

Secondary Archive

Platform for Central and Eastern European Women Artists: Ukraine and Belarus

On the 23rd of February, 70 artists from Ukraine and Belarus will join the Secondary Archive project – a unique initiative on a European scale that responds to the problem of the lack of visibility of women from Central and Eastern Europe in recent art history. The secondaryarchive.org platform is designed not only to show the work of artists from this region, but also to create a place where they can speak for themselves. Statements of three generations of artists from Ukraine and Belarus contain stories of wars, successful and unsuccessful revolutions, reality of the Soviet regime, everyday life of the ‘last dictatorship of Europe’, the role of female artists and the strategies of resistance they can undertake. In a context of growing international tensions, the exchange of experiences and solidarity with women from the threatened countries, is extremely important.

The digital archive, which currently contains hundreds of statements, examples of works and essays, was created thanks to the cooperation of the Katarzyna Kozyra Foundation with international partners.

secondaryarchive.org

Ukrainian and Belarusian art for a long time remained unknown to the international audience. Belarus is in a particularly difficult situation, as currently there are no state or private institutions where contemporary artists can present their works. The country, which had been experiencing a kind of “cultural thaw” since the 2010s, has been brutally cut off from the rest of the world in the last two years. In response to the massive anti-government protests, the last independent cultural entities have been shut down, a significant part of the cultural representatives have left the country, and some of them remain imprisoned.

The war in Ukraine, the protests and political repression in Belarus, the situation on the border and the specter of another conflict emerging from Russia – all this has had a huge impact on the local art scene in recent years. A mass movement of politically and socially engaged art has arisen, the role of the artist in society is changing. Local female artists are attracting more and more attention, and their works are beginning to be shown at exhibitions abroad. However, this often does not go hand in hand with real interest in their works, but is rather a polite gesture of support or a kind of fascination with local exoticism. By presenting their art without proper context, history and understanding, they are once again deprived of the opportunity to express themselves

The Katarzyna Kozyra Foundation and its partners have been working for two years on showcasing artists from the region and the history of their practices. secondaryarchive.org is a space where they can speak for themselves – both by creating statements and presenting their works. From the beginning, the name of the platform was a delicate provocation and a word play referring to the position of women as representatives of the “second sex” and the secondary role that was attributed in the past to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in relation to the so-called “first world”. Residents of the countries of the former Eastern Bloc educated according to Western models most often know more about the history of the West than about their neighbors. In the light of the threats facing the countries of Central and Eastern Europe today, it is necessary to know the common past, share stories, facilitate dialogue and build support networks within the region.

The platform, which last year gathered hundreds of profiles of artists from Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, is now expanding its borders. The archive will be joined by fifty artists from Ukraine and twenty from Belarus. Implemented thanks to the joint effort of local curators, artists and coordinators, the project includes artists from all backgrounds – emerging, young, unknown, as well as those with an established position. It includes testimonies of e.g. Tetiana Jablonska, one of two Ukrainian women-artists representing the Soviet Union at the Venice Biennale, Iryna Pap, the most famous woman reportage photographer in the USSR, or Alla Horska, who was murdered by the regime in 1970 for her political views, as well as key contemporary Belarusian and Ukrainian artists such as Marina Naprushkina, Lada Nakonechna, Vlada Ralko, Ala Savashevich, Zhanna Kadyrova and many others.

“Secondary Archive – Platform for Central and Eastern European Women Artists: Ukraine and Belarus” was carried out by the Katarzyna Kozyra Foundation together with partners – the Artsvit Gallery (Ukraine) and the Goethe Institute in collaboration with the Ambasada Kultury (Belarus). The initiative is supported by the European Union under the House of Europe programme.

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Colophon

Secondary Archive

Project leader: Katarzyna Kozyra Foundation
Partners: Ambasada Kultury, Artsvit Gallery, Goethe Institut e.V.
Project curator: Asia Tsisar
Project manager: Magdalena Majewska
Project support: Zuzanna Andruszko
Project design and identification: Marcel Kaczmarek
Website developers: Aleksandra Gajda
Website editor: Justyna Michalska
Media strategy: Joanna Andruszko

Belarus

Partners: Ambasada Kultury, Goethe Institut e.V
Project coordinators: Anna Chistoserdova, Valentina Kiselyova
Curatorial team: Anna Karpenko, Sophia Sadovskaya
Translations (English): Olga Bubich, Lara Perski
Translations (Belarusian): Valeryia Khotsina, Alesia Ramaniuk
Simultaneous translation: Vadzim Vileita
Proofreading (English): Olga Bubich
Proofreading (Belarusian): Valeryia Khotsina
Website edition: Viktoryia Kharytonava
Special thanks: kalektar.org, NGO Ecohome, Jakob Racek, Tanja Setsko, Nataša Ilić

Ukraine

Partner: Artsvit Gallery
Project coordinators: Iryna Kharlamova, Iryna Polikarchuk
Project support: Mariia Behmat, Olha Bychekhovska
Curatorial team: Oksana Briukhovetska, Kateryna Iakovlenko, Iryna Polikarchuk, Kateryna Rusetska
Translations: Olha Zaporozhets, Larissa Babij, Grace Mahoney, Anastasiia Mednikova
Simultaneous translation: Svitlana Bregman, Yuliya Harasym
Proofreading (Ukrainian): Kateryna Iakovlenko, Liubov Ilnytska
Website edition: Denys Vasyliuk
Special thanks: Kateryna Badianova, Yevheniia Moliar, Valeria Schiller

Press contact: Joanna Andruszko, joannandruszko@gmail.com, tel. +48 693 974 686

Artist List

Ukraine

ANTIGONA
Jan Bačynsjkyi/Yana Bachynska
Tereza Barabash
Nataliia Bazylevych
Yevgenia Belorusets
Oksana Briukhovetska
Uliana Bychenkova
Yana Bystrova
Oksana Chepelyk
Olia Fedorova
Ksenia Gnylytska
Uli Golub
Alena Grom
Tetiana Hershuni
Nataliia Holibroda-Boiko
Alla Horska
Zhanna Kadyrova
Alevtina Kakhidze
Olha Kashymbekova
Dana Kavelina
Oksana Kazmina
Lesia Khomenko
Kinder Album
Alina Kleitman
Alina Kopytsya
Tetiana Kornieieva
Yulia Kosterieva
Yulia Krivich
Iryna Kudria
Maria Kulikovska
Daria Kuzmych
Olha Kozyura
Kateryna Lesiv
Kateryna Lysovenko
Olan Mamay
Anna Manankina
Lada Nakonechna
Irina Pap
Valentina Petrova
Vlada Ralko
Ada Rybachuk
Anna Scherbyna
Halyna Sevruk
Anna Sorokovaya
Olena Subach
Valeria Troubina
Tetiana Yablonska
Alina Yakubenko
Kateryna Yermolaieva
Anna Zvyagintseva

Belarus

Xisha Angelova
Lena Davidovich
Zhanna Gladko
Janna Grak
Masha Maroz
Volha Maslouskaya
Vika Mitrichenko
Marina Naprushkina
Ulyana Nevzorova
Ludmila Rusova
Ala Savashevich
Nadya Sayapina
Olha Sazykina
Antonina Slobodchikova
Anna Sokolova
Tamara Sokolova
Olia Sosnovskaya
Varvara Sudnik
Masha Svyatogor
Galina Vasilyeva
Natalya Zaloznaya
Alesya Zhitkevich