead birds that I have been photographing on the streets of different cities and countries for the past six months. In this way, I form reflections on death, how it has changed before our eyes, dressed in the armor of a socio-political context, it has turned into cold statistics and counts of the dead and wounded.

I think about how a collection of pain builds up over a lifetime, and how humanity adapts to any degree of pain. Perhaps soon there will be nothing left that can touch our souls. Because wartime as matter always tries to return man to the animal world, putting the goal of "survival" in the first place. In the iconographic tradition, the bird is a symbol of the holy spirit. By depicting a dead bird, I indicate the death of the spiritual, interweaving the two different concepts of spirit and spirituality with the image of death, thus sacralizing death.

In anticipation of the changes of the present, it is impossible to predict the fate of mankind. It is only noticeable how the spiritual in a person dies or is preserved in a "cocoon" until it becomes important again and can be reborn.



30x35cm, wood, firing painting



"Something about a dead bird" series 2023

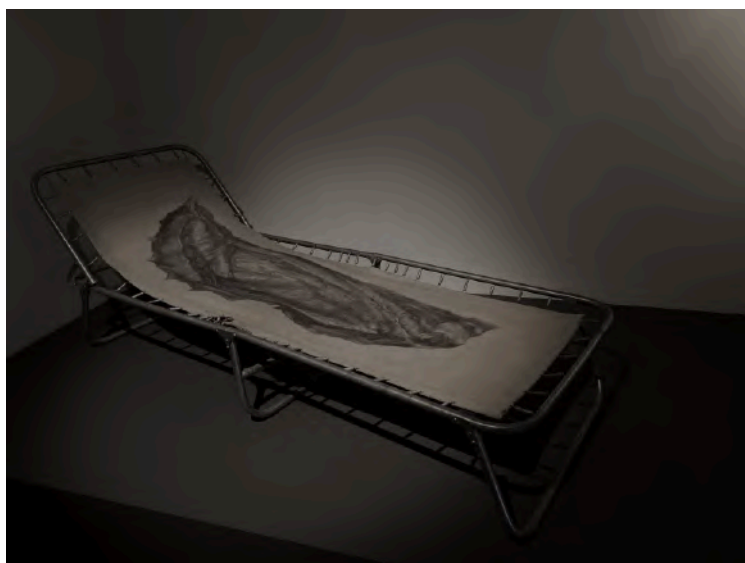






“COCOON”

object-folding bed, tarpaulin, stainless steel, acryl, 180x70 cm





"Something about a dead bird" series" 2023
70x65cm unprimed linen canvas, folds, gelatin, acril



"The winter landscape has changed to - the landscape of emptiness"

210x140 cm unprimed linen canvas, folds, gelatin, acril

Some landscapes will remain only in the stories and legends of people who once saw life in them, in the past life, before the war.

Now all these places are reminders of death, which took away all living things, including man.

The territory for which blood is spilled becomes a shelter of ashes, every day the ashes cover a new piece of land. All the roles have been distributed, it remains only to wait. Passive observation or active participation, compassion and suffering, many victims - everything turns into "waiting" in which time freezes and it is scary to think about the future, but it is allowed to think about it only with hope. Not everyone will be taken into the future, but the ashes will definitely be there, but at least not alone.

"The winter landscape has changed to - the landscape of emptiness" contains a dialogue with the art piece "Winter landscape" by Anselm Kiefer, in his work he reflected on the theme of the Second World War, depicting in his work its consequences, in the image of a severed head of a woman levitating above the winter landscape .

In my work, I depict a dead bird levitating over a burnt landscape. In dialogue with Kiefer's work, I analyze wartime as matter, which suggests that we will fully understand all the horrors and mistakes of war only by distancing ourselves from the events. When the present becomes the past. But the consequences that we have are already only wounds that will not soon turn into scars.

Through the events of the Second World War, I try to understand what the russian-Ukrainian war will lead to, which in one way or another applies to everyone today and can lead to terrible consequences for the existence of humanity in the future.





"Is the wound healing or growing?" 2023

174x97 cm unprimed linen canvas, folds, gelatin, acril



"The place of healing of always homeless body" 2022

object-folding bed, tarpaulin, stainless steel, graphite pencil, 164x61 cm, height 26 cm

One of the most severe levers for forced migrations is war. It is impossible to plan an escape from reality, one can only grope for light in the darkness, intuitively try to survive.

When I think about the present, I think about the people around me, about people who were not ready for this life, including myself. The history of wars is terrible and merciless. The evolution of consciousness, unfortunately, has strong evasions, today it is once again clear to everyone, on the example of the Russian-Ukrainian war.

Delving into my childhood memories, I remember a metal Soviet folding bed covered with a tarpaulin, which was in every Ukrainian family. It was laid out by the owners of the house in case the guest was delayed and stayed overnight. Therefore, for me, the folding bed is a certain symbol of a temporary shelter, a place of rest, which, under certain circumstances, can turn from temporary to permanent.

The image of hope that sprouts from the body is a kind of healing place for the soul, a place where branches of new life sprout. Even in the most difficult times, there is a belief that everyone can find their own place or create it.

"The fragility of the world in the body of unknown" 2022

The bark of that tree is like skin that falls in cascades in the abyss of autumn, there is a thick air of sad thoughts. Where no one hears a body groan until they see its wounds, until they receive the same wounds themselves.

That trunk is torn from its roots, from its branches.

We know nothing of this tree, except that it is mutilated, like the history of its place, half-alive trying to climb out of the hole into which it has been thrown not for the first time and not for the last time.

A useless death or a useless life blurs the boundaries in a senseless world.

[link to audio poem](#)



МАРНА СМЕРТЬ ЧИ МАРНЕ ЖИТТЯ СТИРАЄ КОРДОНИ В БІВІТІ ЗДОМУ ОВІТІ?

author.tech. unprimed canvas, acrylic, embroidery, diptych 115x110 cm, 200x17 cm

the phrase is embroidered on the canvas, in Ukrainian translated

"A useless death or a useless life blurs the boundaries in a senseless world."



Personal exhibitions 2023 "The fragility of the world",Chernivtsi , Ukraine





"Overcoming the inhuman" or "Overcoming the black spot" wood, graphite pencil, 30x30 cm



"Against the Darkness" 2022, wood, graphite pencil, 30x20 cm

"A tree of a great height standing in the middle of the earth" 2022

The project is filled with thoughts about the body of the war, about human being as a part of the nature and war, which destroys everything around, about "crime against human's life", as if it was "a crime against the nature itself".

Black spots represent the burnt days of war on our peaceful life. They absorb living space, memories and plans for the future. The image of the enemy appears in this vibrating blackness. I think about who he is, how does he look like, is it in fact a human? The folk-swear definition of the enemy as "inhuman-pig-dog" appeared in "Ukrainian folklore" in 2014. I have borrowed and used it in my system of images.

However, I find the image of light against the darkness. "The life grows out of a person, branches germinate into the sky from her hands, her feet put down roots into the ground."

This is a metaphor about the past and the future, about the roots and branches of a tree, as a reflection of ancestors and descendants, I think about the connection between human's life with the nature." Seeds, sprouts, a tree" – it is a rebirth, it is a body that grows from the nature, and then returns to it again. The battle with a tree that sprouts from nowhere is an image of the fight for freedom, of the resistance to irrational evil. These are the chopped off branches of a tree standing in the middle of the earth, which will sprout next spring anyway.



"Tree of great height" 2022, wood, graphite pencil, 30x20 cm



"Prickly Tear" 2022, wood, graphite pencil, carving, 30x20 cm



"A tree of great height standing in the midst of the earth" 2022, wood, graphite pencil, 30x20 cm



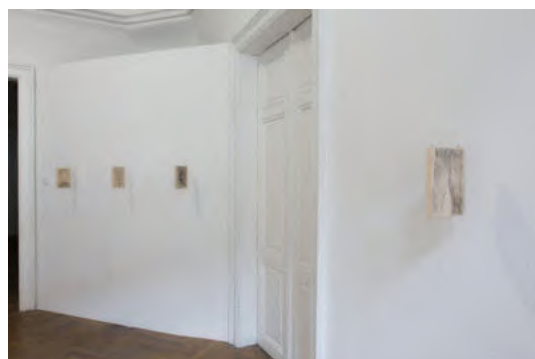
"Seeds" 2022, author's technique double-sided painting, wood, pencil, carving, 20x15



"Branches to the open sky" double-sided work, wood, graphite pencil, 20x15 cm



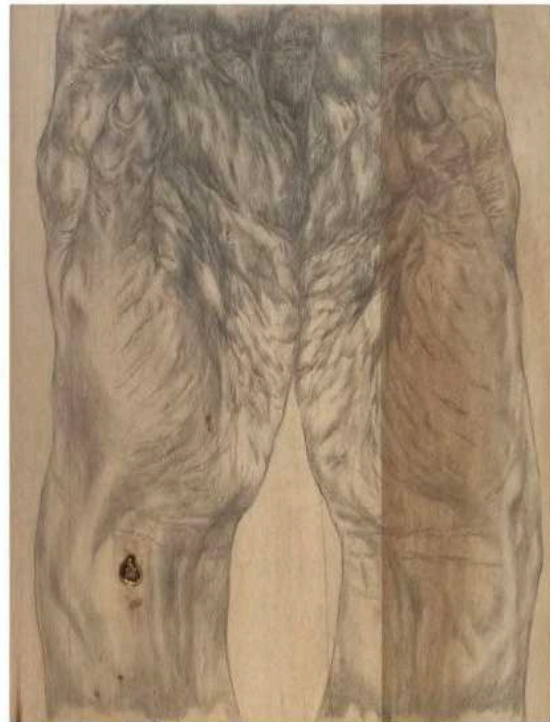
"is it possible to protect the whole world from the tumor of darkness?" double-sided work, wood, graphite pencil, 20x15 cm



exhibition "Living according to Sky" Šopa Gallery, Kosice, Slovakia



"Body of war" 2022, 30x30 cm wood, graphite pencil



"Branches of great tree" 2022, double-sided work, wood, graphite pencil, 20x15 cm

The branches of the great tree are bleeding from wounds, either from bullets or from nails piercing the flesh. These wounds ache, become inflamed, heal, and this endless process repeats itself over and over again. Wounds are suffering locked in a circle of terror and hope, walking in a closed circle in the impossibility of fully realizing the perverse reality.



"Battallia of Modernity" 2022, unprimed canvas, acrylic, 300x300 cm

The unfolding events resemble a terrible surrealistic dream that is impossible to comprehend. The state of waiting gives hope to wake up soon from this horror and understand that all this did not exist. But no, the war entered everyone's life. It follows us everywhere, it is present in everything that surrounds us. The war is next to us when we look at the window, it is still with us when we have a dinner, when we go to bed.

The shape of the curtain is an attribute of home comfort in a peaceful life. This is what guards the intimacy of our lives, preserving behind a fabric curtain what is domestic and personal.

I think about it as a separation between man and war, as a division between our personal lives and the terrible reality of war that changes everything around. I peer into the curtain and think about the time. Time in process of waiting started to flow differently, it burns in a whirlwind of terrible news. In anticipation of victory, hours, days, months, turn into a homogeneous mass, it seems that it is one very long day and only the number of terrible crimes of the occupier reminds how long this day lasts.

"The Battallia of Modernity" is a fixation of a battle that is difficult to imagine literally, it is a belief in the light which will definitely defeat the darkness.



exhibition "Living according to Sky" Šopa Gallery, Kosice, Slovakia



"Embrace of eternity" 2023
unprimed canvas, acrylic, 200x170 cm

I consider any war a crime not only against humanity but against nature as a whole. War wakes inside my sense of loss, the value of life, and the fear of death. A part of myself dies whenever I learn of a new loss of human life. Each loss is the loss of the whole world. We are all in this body together, suffering and losing every day. While we remember this we have a chance for the future.



2023 "One, Five, 9" A-Space gallery, Lisbon, Portugal



"One less tree in paradise" 2022-23
unprimed canvas, acrylic, 200x135 cm

The open sore of our tragedy turns into a landscape of emptiness, which is a reminder of the sins of humanity, but this is only a fragment of mourning for the losses of a great world, a world unable to stop the abyss that is so fast approaching humanity.





pollyshcher@gmail.com

<https://www.instagram.com/pollyshch/>