

Edinburgh Art Festival – Home: Ukrainian photography UK words

For Edinburgh Art Festival (EAF) 2024, Stills will present its first ever exhibition dedicated to contemporary photography from Ukraine, with work by eight Ukrainian photographers exploring the complex meaning of home: Igor Chekachkov, Alexander Chekmenev, Nazar Furyk, Mykhaylo Palinchak, Polina Polikarpova, Andriy Rachinskiy, Elena Subach and Daria Svertilova.

Ben Harman, Director of Stills: Centre for Photography, said: "We're really excited to be presenting Stills' first exhibition dedicated to photography from Ukraine and to be working in partnership with Open Eye Gallery, Liverpool and Ukrainian.Photographies to harness their expertise. The process of working on this exhibition has opened our eyes to the rich history of photography from Ukraine and to the numerous interests and trends in contemporary practice. We look forward to sharing some of these with our audiences this Summer."



Alexander Chekmenev, from the Passport series, 1995

Photography from Ukraine has a rich history with a geographic spread of movements, schools, influential individuals and groups that have helped to shape its development over the decades against the backdrop of changing social and political contexts. The contemporary work on display at Stills was first brought together by the exhibition's curators in Liverpool in 2023 to explore the meaning of 'home' against the backdrop of Russia's full-scale military invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Working with still life, portraiture and long-term documentary projects and developing varied styles and conceptual approaches, each photographer brings a different perspective to the idea of home.

Whilst some of the photographers remain living and working in Ukraine, others have been displaced around Europe. **Alexander Chekmenev's** work is specifically an homage to 'Citizens of Kyiv' whereas **Polina Polikarpova** and **Daria Svertilova** both explore the lives of young people in Ukraine through documentary series; **Igor Chekachkov's** work is a collaboration

with Ukrainians that have had to relocate to other countries and he has made new work in Scotland for the presentation at Stills; **Mykhaylo Palinchak, Andriy Rachinskiy and Elena Subach** each apply a conceptual framework to elements of the visual landscape of a conflict zone; Similarly, **Nazar Furyk** is represented with work that draws our attention to landscape and environmental damage in the region of Kherson.

As part of the exhibition, selected photographs will be exhibited in the public realm in Edinburgh, at poster sites and on flyers, accompanied by poems written by UK poets invited to respond to the pictures.

In its first presentation as part of *Home*, an extensive cultural programme that took place in the Liverpool City Region in 2023, this exhibition was accompanied by a series of pairings, images with poems, that were on public display around Liverpool. For the Stills exhibition we are revisiting three of these diptychs to share Ukrainian Photography with UK words on flyers and posters around the city of Edinburgh. These will include images by **Marina Frolova, Alexander Chekmenev and Yaroslav Solop** with poems by **Deren Rhys Jones, Jackie Kay and Hanan Issa**.

Home: Ukrainian Photography, UK Words is part of a touring programme partnership with Open Eye Gallery, Liverpool and Ukrainian.Photographies. A catalogue for the project will be available to purchase from the Stills shop.

Stills is supported by Creative Scotland and City of Edinburgh Council. The tour is funded by Arts Council England. Organised by Open Eye Gallery and Ukrainian.Photographies. Tour partners: University of Salford, PhotoNorth Festival, Culture Coop, Stills, The Turnpike Gallery with Wigan Council, and UK Parliament. The preview is sponsored by Bellfield Brewery.

