

MAXXI's commitment to supporting Ukraine continues

A residency programme for Ukrainian artists in Fontecchio, in the province of L'Aquila, until March 2023

project realised in cooperation with

Municipality of Fontecchio, Fondazione Imago Mundi

with the support of

Italian Ministry of Culture

Today, these artists are not only artists, but defenders of their homeland, Europe and the world on many fronts.
Solomia Savchuk

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Rome, 27 October 2022. The commitment of **MAXXI National Museum of 21st Century Arts** to supporting Ukrainian culture and art continues.

The **residency programme** for artists hailing from the country torn by the war waged by Putin started at the end of September.

Lucy Ivanova (Dnipro 1989 – lives and works in Kiev), **Petro Ryaska** (Bilky 1975 – lives and works between Užhorod and Bilky), **Andriy Sahaydakovsky** (Lviv 1957 – where he lives and works) and **Olena Turyanska** (Lviv 1966 – where she lives and works) will live and work in **Fontecchio**, a small medieval hamlet near L'Aquila whose rebirth is centred around art and culture, until March 2023.

Lucy Ivanova is one of the most interesting painters of her generation and a lover of naturalism, while Petro Ryaska has a multimedia and performance practice, organises exhibitions and curates one of the most beautiful residency programmes in Ukraine 'Sorry, No Rooms Available' in Užhorod.

Of the older generation are Andriy Sahaydakovsky, the most important living Ukrainian artist, who portrays the absurd everyday through multimedia installations, and Olena Turyanska, an experimenter with paper, who through drawing and carving seeks the harmony and symmetry of reality.

The residency programme is implemented with the support of the **Italian Ministry of Culture** and in collaboration with the **Municipality of Fontecchio** and **Fondazione Imago Mundi**, which was already a partner of the Museum for the exhibition *Ukraine. Short Stories. Contemporary artists from Ukraine*: 140 artworks in a 12x10 format created for the Imago Mundi Collection and hosted at MAXXI immediately after the invasion of the country.

The artists were chosen from a shortlist of names proposed by **Solomia Savchuk**, Head of Contemporary Art at Mystetskyi Arsenal in Kiev and curator of the exhibition *Ukraine: Short Stories*, and **Maria Lanko** who, together with Borys Filonenko and Lizaveta German, curated the Ukrainian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale. Lanko is famous for escaping by car from Kiev at the outbreak of war and smuggling 78 bronze funnels belonging to Pavlo Makov's work *Fountain of Exhaustion, Acqua Alta*; thanks to this heroic gesture, the work was able to represent Ukraine at the Venice Biennale.

During their stay in Fontecchio, also thanks to the significant cultural mediation work put in place by the municipality, the artists will come into contact with the local community and the local cultural scene. They will be the protagonists of events, talks and workshops, studio visits, also at MAXXI L'Aquila. At the end of the residency period, the artists will present to the public and the region the works and projects commissioned by MAXXI and the fruit of their experience and dialogue with the area.

Giovanna Melandri, President of Fondazione MAXXI, concluded: "Art is an instrument of freedom, and speaks a universal language that unites peoples and rejects all forms of violence. In the face of this war of aggression and Putin's crimes, MAXXI's stance is clear: we want to continue to support the resistance, identity and culture of the Ukrainian people through art. I would like to thank the Italian Ministry of Culture for making this project possible, the Fondazione Imago Mundi, curators Solomia Savchuk and Maria Lanko, and mayor Sabrina Ciancone for the enthusiasm with which she welcomed the idea, further

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strengthening MAXXI L'Aquila's bond with the Abruzzo region. For a few months, Fontecchio will be the home of the Ukrainian artists, and I am sure it will be a beautiful and profound experience for everyone. However, I especially want to thank the Ukrainian citizens, artists and others, who are fighting for the freedom of their people. I also want to announce another event dedicated to Ukraine and its culture. Next 24 November, MAXXI will host the reading *Piantare un fiore nella terra bruciata* (Planting a Flower in the Scorched Earth), featuring Ukrainian poets Natalia Beltchenko, Iya Kiva, Oksana Stomina and Elina Svetsytska. Their words - which recount the tragedies of war but also the resistance and hopes of the population - will be accompanied by the pictures taken by photojournalist Niccolò Celesti".

Solomia Savchuk, curatorial advisor of the project, said: "We are grateful to the MAXXI Foundation and the cultural institutions of Italy for initiating the residency project for Ukrainian artists at this difficult time for all of us. Today, it is almost impossible to underestimate the importance of building sustainable cultural networks and platforms for dialogue, which promote communication and collaboration. The experience of rebuilding Fontecchio is a very significant model for us in the context of the future reconstruction of our country. It is obvious that culture and art, and especially contemporary art, play a special role in this process. We know its potential not only in the researching the past but also in predicting the future. I hope this project will be the beginning of many joint projects, initiatives and creative experiments for all participants".

Maria Lanko added: "Any residency is a chance of growth for an artist-the opportunity to work in a completely foreign environment and social situation usually results in unexpected and offbeat outcomes in the artist's practice as well as in the image of the place of residence itself. This year's residency for Ukrainian artists in Fontecchio is way more than that-during the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine it provides the artists with a safe space and an opportunity to work uninterruptedly, without ubiquitous air raid sirens and regular walks to bomb shelters. While the village of Fontecchio suffered from a serious destruction, Ukrainian artists who are now experts on cultural and artistic resistance, should be of important contribution to the symbolic reconstruction of the place".

Enrico Bossan, Artistic Director of Fondazione Imago Mundi, said: "Fondazione Imago Mundi's mission is to leverage contemporary art in order to contribute to an understanding between cultures - even apparently distant ones - and to dialogue between peoples, in the name of shared ideals. Back in 2014, we had already dedicated the Short Stories collection to Ukraine, and today we think it is even more vital to continue supporting artists. As proof of our willingness to stand by Ukrainian artists, since last spring we have been displaying the work *Kollina* by Olexa Furdiyak at the entrance to our headquarters, the Gallerie delle Prigioni in Treviso; the work is a large iron sculpture depicting a man kneeling in a solemn pose, a sort of contemporary knight whose gesture affirms the value of freedom. We are happy to continue our collaboration with MAXXI with this residency project, which we believe is a further tool to give voice to Ukrainian artists at this crucial time in history".

Sabrina Ciancone, the mayor of Fontecchio, concluded: "Since last spring, we have hosted 11 friends in our municipality who randomly and fortunately arrived from Ukraine in search of peace. Today, we host in Fontecchio artists from those war zones; thanks to our fruitful collaboration, Fondazione MAXXI enables us to enjoy guidance and assurance as to how to manage, choose, care for and maintain relations between the artists and the Italian context, as part of a perpetual oscillation between lucidity and passion that unites our work. Hosting Ukrainian artists today does not mean offering refuge, silence and serenity. Instead, it means giving each other the opportunity for exchange and openness, strengthening relations with places and between people - between us, the serene inhabitants of a mountain village, and our new Ukrainian friends".

About Fontecchio

Perched on a hill amidst the greenery of the Sirente-Velino Regional Natural Park, Fontecchio is one of the medieval villages that dot the L'Aquila area. The beautiful old town centre – a collection of old houses and shops, narrow streets and alleys of white pebbles, tiny widenings and flights of steps – was severely damaged by the 2009 earthquake, which accelerated an already ongoing depopulation process. Today, there are about 300 inhabitants in the village. In recent years, the lively municipal administration has chosen art and culture as an engine of development through the crucial involvement of citizens. In parallel with the restoration of the hamlet's historical, artistic and architectural heritage, the community has been involved in cultural activities,

and young artists and artisans from different parts of the world have been welcomed into residency, some of whom have then chosen to stay and live in the hamlet.

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