



Urban Activists and Global Solidarity For a Sociology of Ukraine's Cultural Heritage and War Street Art

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Abstract

Social context. The ongoing conflict in Ukraine since 2022 has led to significant transformations in the country's economic, social, and cultural landscapes. The war has disrupted traditional industries and healthcare systems while causing mass displacement of millions of Ukrainians, leading to new social networks and fragmented communities. Amidst these challenges, street art has emerged as a powerful form of cultural expression and resistance, reflecting the resilience of Ukrainian identity.

Objectives. This research aims to document and analyze the evolution of street art as a response to existential threats, exploring how artists use urban spaces for political commentary and social critique.

Methodology. The study employs a mixed methodology, including Hybrid Discourse Analysis and Sociological Network Analysis, to understand the complex relationships between street art, community engagement, and cultural heritage preservation. Additionally, the research emphasizes the role of digital platforms in documenting and sharing Ukrainian street art, fostering international solidarity and cultural exchange.

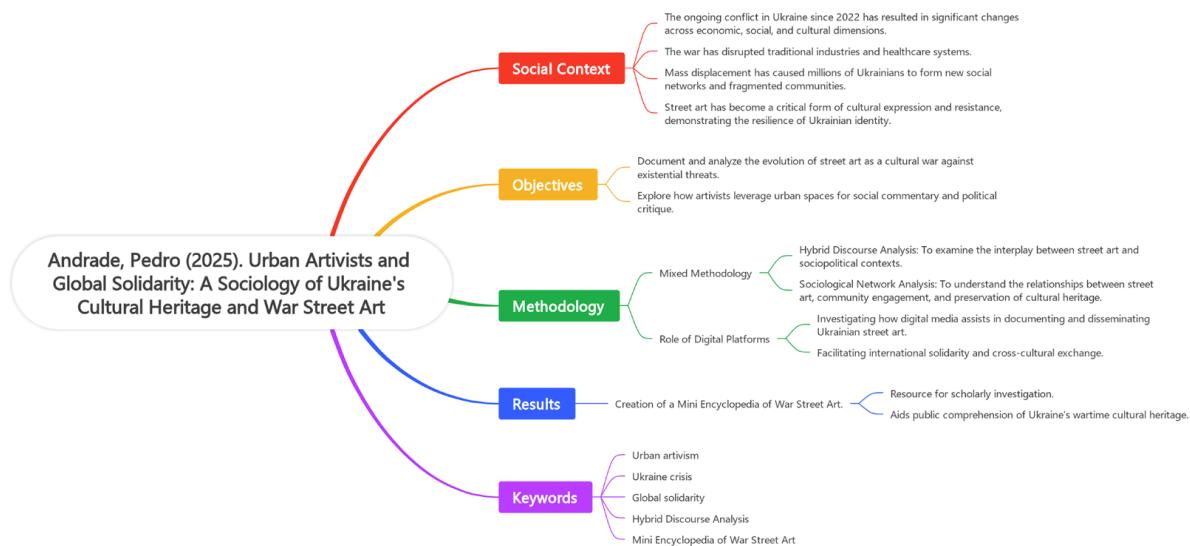
Results. Ultimately, the project seeks to create a Mini Encyclopedia of War Street Art, serving as a resource for future scholarly investigation and public understanding of Ukraine's cultural heritage during wartime.

Keywords

Urban activism; Ukraine crisis; global solidarity; Hybrid Discourse Analysis; Alphabet of Conceptual Relationships (AIR);

Project's research abstract

A research abstract synthetizes a research work in progress, by making explicit its core stages and contributions, using both textual and visual languages. The following image depicts the present project's strategy.



1 Introduction: Ukraine's Sociological and Political Stories

Stories and History

Benedict Anderson's framework, and his work on "*imagined communities*" (2006), even if not focused on Ukraine, may illuminate how street art contributes to the construction of Ukrainian national identity, particularly through shared *visual symbols and narratives of resistance*, during periods of crisis.

In fact, Ukraine's economic, social and cultural structures have undergone unprecedented transformation since the commencement of the 2022 invasion. The nation's economy, once centered on industrial production and agriculture, has been forced to adapt to wartime conditions. Ecological systems face severe disruption through military action, whilst healthcare infrastructure struggles under the dual burden of treating war casualties and maintaining civilian services.

Migration patterns have shifted dramatically, with millions of Ukrainians displaced internally or seeking refuge abroad. This mass movement has created new social

networks whilst simultaneously fragmenting established communities. Technology and media have emerged as crucial tools for documenting cultural destruction and preserving heritage through digital means.

Within the cultural front and related cultural wars, educational institutions have adapted to remote learning systems, whilst cultural heritage sites face active destruction. Literature, arts, and tourism sectors have experienced profound changes, with street art emerging as a particularly potent configuration of resistance and cultural expression. Such transformations reflect broader social activities, actions, and practices that reveal the resilience of Ukrainian social actors in preserving cultural identity amidst existential threats.

Research Context and Social Space-Time

On his turn, Edward Said's classical analysis of *cultural imperialism* (1993) provides tools for understanding the cultural dimensions of the conflict, particularly how Ukrainian artists assert cultural autonomy against Russia imperial narratives.

The temporal dimension of this crisis mainly spans from

the 2014 annexation of Crimea through the 2022 and ongoing full-scale invasion, encompassing nearly a decade of cultural evolution under duress. Such period has witnessed the emergence of new forms of artistic expression that blend traditional Ukrainian motifs with contemporary resistance themes.

Spatially, our analysis focuses on major urban centers including Kyiv, Kharkiv, Lviv, and Odesa, where street art has proliferated as both documentation and defiance. These cities represent diverse regional identities within Ukraine, each contributing unique perspectives to the national cultural narrative through artistic expression. The social context encompasses not merely the immediate effects of conflict, but the longer-term implications for cultural continuity and transformation. Street art emerges as a particularly significant medium for understanding these changes, serving simultaneously as historical record, emotional outlet, and tool for cultural diplomacy.

Research Objectives and departing Questions

Primary Research Aims

The present research endeavours to contribute substantially to understanding the complex social processes occurring within Ukrainian society during this period of unprecedented challenge. The primary aim involves documenting and analysing the transformation of cultural expression, particularly through street art, as a response to existential threats to national identity.

This text seek to partially examine how artists engaged in activism, and how these **activists** utilise urban spaces as canvases for political and cultural commentary and social critique. These creative practitioners represent a new generation of cultural actors, whose work transcends traditional artistic boundaries, to engage directly with social and political realities.

Furthermore, the research aims to understand how street art functions within the broader ecosystem of cultural tourism, even under wartime conditions. This includes examining how international audiences engage with Ukrainian street art through digital platforms, creating new forms of cultural exchange and solidarity.

The ultimate objective involves contributing to a **de-destruction** posture, which means a *sociological critique* intimately connected with *social critique*. In this case, it

involves the **preservation of Ukrainian cultural heritage** through comprehensive documentation, analysis and interpretation, that may ensuring that this critical period in the nation's cultural development is recorded for future scholarly investigation and public understanding. In particular, it is urgent to consider:

Cultural Wars Understanding

Analyse the cultural metamorphoses occurring in Ukraine through the lens of street art and activists, examining how these creative expressions reflect broader cultural conflicts and identity formation processes during wartime.

War Impact Assessment

Examine the multifaceted impact of ongoing conflict on street art production, cultural tourism infrastructure, and the preservation of urban heritage within Ukrainian cities.

Digital Preservation Exploration

Explore virtual platforms' role in documenting and preserving war street art, particularly through the development of a Sociological Virtual Museum concept.

Tourism Promotion Analysis

Investigate how street art functions as a mechanism for promoting cultural tourism in Ukraine, even under conditions of active conflict, and its potential for post-conflict recovery.

2. State of the Art: Contemporary Ukrainian Street Art and the Academia

Recent scholarship specifically focused on Ukrainian street art, has emerged from both Ukrainian and international academic institutions. Scholars such as Tetyana Ogarkova (2025) at the Ukraine Crisis Media Center have documented the evolution of street art from the Maidan protests through the current conflict, providing crucial primary source materials for academic analysis. On this matter, see [s.a.] (2025). International scholars including Maria Sonevytsky (University of California, Berkeley) have examined how Ukrainian cultural expressions, including street art, participate in processes of **de-colonisation and identity** formation (2024). Her work on "*musical Ukrainianness*" provides parallel frameworks for understanding visual cultural expressions.

The emerging field of “**conflict street art studies**” draws upon work by scholars such as Jessica Winegar (2015), from Temple University, on **revolutionary art in Egypt**; and Julie Peteet (2017), University of Louisville, on **Palestinian wall art**, providing comparative frameworks for understanding **Ukrainian artistic resistance**.

Digital humanities approaches, pioneered by scholars like Johanna Drucker (UCLA), offer methodological tools useful for documenting and analysing **street art through virtual platforms** (2014).

In Portugal, Pedro Andrade developed a consistent reflection on **public, urban and street art**, via both theoretical reflections and empirical fieldwork (2009, 2010a,b, 2018a,b; 2020a,b,c,d). One of these studies was out of print (2010a) and had a 2nd Edition in 2020.

Sociological Insights

The research reveals profound cultural transformations occurring within Ukrainian society, with street art serving as both symptom and catalyst of broader changes. Traditional hierarchies between “high” and “popular” culture have been challenged, with street art gaining unprecedented cultural legitimacy and recognition.

Generational dynamics have shifted significantly, with younger artists and audiences playing leading roles in cultural production and interpretation. This generational shift reflects broader changes in social authority and cultural gatekeeping, with grassroots cultural producers gaining influence previously reserved for established institutions.

The democratisation of cultural production has accelerated under wartime conditions, with barriers to artistic participation reduced through necessity and urgency. And community-based cultural practices have expanded, with street art serving as a medium for collective expression and social cohesion.

3 Methodology

Mixed methods: Social/Human Sciences, Hybrid Discourse Analysis (HAD), Critical/Ethical Artificial Intelligence

In order to comprehend such phenomena, the present research employs several interconnected methods: (a)

Social/Human sciences quantitative and qualitative methodology, including **Critical/Ethical Artificial Intelligence** (Andrade, 2024); (b) **Hybrid Discourse Analysis (HDA)** as developed by Pedro Andrade (2022b 2023a,b). This is a methodological approach that combines traditional discourse analysis with **sociological network analysis** and **conceptual relationship mapping**. HDA recognizes that cultural phenomena such as street art operate simultaneously across textual, linguistic, visual, spatial, and social dimensions.

In effect, the hybrid nature of this methodology acknowledges that street art cannot be adequately understood through any single analytical lens. Instead, it requires approaches that can accommodate multiple forms of meaning-making. This methodological pluralism reflects the inherent complexity of the phenomena under investigation.

HDA's strength lies in its ability to trace connections between different levels of social reality, from individual artistic expressions to broader cultural and political structures. This multi-dimensional approach proves particularly valuable for understanding how street art functions within the complex social ecology of wartime Ukraine. Since 2022, using such tool, Andrade analysed the current **invasion of Ukraine by Russian Federation**, namely its consequences for **cultural heritage, digital media arts and cultural tourism** (2022c, 2023a,b,2024). The methodology's emphasis on relationships, rather than isolated phenomena, aligns well with street art's inherently social and contextual nature. Street art exists in relationship to its urban environment, its audiences, its political context, and its cultural traditions.

Alphabet of Conceptual Relationships (AIR)

The **Alphabet of Interconceptual Relationships (AIR)** represents a crucial component of Hybrid Discourse Analysis, providing a systematic framework for understanding the complex web of relationships that constitute social phenomena. An AIR analysis departs from natural language sentences (in Portuguese, English etc.), in order to translate them into **(socio)logical sentences**, which signifies sentences that convey meaning about the social fabric. For such purpose, AIR employs 37 distinct types of social relationships to map connections among social processes, structures, contexts, practices,

agents and objects (Andrade, 2007).

In the context of Ukrainian street art, AIR proves particularly valuable for understanding how artistic expressions relate to broader social, political, and cultural phenomena. For example, the relationship between individual artistic works and collective identity formation can be mapped using AIR's framework of symbolic and discursive relationships.

In sum, this methodology tool recognises that social phenomena rarely exist in isolation but emerge through complex webs of relationships. Street art, for instance, simultaneously relates to urban space, political resistance, cultural identity, tourism, and individual creativity. AIR provides tools for systematically analysing these multiple relationships without reducing complexity, e.g., to simple cause-and-effect models.

Sociological Networks Analysis

Other instrument for Hybrid Discourse Analysis are **Sociological Networks**. After the analysis of sentences provided by the Alphabet of Interconceptual Relations, Sociological Network Analysis interprets such sentences in relation with other sentences, inside a paragraph and a text section, or in articulation with other texts/sources. The result is a specific Sociological Network, that, in turn, may be connected with other Sociological Networks. Some of its exemplificatory types may be observed in Fig. 1.

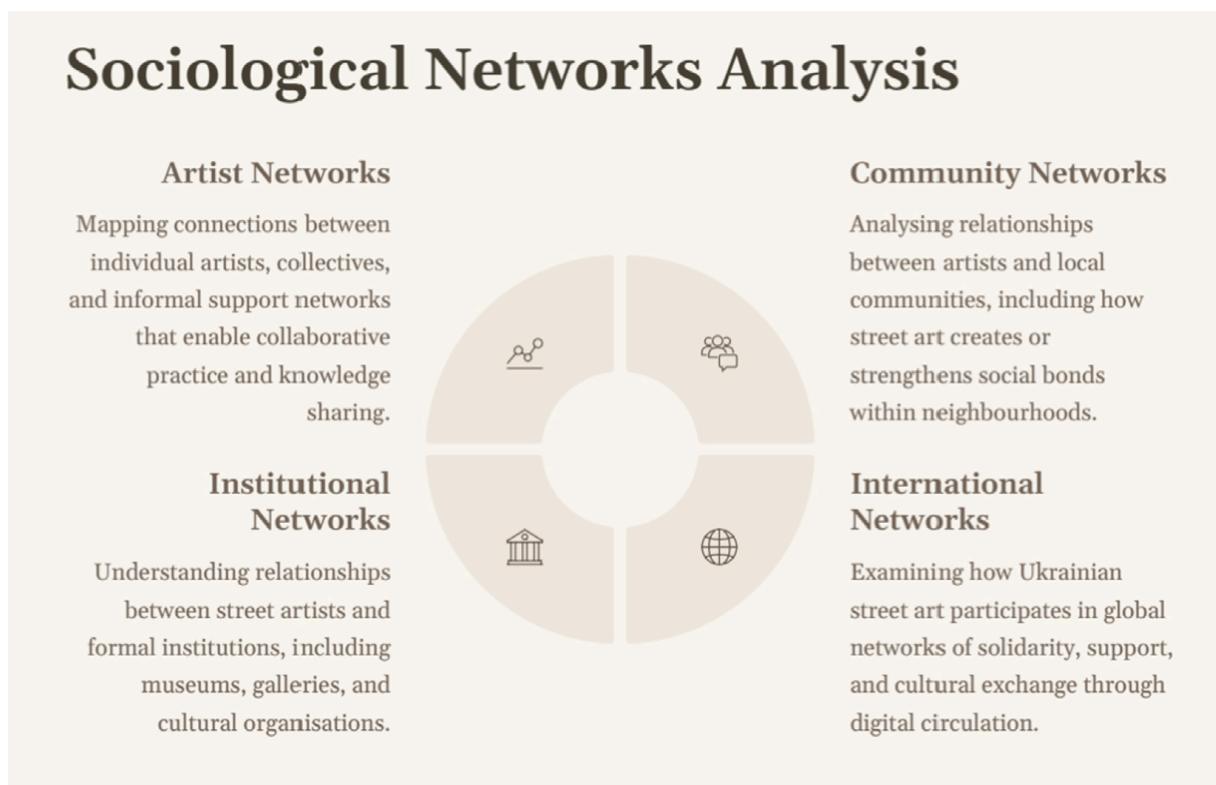


Fig. 1 Sociological Networks Analysis © Credits: Pedro Andrade's Cultural Studies Collection, 2025

Data Collection and Sources

Some illustrations are the following:

Digital Archives

Systematic collection and analysis of street art documentation across social media platforms, news reports, and existing digital archives, creating comprehensive datasets for analysis.

Primary Documentation

Systematic photographic documentation of street art across major Ukrainian cities, conducted through both fieldwork and digital collaboration with local photographers and researchers.

Artist Bios and Interviews

In-depth life stories and interviews with activists, conducted through secure digital platforms when direct access is not possible, focusing on motivations, techniques, and social impacts. Below, some examples of activists' bios will be presented.

Community Engagement

Participatory research methods involving local communities in documenting and interpreting street art within their neighborhoods, ensuring local voices are centered in analysis.

Community testimonies form a crucial component of this research, providing insights into how street art functions within lived experiences of conflict and cultural transformation, via firsthand accounts and testimonies. These accounts reveal the multiple ways in which artistic expressions serve community needs: emotional processing, identity affirmation, and social connection.

Residents consistently describe street art as serving therapeutic functions, providing spaces for collective mourning whilst simultaneously asserting cultural continuity and resistance. Many testimonies may emphasise the importance of seeing Ukrainian cultural symbols and language in public space as affirmations of cultural survival.

Moreover, international testimonies from tourists and cultural workers can reveal how Ukrainian street art has

become a powerful tool for cultural diplomacy, enabling global audiences to engage with Ukrainian experiences through visual narratives that transcend linguistic barriers.

Analytical Framework Integration

This integration may include:

Textual Analysis

Examination of written elements within street art, including slogans, poetry, and linguistic choices, analysed for political messaging, cultural references, and identity construction, via language politics, Historical references, identity markers and resistance rhetoric.

Visual Analysis

Systematic analysis of visual elements including colour, composition, iconography, and artistic style, examining how these choices convey meaning and emotional impact and resonance, and about symbolic content, aesthetic strategies and cultural motifs.

Spatial Analysis

Investigation of location choices, site-specific meanings, and the relationship between street art and urban architecture, including consideration of accessibility and visibility. The site selection may be articulated with urban integration, audience considerations and spatial politics.

Result: A Mini Encyclopædia of War Street Art

Walter Benjamin's work on *mechanical reproduction* (1994) is one of the first frameworks for later understanding how digital documentation of street art transforms its *aura* and political potential.

The present research, among other outcomes, contribute to constructing a comprehensive **Mini Encyclopædia of War Street Art**, designed as a digital resource that combines scholarly analysis with accessible presentation for diverse audiences. This encyclopædia serves multiple purposes: academic resource, public education tool, cultural preservation mechanism, and advocacy platform. The encyclopædia's structure reflects the hybrid methodology employed in its creation, organising content across multiple dimensions: chronological development, geographical distribution, thematic content, artistic

techniques, and social impacts. Such multi-dimensional organisation enables users to explore content according to their specific interests and research needs.

Each entry within the encyclopædia combines high-quality visual documentation with contextual analysis, artist biographies, community testimonies, and scholarly commentary. This comprehensive approach ensures that the resource serves both immediate documentation needs and long-term scholarly investigation.

The digital format enables regular updates and expansions, ensuring that the encyclopædia remains current

and comprehensive as the situation continues to evolve. Interactive features allow users to explore connections between different works, artists, and themes.

Some Figures shown in this text are examples of the *Encyclopædia mini cards* (e.g., see Figs. 1-4, 15-20).

Virtual Sociological Museum Concept

The following Encyclopedia mini card aims to clarify the meaning of a new type of Museum, that preserves content related with **social processes**, and the correspondent **Sociological interpretation** (for more details, see Fig. 2).

Virtual Sociological Museum Concept

Digital Preservation



Comprehensive digital archive ensuring long-term preservation of street art documentation, protecting cultural heritage from physical destruction or deterioration.

Educational Platform



Interactive learning environment designed for diverse educational contexts, from primary schools to university-level research, with age-appropriate content and activities.

Community Engagement



Participatory features enabling communities to contribute their own stories, documentation, and interpretations, ensuring diverse voices are represented in the archive.

Research Infrastructure



Advanced search and analysis tools supporting academic research, policy development, and cultural programming, with APIs for scholarly collaboration.

Fig. 2 Virtual Sociological Museum Concept © Credits: Pedro Andrade's Cultural Studies Collection, 2025



Fig.3 Cultural Heritage Preservation Through Documentation © Credits: Pedro Andrade's Cultural Studies Collection, 2025

Cultural Heritage Preservation Through Documentation

The Sociological Museum organizes its work through a research agenda that includes, in a short term, the following stages (Cf. Fig. 3).



Fig. 4 Long Term Sustainability Planning © Credits: Pedro Andrade's Cultural Studies Collection, 2025

In more detail, a long-term phase, since 2024 until 2030, considers the following actions (Fig.4).

4. Some Artivists' Bios: Resistance Through Street Art.

Chela Sandoval's work on *oppositional consciousness* (2000) offers frameworks for understanding how Ukrainian artivists develop and express resistance through creative practice.

The term "artivist" perfectly encapsulates the dual role of some Ukrainian artists who have emerged as crucial cultural actors during the conflict. Such individuals seamlessly blend artistic practice with political activism, using their creative skills to document, resist, and reimagine Ukrainian society under conditions of existential threat.

Ukrainian artivists operate within a rich tradition of artist-activists that includes international figures such as Banksy, Ai Weiwei, and JR (see Peterson, 2019), but their work is distinguished by its immediate relationship to ongoing conflict and cultural survival. Their artistic production serves multiple desiderata: documentation of wartime experiences, memorialisation of losses, assertion of cultural continuity, and international advocacy for Ukrainian sovereignty.

The digital circulation of their work has created new forms of cultural diplomacy, allowing international audiences to engage with Ukrainian experiences through visual narratives that transcend language barriers. This global reach amplifies the political impact of their work, whilst simultaneously preserving it for future generations.

Featured Artivists: Resistance Leaders

Artistic Strategies and Techniques

Judith Butler's examination of how certain lives become grievable whilst others remain invisible (2009) provides crucial insights into how Ukrainian street art makes visible the *human cost of conflict*.

Ukrainian Artivist strategies include diverse technical approaches adapted to wartime conditions and resource constraints: stenciling techniques allow for rapid deployment and replication, whilst wheat paste applications enable works to be quickly applied and removed as security conditions change.

Many artists have developed modular approaches, creating works that can be assembled from pre-prepared components, reducing the time spent in vulnerable public spaces. Digital tools enable virtual collaboration between artists in different locations, expanding creative possibilities despite physical separation.

Material choices reflect both aesthetic preferences and practical constraints. Artists frequently use locally sourced materials, both for accessibility and as statements of cultural rootedness. Some incorporate debris from damaged buildings, transforming destruction into creation. This is a clear practical example of **de-destruction**, meaning the use of re-creation as a weapon against autocracy ideological regimes.

Collaborative techniques have become increasingly important, with artists working in groups for both safety and creative enhancement. Such cooperation often cross disciplinary boundaries, incorporating musicians, poets, and community organisers into artistic processes.

Gamlet Zinkivsky

Pioneer of contemporary Ukrainian street art, Zinkivsky's work blends traditional folk motifs with urban aesthetics. His murals in Kyiv's Podil district serve as powerful statements of cultural continuity amidst destruction. Underground artist whose anonymous stencils appear throughout Ukrainian cities, providing sharp political commentary on the conflict whilst maintaining operational security through anonymity.

"Using ruins as his canvas, Gamlet Zinkivsky has captured life in wartime Ukraine in dozens of grim, gripping and harshly beautiful paintings. 'Broken, but invincible,' read one captioned work." (New York Times, 2025).

"Gamlet Zinkivsky is a street art star in Ukraine. Back in his city of Kharkiv, he paints Molotov cocktails on wooden planks that cover broken windows after the fighting between the Russian and Ukrainian army, saying his art "inspires" the Ukrainian people to "fight and defend" (AFP News Agency, 2022). See also Fig. 5.



Fig. 5 Gamlet Zinkivsky, *Warning! Life Goes On*, 2024

Source: <https://www.instagram.com/gamletzinkivskyi/>



Fig. 6 Lesia Khomenko, *Full Scale*, 2022; Source: <https://www.lesiakhomenko.com/>

Lesia Khomenko

Feminist artist whose work challenges gender stereotypes whilst asserting Ukrainian cultural identity. Her

collaborative projects with women's organisations have created powerful community- based art interventions (Cf. Fig. 6).



Fig. 7 Waone (Interesni Kazki), *Silent Space*, 2023

Source : <https://www.waone.net/>

Waone (Interesni Kazki)

International figure whose fantastical murals blend Ukrainian mythology with contemporary concerns. His

work serves as cultural ambassadorship, introducing global audiences to Ukrainian cultural narratives (consult Fig. 7).



Fig. 8 AEC (Interesni Kazki), *Invaders*, 2023; Source: <https://www.aecinteresnikazki.com/category/murals/>

AEC (Interesni Kazki)

Partner to Waone in the Interesni Kazki collective, AEC's geometric and architectural elements create structured backdrops for mythological narratives that assert Ukrainian cultural distinctiveness. "As an Ukrainian art-

ist whose country is suffering from the barbaric Russian attack (...) the freedom have to be defended with arms. This is my call to Swiss people to support Ukraine." (Fig. 8).

Oleksandr Klymenko

“ The main idea of the project is to transform death (the symbol of which is an arms box) into life (which in

Ukrainian culture is traditionally personified by an icon) The boxes on which the icons are written are brought from the war zone.” (Observe Fig. 9).



Fig. 9 On the left: Oleksandr Klymenko (2023). On the right, Charity Art Marathon in favor of Ukraine (2022)

Source: <https://alliance.elegantnewyork.com/>

Geo Leros

Geo Leros turns Kyiv into a brighter city. He has launched a number of art projects in the city's public

spaces. He invites world-known muralists to come to Kyiv and transform dull building walls into an open-air art gallery (Fig.10).



Fig. 10 Geo Leros, Ukraine's next generation: Project City Art,2017

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LPYIwNZ5Wp4>

Kateryna Lysovenko

She focuses on the research of power and ideology and the transition from the Soviet to the contemporary. In her artworks, the victim's image often emerges, no

matter which topic she chooses – either the dominance of the art academy or right-wing violence, religious oppression, and harassment (Cf. Fig. 11).



Fig. 11 Kateryna Lysovenko, A Planet on a Pin, 2025

Source: <https://voloshyngallery.art/artists/32-kateryna-lysovenko/>

Yurko Dyachyshyn

Documentary photographer whose work bridges journalism and art, creating powerful visual narratives that

circulate both in news media and gallery contexts, expanding the reach of activist messaging (Fig. 12).



Fig. 12 Yurko Dyachyshyn, Lviv / War (2022-2025); Source: <https://dyachyshyn.com/lviv-war>

Sasha Kurmaz

Sasha is an interdisciplinary artist. In his artistic practice, he uses photography, video, public intervention, performative situations, and various forms of collaborative practice and social engagement. The focus of his work is urban space, society, its development, and transformations, as well as examining the tension between the individual and the power structures. For instance:

"This documentary photo series captures everyday moments of people moving through the streets. However, the focused perspective of the sniper scope introduces an element of tension and threat, inviting viewers to question the safety of the lives of the people in the images. I made an effort to portray in this piece the sense of fear that I had to deal with when Russian forces surrounded the city of Kyiv in the spring of 2022." (see the art work *Target*, Fig. 13).



Fig. 13 Sasha Kurmaz, *Target*, 2022



Fig. 14 Sasha Kurmaz, Russian Literature and Genocide, 2022

Source: https://files.cargocollective.com/26969/Sasha_Kurmaz_selected_works.pdf

"This installation includes selected books by Russian writers who glorified the Russian Empire, using colonial narratives and incorporating imperialist discourse in their works. The books prop up a photograph of murdered Ukrainian civilians, taken by Mykhailo Palnchak, and Oleksandr Sinitsyn in April 2022 after the Armed Forces of Ukraine liberated the Kyiv region from Russian occupation." (Cf. Fig. 14).

5 Working Hypotheses: Reinventing Ukraine's Cultural Paradigm

War Street art as a Paradigm's Game Changer

James Scott's analysis of "**hidden transcripts**" (1991) illuminates how street art works as a form of resistance communication, often employing coded messages and symbolic language.

Street art has emerged as a crucial medium for reinventing Ukrainian cultural paradigms, facilitating the integration of traditional cultural elements with contemporary expressions and international influences. This process of cultural reinvention occurs through creative synthesis rather than wholesale replacement, resulting in hybrid forms that honour historical traditions whilst addressing contemporary realities.

The younger generation, in particular, has embraced street art as a medium for cultural innovation, using it to explore questions of identity, belonging, and future possibilities. Their work often combines Ukrainian folk motifs with global aesthetic trends, creating distinctively Ukrainian contributions to international street art movements.

This cultural reinvention extends beyond aesthetic considerations to encompass social and political dimensions. Street art provides a medium for experimenting with new forms of civic engagement, community organisation, and cultural diplomacy. These experiments may prove crucial for post-conflict cultural reconstruction and development.

The process of cultural reinvention through street art demonstrates the resilience and adaptability of Ukrainian culture, its capacity to evolve whilst maintaining core identity elements. Such adaptability may prove crucial for cultural survival and development under challenging conditions.

Moreover, Pierre Bourdieu's **field theory** (1993) provides analytical tools for understanding how Ukrainian street artists navigate between artistic autonomy and political engagement within several *social fields*. A social field may be defined as a context where social agents aim to

maintain or acquire diverse forms of capital (economic, political, cultural, symbolic capitals, etc.), in order to maintain or subvert the power relations within a specific field. Each social field may intersect other social fields, and some of these articulations will be specified in the next reflections.

Environmental Factors and Urban Context

Henri Lefebvre's conceptualisation of *spatial practice* (1991) provides crucial insights into how street artists reclaim urban space during conflict, transforming sites of destruction into spaces of cultural resistance and memory. In a word, spaces and times, cyberspaces and cybertimes, of **de-destruction**.

Ukraine's urban environment has been dramatically altered by conflict, creating new contexts for street art production and reception. Destroyed buildings provide both canvases and commentary. As noted *supra*, artists often incorporate physical damage, remains and traces, into their compositions, as powerful statements about destruction and resilience.

Environmental concerns include both the physical preservation of artworks under challenging conditions and the broader **ecological impacts** of conflict on urban spaces. Many street art projects now incorporate environmental themes, addressing both immediate conflict-related ecological damage and longer-term sustainability concerns.

Climate considerations affect both artistic production and preservation strategies. Harsh winter conditions, building damage, and resource scarcity require adaptive approaches to materials and techniques. Artists have developed innovative solutions that work within such constraints, whilst maintaining artistic integrity.

Moreover, the relationship between street art and urban planning has evolved, with artistic interventions increasingly recognised as important contributions to **post-conflict urban recovery** and community healing. This recognition opens possibilities for more integrated approaches to cultural planning and urban development.

Technology and Digital Innovation

Arjun Appadurai's work on *cultural flows* (1996) provides frameworks for understanding how Ukrainian street art circulates globally through digital platforms, creating new forms of cultural solidarity.

Digital technologies have become crucial tools for documenting, preserving, and disseminating Ukrainian street art, enabling new forms of cultural preservation and access under challenging conditions. 3D scanning technologies allow for precise documentation of three-dimensional works, while high-resolution photography captures fine details of artistic techniques and materials. Virtual and augmented reality technologies offer possibilities for immersive experiences that can transport global audiences to Ukrainian urban environments, enabling forms of **cultural tourism** that transcend physical limitations. These technologies also support educational applications, allowing students worldwide to explore Ukrainian street art in contextualised virtual environments.

Blockchain technologies are being explored for authentication and provenance tracking of digital art documentation, ensuring the integrity of archived materials, whilst enabling new forms of digital art sales that can support artists financially during the crisis.

Artificial intelligence applications, if taken as a **Critical and Ethical A.I.**, may assist in cataloguing and analysis, identifying patterns across large datasets of street art documentation, that might not be apparent through manual analysis alone. Suvh tools support both preservation efforts and scholarly research.

Legal and Ethical Considerations

Susan Sontag's meditation on the *ethics of representing suffering* (2003) offers crucial perspectives on how street art documents Ukraine's barbaric invasion reality. The legal status of street art in Ukraine has evolved significantly during the conflict period, with local authorities often adopting more permissive approaches to unauthorised artistic expressions that serve community morale and cultural affirmation purposes. This shift reflects broader changes in the relationship between state authority and civil society expression during crisis periods.

Ethical considerations surrounding the documentation and circulation of Ukrainian street art include questions of artist consent, community privacy, and the potential security implications of revealing artwork locations. Researchers and documentarians must balance preservation goals with safety considerations for artists and communities.

International circulation of Ukrainian street art also raises other questions, about cultural appropriation and representation, particularly when works are removed from their original contexts for exhibition or sale. Such ethical considerations require careful attention to ensuring that Ukrainian voices remain centered in discussions of their own cultural production and difference.

Last but not the least, copyright and intellectual property issues have become complex, particularly as digital documentation and reproduction become crucial for preservation and dissemination. New frameworks are needed that protect artists' rights whilst enabling necessary preservation and educational activities.

Mental Health and Social Healing

Gayatri Spivak's interrogation of *subaltern voice* (1988) provides sound points of view on how marginalised Ukrainian voices find expression through street art practices.

Street art has emerged as an important tool for mental health support and social healing within Ukrainian communities, providing outlets for trauma processing and collective expression. Community-based art projects offer structured activities that bring people together, whilst addressing individual and collective emotional needs.

Art therapy applications of street art techniques have been developed specifically for conflict-affected populations, recognising the particular therapeutic value of public artistic expression. These approaches acknowledge that healing occurs through both individual creative expression and community recognition and support.

The public nature of street art provides validation and witnessing that private therapeutic activities cannot offer, creating spaces where individual trauma becomes acknowledged as collective experience deserving of support and recognition.

Political and Cultural Transformations

Fredric Jameson's analysis of *postmodern culture* (1991) suggests frameworks for understanding how Ukrainian street art navigates between global aesthetic forms and local political content.

The ongoing conflict has accelerated existing cultural and political transformations within Ukrainian society, with street art serving as both documentation and catalyst of these changes. Pre-existing tensions between different regional identities, language communities, and cultural orientations, have been reconsidered under the pressure of external threats.

Street art has provided a medium for exploring and expressing new forms of national unity that transcend traditional divisions. Artists from different regions and backgrounds collaborate on projects that celebrate diversity whilst asserting shared Ukrainian identity.

The relationship between state authority and civil society has evolved, with cultural producers gaining increased autonomy and influence in shaping public discourse. Street art has played a role in this shift, demonstrating the power of grassroots cultural production to influence political and social conversations. In other words, civil conversation versus state and static conservation...

Such metamorphoses suggest longer-term changes in Ukrainian cultural and political organization, that may persist beyond the immediate crisis, underlying the conflict's profound structural impacts on Ukrainian society.

International Solidarity and Cultural Exchange

Michel de Certeau's analysis of *everyday's tactical resistance* (1984) illuminates how Ukrainian street artists employ daily practices to subvert dominant narratives and claim urban space.

Some solidarity dimensions and respective possible actions are presented in Fig. 15).

Educational Impact and Curriculum Development

Here are some specific examples of educational strategies inside the Ukraine crisis:

International Solidarity and Cultural Exchange



Artist Residencies

International artist residency programmes providing Ukrainian artists with safe spaces for continued creative work whilst fostering cross-cultural collaboration and learning.



Exhibition Partnerships

Collaborative exhibitions between Ukrainian artists and international institutions, raising awareness whilst providing platforms for cultural dialogue and artistic exchange.



Financial Support Networks

International funding initiatives supporting Ukrainian cultural workers, from emergency relief to longer-term cultural development and preservation projects.



Digital Collaboration

Online platforms facilitating collaboration between Ukrainian and international artists, enabling continued creative exchange despite physical barriers and travel restrictions.

Fig. 15 International Solidarity and Cultural Exchange

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Primary Education Integration

Development of age-appropriate materials introducing children to Ukrainian culture through street art, emphasising creativity, cultural pride, and peaceful conflict resolution.

Professional Development

Training programs for educators, cultural workers, and tourism professionals, ensuring effective use of Ukrainian street art resources in various professional contexts.

Secondary Curriculum Enhancement

Integration of Ukrainian street art studies into history, art, and social studies curricula, providing context for understanding contemporary cultural and political developments.

Media Representation and Documentation

Julia Kristeva's semiotic theory (1980) may offer tools for analyzing the *symbolic dimensions of Ukrainian street art*, particularly its use of national and religious iconography.

Higher Education Research

Development of undergraduate and graduate research programs focused on Ukrainian street art, contributing to broader academic understanding of culture, conflict, and resistance.

International media attention to Ukrainian street art has significantly increased its global visibility and impact, with major news outlets, documentary filmmakers, and cultural publications featuring Ukrainian artists and their work. This media coverage serves multiple aims:

raising awareness of Ukrainian cultural resilience, documenting artistic responses to conflict, and building international support for Ukrainian cultural preservation efforts.

Social media platforms have become crucial sites for the circulation and interpretation of Ukrainian street art, enabling real-time documentation and global engagement. Instagram, TikTok, and other visual platforms, again if used critically and ethically, allow artists to reach inter-

national audiences directly, bypassing traditional media gatekeepers, whilst maintaining control over their artistic narratives.

Documentary films focusing on Ukrainian street artists have provided deeper insights into the personal and political dimensions of their work, humanising the conflict through individual artist stories whilst highlighting broader cultural themes. These films serve important educational and literacy objectives, whilst contributing

Cross-Cultural Influences and Exchange

Global Street Art Movements

Integration of Ukrainian themes into international street art practices, with artists worldwide creating solidarity works incorporating Ukrainian symbols and messages.

Cultural Influence

Ukrainian street art's influence on international cultural movements, contributing distinctive perspectives on resistance, identity, and cultural survival.

International Collaboration

Collaborative projects between Ukrainian and international artists, fostering cultural exchange whilst raising awareness of Ukrainian experiences.

Traditional Art Forms

Incorporation of traditional Ukrainian folk art techniques and motifs into contemporary street art, creating hybrid forms that honour historical traditions.

Contemporary Practices

Adoption of international street art techniques and styles, adapted to Ukrainian cultural contexts and political messaging needs.

Digital Innovation

Development of new digital art forms and documentation techniques, contributing to global innovations in digital art preservation and presentation.



Fig. 16 Cross-Cultural Influences and Exchange

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to historical documentation, not necessarily under the auspices and control of 'Big History'.

And academic and cultural publications have increasingly featured Ukrainian street art, contributing to scholarly discourse, simultaneously raising the profile of individual artists and movements within international cultural communities.

Tourism Industry Adaptation

Doreen Massey's conceptualisation of *space as relational* and dynamic (2005) provides tools for understanding how street art creates new spatial relationships and meanings, within **war-affected urban environments**.

Ukraine's tourism industry has undergone dramatic transformation, with traditional models of cultural tourism becoming impossible under current conditions. However, innovative approaches have emerged that maintain international engagement with Ukrainian culture whilst adapting to new realities.

Virtual tourism initiatives allow global audiences to explore Ukrainian cities and cultural sites through digital

platforms, with street art serving as particularly compelling content for these virtual experiences. Such initiatives not only maintain cultural connections, but also generate revenue for artists and cultural organisations.

Post-conflict tourism planning increasingly incorporates street art as a significant cultural asset, recognising its potential for attracting visitors interested in contemporary culture and social history. This recognition represents a shift from traditional heritage tourism models, towards more diverse and inclusive approaches.

In sum, the documentation and digital presentation of Ukrainian street art serves as preparation for eventual physical tourism recovery, ensuring that visitors will have access to comprehensive information about works that may no longer exist in their original locations.

Cross-Cultural Influences and Exchange

Manuel Castells' analysis of *networked social movements* (2015) illuminates how Ukrainian street art participates in global networks of resistance and solidarity through digital circulation.

Comparative International Perspectives



Northern Ireland

Comparative analysis with Northern Irish political murals reveals similar patterns of using wall art for identity assertion and political messaging during conflict periods.



Palestine

Palestinian street art provides parallel examples of artistic resistance under occupation, offering insights into how art functions within asymmetrical power relationships.



Chile

Chilean street art during social movements demonstrates how artistic expression can mobilise collective action and challenge authoritarian structures through visual communication.

Fig. 17 Comparative International Perspectives; © Credits: Pedro Andrade's Cultural Studies Collection, 2025

The analysis of this topic suggests some related activities, shown in Fig. 16.

Comparative International Perspectives

Homi Bhabha's concept of "*third space*" (1994) offers insights into how Ukrainian street art creates **hybrid cultural forms**, that resist binary categorisations of East versus West (Cf. Fig. 17).

6 Conclusion and Recommendations on Future Research Directions

Jacques Rancière's exploration of the *relationship between aesthetics and politics* (2004) provides crucial insights into how Ukrainian street art makes political claims through aesthetic means. For instance, by using the following reflexive and empirical strategies, among others:

Longitudinal Impact Studies

Long-term research tracking the evolution of Ukrainian street art and its social impacts over time, examining how artistic practices change as political situations develop.

Comparative Conflict Analysis

Systematic comparison with street art in other conflict contexts, developing theoretical frameworks for understanding art's role in resistance and cultural preservation.

Digital Preservation Technology

Research into emerging technologies for cultural preservation, including blockchain authentication, AI cataloguing, and immersive virtual reality experiences.

Community Impact Assessment

Detailed studies of street art's effects on community cohesion, mental health, and cultural identity formation within affected populations.

Policy Recommendations

Cultural Protection Legislation

Development of legal frameworks specifically protecting street art and other forms of grassroots cultural expression, recognising their value as cultural heritage worthy of preservation.

Funding Support Mechanisms

Establishment of sustainable funding streams for cultural preservation and documentation projects, including both emergency response and long-term development support.

Educational Integration Policies

Systematic integration of Ukrainian cultural content into educational curricula, both domestically and internationally, ensuring continued cultural transmission and awareness.

International Cooperation Frameworks

Development of formal mechanisms for international cultural cooperation and exchange, facilitating continued Ukrainian cultural participation in global communities.

Technical Documentation Standards

Standardised documentation protocols have been developed to ensure consistency and interoperability across different documentation efforts. These standards address technical specifications for photography, metadata requirements, and digital storage formats that support long-term preservation and accessibility.

Collaboration with international digital preservation initiatives ensures that Ukrainian street art documentation follows best practices for digital archiving, enabling integration with global cultural heritage databases and supporting future research needs.

Quality control measures ensure that documented materials meet professional standards for research and education applications. Such measures include peer review processes, technical verification, and regular audits of archived materials to ensure continued accessibility and accuracy.

Training programs for local documentarians secure that technical standards can be maintained even when international collaboration is limited by practical constraints. This local capacity building is crucial for projects' sustainability and comprehensiveness.

Community Engagement Strategies

Now, observe some possible illustrations of the above-mentioned process in Fig. 18.

Digital Platform Development

The development of sophisticated **digital platforms on Ukrainian war street art**, represents a crucial component of the preservation and dissemination strategy. These platforms must balance accessibility with security, ensuring that sensitive information about artist identities

and artwork locations can be protected, whilst maintaining open access to cultural content.

User experience design prioritises intuitive navigation and engaging presentation, recognising that the platform serves diverse audiences from academic researchers to casual browsers interested in Ukrainian culture. Interactive features enable users to explore connections between artworks, artists, and themes, and at the same time contributing their own knowledge and interpretations.

Technical architecture supports scalability and long-term sustainability, with robust backup systems and migration strategies ensuring continued access even as technology evolves. Integration with existing cultural heritage databases and academic resources maximises the platform's utility for educational research.

Community Engagement Strategies



Participatory Documentation

Training community members to document street art in their own neighbourhoods, ensuring local perspectives are included in the archive whilst building local capacity.

Oral History Collection

Systematic collection of community stories and interpretations of local street art, providing crucial context and meaning-making that complements visual documentation.

Educational Workshops

Community-based educational programmes that combine street art appreciation with broader cultural and historical education, fostering local cultural knowledge and pride.

Collaborative Projects

Facilitating collaborative art projects that bring together artists and community members, creating new works whilst strengthening social connections and cultural participation.

Fig. 18 Community Engagement Strategies

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Multilingual Access and Translation



Ukrainian-English Translation

Comprehensive translation of content between Ukrainian and English, ensuring accessibility for both domestic and international audiences whilst preserving nuanced cultural meanings.



Additional Language Support

Selected content translated into additional languages based on user demographics and international partnership opportunities, expanding global accessibility and engagement.



Cultural Context Notes

Detailed cultural context information provided to help international audiences understand references, symbols, and meanings that may not be immediately apparent across cultural boundaries.



Accessibility Features

Audio descriptions, screen reader compatibility, and other accessibility features ensuring that the platform serves users with diverse abilities and access needs.

Mobile optimisation ensures accessibility for users in various contexts, including field researchers and community members who may primarily access the platform through mobile devices. Offline capability allows for continued access in areas with limited internet connectivity.

Multilingual Access and Translation

Within the contemporary intercultural world, some perspectives of this activity can be consulted in Fig. 19.

Collaborative Networks and Partnerships

SturtHall's pioneer work on *cultural identity formation* (1996) may illuminate how Ukrainian street art participates in the ongoing construction and reconstruction of this country and of European national identity.

Strategic partnerships with international cultural organizations, academic institutions, and civil society groups

have been crucial for solidarity development and sustainability. These partnerships provide both material resources and expertise whilst ensuring that supporting projects for Ukraine maintains international standards and visibility.

Academic partnerships with universities in various countries enable scholarly collaboration and student involvement, creating educational opportunities whilst expanding the project's research capacity. These partnerships also provide long-term institutional support that can outlast immediate Ukrainian crisis conditions. Cultural institution partnerships facilitate exhibitions, educational programs, and public engagement activities that raise awareness of Ukrainian culture whilst generating support for preservation efforts. Such partnerships also provide expertise in digital archiving and cultural heritage management.

Technology agreements with companies and organisations specializing in digital preservation and other relevant technologies provide access to cutting-edge tools and techniques that enhance international support project's technical capabilities and innovation potential.

Challenges and Limitations

However, some biases and risks must as well be considered, such as:

Security Constraints

Ongoing security concerns limit access to certain areas and require careful consideration of information sharing that might compromise artist or community safety. These constraints necessitate adaptive approaches to documentation and dissemination.

Resource Limitations

Limited financial and human resources constrain the projects' scope and speed of development.

Priority-setting and strategic partnerships are crucial for maximising impact within available resources.

Technical Challenges

Rapid technological change requires continuous adaptation and updates to ensure platforms functionality and accessibility. Long-term preservation strategies must account for evolving technical standards and requirements.

Cultural Sensitivity

Balancing documentation and preservation goals with respect for artist and community autonomy requires ongoing negotiation and careful attention to ethical considerations and community feedback.

Innovation and Technological Advancement

Artistic creativity should merge with **scientific invention**, in order to produce more and better **social innovation**. The present project is serving as a catalyst for innovation in digital cultural preservation, developing new approaches to documenting and presenting street art, that may have applications beyond the immediate Ukrainian context. These innovations include novel applications of 3D scanning, virtual reality, and artificial

intelligence to cultural heritage challenges.

Collaborative technological development with international partners may hopefully result in tools and techniques that can be shared with similar preservation efforts worldwide. This knowledge sharing contributes to global capacity for cultural heritage preservation whilst building networks of mutual support and learning.

The integration of community participation with advanced technology demonstrates possibilities for democratising cultural preservation and ensuring that technological tools serve community needs and priorities rather than replacing community knowledge and agency.

Experimental approaches to virtual exhibitions and educations may also open new possibilities for cultural engagement that may prove valuable beyond crisis conditions, suggesting broader implications for how cultural institutions might engage with audiences in increasingly digital environments.

Cultural Diplomacy and Soft Power

Diplomacy is migrating, more and more, from **state policies** into **civil society's cultural politics**. Some application of this posture include:

International Awareness

Ukrainian street art serves as a powerful tool for cultural diplomacy, raising international awareness of Ukrainian culture, values, and experiences, through visually compelling and emotionally resonant artistic expressions.

Solidarity Building

The global circulation of Ukrainian street art imagery has contributed to building international solidarity and support networks, demonstrating culture's capacity to create connections across national and linguistic boundaries.

Narrative Influence

Ukrainian activists have successfully contributed to shaping international narratives about the conflict and Ukrainian identity, providing alternative perspectives to mainstream media representations through artistic expression.

Cultural Exchange

Hopefully, the present project may have facilitated cultural exchange and collaboration between Ukrainian and international artists, cultural workers, and institutions, creating lasting relationships that extend beyond immediate crisis response.

Project's Impact and Implications

This comprehensive examination of Ukrainian street art during conflict reveals the profound capacity of cultural expression to serve multiple crucial desiderata simultaneously: documentation, resistance, healing, identity formation, and international communication. The research demonstrates that street art has emerged as far more than aesthetic expression, functioning as a crucial component of cultural survival and adaptation strategies.

The development of the **Mini Encyclopædia** and the **Virtual Sociological Museum** represents not merely preservation efforts but active contributions to cultural continuity and development under extremely challenging conditions. These initiatives demonstrate how digital technologies can be mobilised to serve cultural preservation goals whilst creating new possibilities for new literacies engagement.

The international dimension of this work reveals the potential for cultural expression to transcend political boundaries and create networks of solidarity and support, that may prove crucial for Ukraine long-term recovery and development. The global response to Ukrainian street art suggests broader possibilities for cultural diplomacy and international cooperation in cultural preservation efforts.

Future Visions and Possibilities



Fig. 20 Future Visions and Possibilities

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Perhaps most significantly, this research reveals the agency and creativity of communities facing existential threats, their capacity to transform challenge into opportunity and destruction into de-destruction and creation. The Ukrainian activist movement represents a powerful example of cultural resilience that offers insights relevant far beyond the immediate context.

Future Visions and Possibilities

The following image (Fig. 20) depicts some eventual future projects' opportunities.

Looking forward, the research and preservation efforts documented here may serve as models for similar initiatives in other contexts facing cultural threats. The methodological innovations, technological developments, and community engagement strategies developed through this work may offer potential applications for cultural heritage preservation efforts worldwide.

The educational materials and programmes developed may continue to serve Ukrainian cultural transmission goals long beyond the immediate crisis, contributing to cultural continuity and identity formation for future generations both, within Ukraine and among Ukrainian diaspora communities globally.

In sum, Zygmunt Bauman's concept of *liquid modernity* (2000) offers perspectives on how Ukrainian street art responds to the fluidity and uncertainty of wartime social conditions.

Acknowledgements and Final Reflections

This research would not have been possible without the extraordinary courage and creativity of Ukrainian activists who continue to create under conditions of extreme adversity. Their commitment to cultural expression and preservation serves as inspiration for all who recognize the fundamental importance of culture to human dignity and social continuity.

Gratitude extends to international partners, funding organisations, and individual supporters who may contribute to preservation efforts through financial support, technical expertise, and advocacy. Such collaborations demonstrate the potential for global solidarity in cultural preservation and heritage protection and de-destruction efforts.

The communities that have welcomed researchers and shared their stories deserve particular recognition for their generosity and trust. Their willingness to participate in documentation efforts while facing daily challenges demonstrates remarkable commitment to cultural preservation and collective memory.

Finally, this work stands as testimony to the resilience of Ukrainian culture and the transformative power of artistic expression in even the most challenging circumstances. The street art documented here has capacity for serving as historical record, cultural treasure, and source of inspiration for generations to come.

Slava Ukraini - Glory to Ukraine

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