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## REPRESENTATION OF THE NATIONAL IDENTITY OF UKRAINIANS IN WARTIME PHOTO PROJECTS

## РЕПРЕЗЕНТАЦІЯ НАЦІОНАЛЬНОЇ ІДЕНТИЧНОСТІ УКРАЇНЦІВ У ФОТОПРОЕКТАХ ВОЄННОГО ЧАСУ

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Trauma representation is one of effective responses to certain traumatic experience acquired during the period of war, environmental disasters and other negative phenomena of social life within a specific society. One of the main media for conveying the artist's message and one of the most effective way of capturing the «catastrophe» is photography. Combining documentary and staged images, artistic and naturalistic shooting methods, idealist and naturalist conceptions, the photographer rethinks certain events and reflects them in an artistic form through his own experience and his subjective vision. Recently, there has been a significant increase in the number of non-commercial Ukrainian portrait photo projects, which show the Ukrainians

who found themselves in a crisis situation of military aggression from different sides. In addition to this, such projects can also emphasize the issue of the identity and uniqueness of the Ukrainian nation, its mental and ethnographic features. Thus, there is a need to investigate the features of the development of the genre of national portrait images and visual anthropology within the framework of contemporary photo art of Ukraine and to examine its prominent features.

Photography, its influence on viewer, its attitude towards archives, past and historical facts, and social function have been the subject of an art history discourse since the beginning of the 20th century (Walter Benjamin, Roland Barthes, Susan Sontag), that have been constantly changed due to the emergence of new media and the affirmation of photography as an independent phenomenon in art sphere (Andre Rouye, Olivier Lugon, Frits Gierstberg). However, Ukrainian photography as art phenomenon remains insufficiently studied, compared to the foreign researches and works in the art field. Only since the 1990s a scientific works that explore the specifics of the development of Ukrainian photography have appeared. In particular, in the last third of the 20th century, Kharkov photography became the subject of study by T. Pavlova as the topic of her dissertation. According to her research, the period from the late 1980s to the early 1990s was a time of great changes and transformations not only in Ukrainian society, which underwent «reconstruction» and the actual collapse of the Soviet Union, but also in photography. Artistic analysis of the directions of development of Ukrainian photography in Kiev during the period of «reconstruction» was carried out in the work of V. Mironenko. The issue of the visual language of photography in Ukrainian photo projects dedicated to the revolutionary events in Ukraine at the time of independence is considered in the paper [2]. But despite this, contemporary Ukrainian photography of the last decade is rather a source of inspiration for popular science publications, than a issue of art research. For instance, there are many interviews with well-known representatives of Ukrainian photography (Igor Gaidai, Boris Mikhailov), and popular science articles on foreign and Ukrainian Internet platforms. The information about the latest Ukrainian projects can be found primarily in Ukrainian popular science magazines like «Birds and Fly», «Vogue.ua», «Your Art», as well as in foreign reviews and articles on art competitions, while the field of purely scientific research remains at the initial stage levels.

In general, most contemporary photo projects take the form of «a narrative» (those that tell a certain story) or typological series (those that consist works depicting objects or persons united according to a certain principle). Portrait photo-typologies, are currently one of the most popular ways in the depiction of Ukrainian society by a photo artist, have already appeared in the 19th century. The founder of such typological national project

was August Sander. He helped to define a genre with the work «People of the Twentieth Century. A Photographic Portrait of German». It intended, as he stated, to be «a physiognomic image of an age», and a catalogue of «all the characteristics of the universally human» [1]. Among the most sensational and renowned projects, it is worth to mention the «Portraits» of Thomas Ruff (1989), which features photo portraits of young people who came from the former GDR since the 1980s. One of the first Ukrainian series in such style was «Ukrainians. The Beginning of the Third Millennium» by Igor Gaidai (1996–2003), which showed the inhabitants of Ukraine from all walks of life on a neutral gray background of his portable studio. The Ukrainian typological portrait received its first rise in 2014–2019, in relation to the events on the Maidan, and later – in Donbass. At that time, a number of artistic photo projects of various types, including series of soldiers or civilians. Examples of such projects are: «Alphabet of common words» by Y. Romanova (2014), «If not the war» (2018) by K. Evgeny, «Medium of instruction» by A. Grom (2019); «Mothers» from newspaper «Mirror Weekly» (2019); collective project of ukrainian photographers devoted to the military women and men «If not war» (2019); «Eyes of the defenders» by Ł. Kobieta (2019).

The complex political situation of nowadays and the aggressive invasion of Russian troops into the territory of Ukraine led to another brought the emergence of photographic series, including typological portrait catalogues in different stylistic and conceptual decision including photographic series of civil people, who suffered from war and its consequences. Hence, it becomes possible to trace a certain connection between the national rise and the creation of ethnographic and national projects, for the reasons that certain events and political crises have considerable impact on art strategies and the mood of society in general. A comprehensive analysis of photo projects mentioned above showed that commonality of style techniques and methods for creating works, that can be divided into documentary, ethnographical and idealistic. For instance, there are a large number of semi-reportage, semi-staged images of destroyed villages and settlements, or refugee shelters («Land of No Return» by V. Sorochinski (2022); «Medium of instruction», «Stolen Spring» by A. Grom (2022). The elderly people, Ukrainian women and children, who are extremely vulnerable to political events and suffered the greatest losses from the war, become most relevant and interesting models for artists («Ukrainian refugees», by A. Majdański (2022); «Refugees of the ongoing war» by S. Korovayny (2022). The photographs are made without visible digital manipulation and retouch and are characterized by a maximum sharpness, which allows to see all the details of the picture. Another notable feature is the absence of clearly expressed «artistic» or «commercial» techniques for decorating and improving the quality of the image and the appearance of the

portrayed. All photos are made in color, which emphasize their «reportage» character.

It is worth noting that with all the «straight» style and «documentary» nature of the images, some works are made in a more artistic manner with contrast lighting, which brings these works closer to the dramatic artistic portrait genre in low key, while others operate only with a direct flash or natural lighting. Among such «art projects», we should highlight the photo projects of O. Chekmenyev («Ukrainian citizens», «Faces of war»), in which he often uses high-quality artistic lighting. In the general concept, typological photo series can be divided into those that have a rigid structure (the same compositional and stylistic decision of the photos, the same viewpoint and lighting, as, for example, in the «Mother» project) and those, that have different composition and are captured from various angles («Children of War»). More free interpretation of images and use of artistic techniques inherent in commercial portrait photography can be traced in photo projects dedicated to the defenders of Ukraine (military, volunteers, etc.), such as «Defenders», «Vazhlyva project» and «Unbreakable» by S. Sapaev, that aim to create idealized and sublime images of ukrainians. Such photos are characterized by deep digital image processing, right angles and typical poses. We can see a similar approach in the thematic ethno-photo projects «Free» and «Cultural ethnos of Transcarpathia» by M. Dorogovich, «Skrynja», «Letters to front». These series of portraits, which can be classified as ethnographic, are aimed to save the memory of the Ukrainian cultural heritage, asserting their own national identity. They are made in a national style with elements of folklore, reflected in the use of national costumes, accessories, and in some cases – in the creation of the natural environment, typical for 17–18 centuries. Increased interest in one's own culture and people, traditions, and national costume is connected with the general national revival and explosion of patriotism.

Thus, among the Ukrainian photo projects dedicated to the war in Ukraine, it is worth highlighting: documentary photo projects, aim to create a complete typological catalogue of people who suffered from the war and to show the environment in which they found themselves after invasion; idealized typologies of defenders; purely national-ethnographic photo projects that, due to the work of stylists, photographers and retouchers, transport the viewer into the authentic world of Ukrainian life. In conclusion, it should be emphasized that typological portrait of Ukrainian society becomes one of the important social and artistic tools, which combines documentary and staged genres, due to which photo artist shows the reality of today's world, the life «from the inside», being in the midst of events. Moreover, as a creator of visual message, an artist defines the identity and indomitability of the Ukrainian nation,

preserves the traditions through the media of photography, and raises the issue of military aggression at the international level.

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## **ILLUSTRATIONS BY E. UDIN AND V. YEFYMENKO FOR THE BOOK “FOLK SONGS IN THE RECORDS OF IVAN FRANKO” IN THE CONTEXT OF UKRAINIAN BOOK GRAPHICS OF THE 1960S**

### **ІЛЮСТРАЦІЇ Є. УДИНА ТА В. ЄФИМЕНКА ДО КНИГИ «НАРОДНІ ПІСНІ В ЗАПИСАХ ІВАНА ФРАНКА» У КОНТЕКСТІ УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ КНИЖКОВОЇ ГРАФІКИ 1960-Х РОКІВ**

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Наприкінці п'ятдесятих років ілюстрація попередніх десятиліть, орієнтована на естетику соцреалізму як єдиного можливого та «правильного» творчого методу, почала втрачати свою актуальність. З'являються художники, яких цікавить не лише графічне відтворення