THE UKRAINIAN REVOLUTION OF DIGNITY: DECOLONIZATION AND ARTISTIC PRACTICES

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Abstract: The Revolution of Dignity that was situated at Independence Square in Kyiv from November 2013 to February 2014 constituted a significant milestone in the process of decolonization in Ukraine, with artists assuming a pivotal role in this endeavor. This paper will analyze the actions of a group of artists, writers and cultural agents who organized a 'Mystetskyi Barbakan' in the heart of the protests in Kyiv through the lens of decolonization. Mystetskyi Barbakan' functioned as a meeting place for cultural agents during the demonstrations, as well as a stage for emerging artists and writers to present their work, a place where numerous lectures and performances took place. Although the milieu of 'Mystetskyi Barbakan' acted as citizens of their country who wanted to explicitly show their disagreement with the development of Ukraine, they made themselves visible with artistic and discursive interventions aimed at decolonization and emancipation of Ukrainian culture.

The Euromaidan, also referred to as Revolution of Dignity, occurred in Ukraine between November 2013 and February 2014. Despite the abundance of publications and research on this phenomenon in a multitude of fields and from a plethora of perspectives, both in Ukraine and abroad, it still requires the expansion of its conceptual framework due to the diversity of this process because it was not only political, but also cultural. The cultural aspect cannot be abandoned, otherwise it will lead to a reduction of the Maidan phenomenon. Protests on the Independence Square in Kyiv constitutes an indispensable component of the decolonization process in Ukraine. It is also important to consider the role of artists and writers in both processes, as they were active participants in the meta-process of decolonization and the Revolution of Dignity itself. Artistic practices were able to address audiences in a way that was more direct than politics or journalism. This was because they could break through the frames and templates that were in place, to articulate hopes and fears of protestors, explain it to broader international audience, and answer the Maidan's central future-oriented question: "Who do we want to be?". This central question was reflected by the artists through the artistic interventions they carried out in the space of the protests and also contributed with their online discursive interventions. I argue that during the Revolution of Dignity, practices of artistic intervention aimed at decolonizing Ukraine by intervening in the political process, acting subversively towards the socio-political system in the state and affirmatively towards the protest, and offering a vision of future changes in Ukraine.

As both a technique and a way of positioning oneself in the realm of the political, I interpret artistic interventions in the Revolution of Dignity in this paper as actions that combine artistic works and activism, are politically subversive, and aim at momentary irritation and disruption. For this work, the discursive, performative, and visual forms of artistic interventions are important because they were present during Maidan 2013/2014.

This paper will begin with a theoretical overview and an account of the methodological approach employed in the study of decolonization in Ukraine. I will provide an overview of the research conducted on the Revolution of Dignity. Furthermore, this paper will examine the specific examples of decolonization in artistic practices during the Revolution of Dignity. In particular, it will analyze the artistic practices of the group Mystetskyi Barbakan[1] (further: Art Barbican), whose artistic programmatic was aimed at the decolonization of Ukraine years before the Revolution of Dignity and manifested itself in the protest. This included the contemplation of Ukrainian history, examination of the colonial legacy of the Soviet Union in artistic creations, and the de-sacralization of imperial myths. The artistic practices included exhibitions, performances, poetry readings, and discursive artistic interventions, such as the creation of posters situated at the nexus of protest. This approach will assist in address-

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[1] Mystetskyi Barbakan was a meeting place for Ukrainian artists, writers, architects, and cultural workers in the Maidan protest camp. It was also a space for spontaneous exhibitions, performances, lectures and poetry readings. Mystetskyi Barbakan was formed by the milieu of the underground art space Bakteriia, art groups Soiuz Volnykh Khudozhnykiv „Volia abo Smert" and Ostannia Barykada. Among the most active participants of the Artistic Barbakan are artists Ivan Semesiuk, Olexa Mann, Andriy Yermolenko, poets Artem Polezhaka, Svitlana Povaliaieva, Pavlo Korobchuk. Mysteskyi Barbakan was active during the Revolution of Dignity, from December 2013 to March 2014. The general motives of Mystetskyi Barbakan included nonconformist, provocative and satirical artistic practices, often critical of Ukrainian society, but affirmative of the Revolution of Dignity. After the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, in March 2014, Mystetskyi Barbakan lost its meaning, as the founder and architect of this space, Dmytro Zhyla, remembers.

ing the primary question posed in this paper, namely: How was decolonization enacted in the practices of artistic interventions?

Methodological approach: "Doing Decolonization"

In a discussion on the decolonization of Ukraine, Tamara Hundorova, Ukrainian literary scholar, notes that the decolonization process is complicated by its intertwining with the transitions from communism and socialism. This signifies that following the reclaiming of independence in 1991, Ukraine and its cultural bearers were compelled to confront a significant amount of trauma, historical "blind spots," and the necessity to establish the trajectories of future development (Druhak, 2021). Ukrainian historian Volodymyr Viatrovych posits that decolonization embodies a quest for self-identification and the eradication of imperialist legacies, which can be exploited to reinstate imperial sway (Viatrovych, 2023). Decolonization, therefore, exemplifies a process of rethinking on the past with the intention of effecting change in the present and future. This is a process of both creation and destruction, as well as a state of constant transformation. Decolonization is a recognition and reflection process of imperial structures and patterns at various levels of everyday practices and identity formation, with the aim of overcoming colonial legacies, the destruction of self-perception through the colonial gaze as something inferior, and the creation of an emancipated identity through the healing of colonial traumas and liberation from them.

In her attempt to define the term, a decolonial researcher Madina Tlostanova posits that decolonization can be understood as an option, consciously chosen as a political, ethical, and epistemic positionality and an entry point into agency (Tlostanova, 2019, p. 167). In this way, decolonization is connected to a consciousness of action. The necessity of awareness is emphasized as well by Ukrainian intellectual Mykola Riabchuk, who elucidates decolonization as a transformation in patterns of thought and action, a shift in the dominant ideology (Riabchuk, 2019, p. 158).

Thus, decolonization can be defined as a process and a consciously chosen option for enacting and implementing changes in thinking and behavioral paradigms with an emancipating purpose of overcoming the destructive inertia of past colonial experiences. It is not a process that occurs in a vacuum; rather, it has a specific temporal and spatial context.

Overview of research about the Revolution of Dignity

The extensive documentation of the Revolution of Dignity has facilitated the emergence of a substantial body of interdisciplinary research in both Ukrainian and foreign academic institutions since 2014.

One of the earliest works to examine the artistic practices on the Maidan is the book *The Art of the Maidan* (originally written in Ukrainian, translated into English) by Natalia Moussienko (2015), a Ukrainian cultural scholar. The author provides an overview of the artistic documentation of the Revolution of Dignity, encompassing installations, poster art, photography, painting, and performances. One of the author's primary arguments is the diversity of artistic practices and cultural figures who were present on the Maidan (Moussienko, 2016). The variety of cultural initiatives was also noted by a Ukrainian cultural critic Kateryna Botanova who examines the activities of artists as citizens, "human beings and activists," who played a pivotal role in laying the foundation for a new form of society and solidarity (Biedarieva, 2021, p. 94). This new form of solidarity a historian Marci Shore characterizes as a unifying force, or "civil society in amplified form" (Shore, 2014). To it belong

disparate political and social actors who would not be on the same side of the barricades (in both literal and figurative terms) under different circumstances.

When it comes to applying the decolonization optics on Maidan to the forms of social relations during the protest, researchers focus on post-totalitarian post-traumatic growth and its significance for Ukrainian identity (Matusiak, 2020). Similarly, the Revolution of Dignity appears in studies as a process of symbolically bidding farewell to the figures of the Soviet colonial past in order to facilitate the formation of a new Ukrainian future (Slaboshpytskyi, 2014, pp. 51-118). When it comes to thinking decolonially about the Soviet legacy in Ukraine, scholars emphasize that the passive Soviet relationship between citizens and the government, based on fear and subjugation, has been transformed (Stepanenko, 2015, pp. 29-46). Through expressive forms, including posters and slogans distributed both in physical spaces and online, protesters articulated their hopes for changes in the relationship between the government and citizens and challenged it through direct action as they positioned themselves in the streets to protest.

Self-organization and cooperation

In her analysis of the phenomenon of self-organization among activists, a sociocultural anthropologist Emily Channell-Justice (2022) posits that the notion of self-organization entails the conviction that when a task requires completion and an individual possesses the requisite capacity to undertake it, the task should be executed without delay, rather than awaiting the action of another entity, particularly a state body or political figure. This concept is of benefit to the author in several ways: firstly, as a component of activism and the practice of critique, and secondly, as a method of mobilisation (Channell-Justice, 2022). Building upon the fundamental premise put forth by Emily Channell-Justice, self-organization can be employed as a methodology within the context of artistic practices and group formation in Ukraine during that time. Furthermore, the necessity for self-organization is closely linked to the perceived weakness of established institutions. A certain degree of autonomy from established institutions, such as the Union of Artists or the Union of Writers, allowed cultural practitioners greater freedom in their creative and political expression. In Channell-Justice's work, the concept of institutions is, on the one hand, synonymous with the state. Conversely, when self-organized groups perceive deficiencies in the performance of duties by state institutions, they may assume the functions of the state in their actions. Consequently, there is a shift from a critique of the state to a prefigurative artistic endeavor, which proposes a new vision of what could be expected of a state that was seen as legitimate (Channell-Justice, 2022, p. 30). In this way, self-organization is inherently political, constituting a form of political behavior and participation in social life.

Art Barbican represents a case study of the self-organization of Ukrainian cultural agents who do not act in isolation from the audience, but rather situate themselves at the epicenter of the protests. The intention is not merely to express political dissent; it is also to draw attention to the necessity of changes in life aesthetics. At this spot at the Revolution of Dignity, the majority of participants were artists and writers. However, the initiative was open to all, and its reach was extended through the formation of connections between individuals, thereby expanding the artistic milieu of Mystetskyi Barbican. It encompassed a multitude of activities, connecting both artistic and non-artistic practices. These included readings of prose, performances, and the creation of Molotov cocktails for protesters. The cooperation between artists and authors was not primarily driven by their professional roles but rather

by their desire to support the protests in their country and the desired changes. This was done with the intention of bolstering their social impact and fostering direct engagement with the audience. Concurrently, they also endeavor to establish themselves as artists, organizing exhibitions, performances, and poetry readings at the epicenter of the protest at the Maidan. In this manner, they incorporate artistic methodologies into the political process.

The cooperation extended not only to the established artistic community, with whom joint projects had been undertaken for years prior to the revolution, but also encompassed spontaneous forms of cooperation in a public domain and the provision of exhibition space for emerging artists. Reproductions of works by Mystetskyi Barbakan co-founders, such as Ivan Semesiuk, Olexa Mann, and Andriy Yermolenko, were accompanied by posters and caricatures created by unknown and anonymous artists who shared their work on their own initiative. Additionally, the walls of the Art Barbican provided an opportunity for visitors to leave their own tags, thereby contributing to the collective construction of a constantly evolving, dynamic visual landscape. Mystetskyi Barbakan is an example of activist intervention of cultural agents in the political process.

Decolonization and departure from provincialization

The primitivizing image of Ukrainian culture represents a continuation of colonial narratives, albeit with an over-interpretation and sacralization of folklore elements. Such phenomena represent an evolution of the concept of "provincialism of Ukrainian culture" (Sherekh, 1948, p. 45) which was described in the mid-20th century by Ukrainian itellectual Yurii Sherekh (Shevelov). In his analysis, Sherekh identifies the temporal and local coordinates of this spiritual provincialism. In a local context, this manifests as a tendency to remain mentally anchored in the outskirts of civilization. It is not contingent on one's geographical location, but rather on one's worldview. For Sherekh, provincialism represents a particular orientation of thought and a distinctive pattern of action. In terms of temporality, the author posits that provincialism entails a sense of "being outside of time" (Sherekh, 1948, p. 68), or, in other words, a lack of contemporary sensibility. An additional crucial element of provincialism is the belief that the Ukrainian language is incapable of generating "high culture," necessitating the use of Russian for this purpose (Sherekh, 1948, p. 87).

During the Revolution of Dignity, a series of discursive interventions in the form of Facebook posts were published by members of the Artistic Barbican milieu. In his public statements, Ukrainian contemporary artist Olexa Mann addresses the issue of Ukrainian provincialization and the necessity to overcome it. Mann's statements, which include texts written on Facebook, can be considered an example of the rhetoric that the Revolution of Dignity represents a crucial juncture for the decolonization and overcoming of provincialism, a process that is closely intertwined with the role of the artist.

Olexa Mann published a near-daily account from Independence Square, with a particular focus on developments at Maidan. From the outset of the protest, he assumed an active role, urging his potential readers and followers to participate. The initial challenge of the protest for the artist was the absence of a clear, unified message. He saw this as an example of provincialism and a lack of temporal coherence. "It immediately evokes the image of a Ukrainian cellar filled with rotting potatoes," he stated. "Furthermore, it is imperative that we reformat Maidan". The objective was to eliminate all these "traditional Ukrainian expressions of lamentation" (Mukharskyi, 2014, p. 207). In his vision, Maidan should be constructed

by a diverse group of individuals, including writers, musicians, philosophers, businessmen, artists, and active citizens. This approach aims to shift the focus from a mere performance to a sensory experience. In the initial, pacific phase of the demonstration, Olexa Mann draws parallels with the Revolution of 1968 and its creative aspects, citing the (self-) irony and vitality of the process as key factors that resonate with younger demographics, who will shape the future. Olexa Mann calls for a departure from the kitschy representation of Ukraine on Maidan. In addition, Olexa Mann and other members of Artistic Barbican have proposed a set of mottos for Maidan with the objective of decolonizing the Ukrainian intellectual paradigm. The distribution of these mottos in the form of posters on Maidan was a participatory action.

The mottos create an antithesis through the duality between the colonial past and the (decolonial) future. For the authors, the past, which was shaped and controlled by Russian cultural codes, is an obstacle to the Ukrainian future, which the authors see as European. Thus, they oppose a rigid and outdated pro-Russian orientation to an innovative European choice: "We want to go to the future, not back to the past", "It is time to create history, not read it" (Mukharskyi, 2014, pp. 208-209). For this antithesis they played with the lexicon that for them represents the difference between Russian and European cultural codes: "EU is rave, Customs Union is trash", "Techno-minimal against Russian chanson", "Russian chanson belongs to the underground" (Mukharskyi, 2014, pp. 208-209). The choice of Russian chanson as the starting point for several of the motto's points to an emphasis on the criminal nature of this culture, which was popular with the criminal Ukrainian government of the time, and the need to move away from it.

A decolonial aspect of the mottos is the emphasis on the homecoming of Ukrainians after a long period of colonization by Russian forces: "We are Euro-born." Europe is in this case a beacon of personal freedom and dignity, not some financial benefits: "Europe is your right to protest". However, the decolonial return to oneself requires direct action rather than remaining in the realm of post-Soviet postcolonial passivity, seeing the state as untouchable and unchangeable: "Don't beg for the right to live, take this right". The main conflict of the mottos is the clash of two cultural systems, to one of which the authors feel an affinity and see themselves as part of. The other, on the other hand, appears as an aggressor trying to keep Ukraine in its grip: "It is a protest of civilization against barbarism" (Mukharskyi, 2014, pp. 208-209). The slogans simultaneously express a common sense of "we", indicating solidarity among the protesters, and address an abstract "you", explaining the reason for the protest to outsiders and mobilizing those who are not part of the protest to join it.

The objective of the demonstration, as perceived by Olexa Mann, is to facilitate a transformation in the country's socio-political landscape. This transformation is envisioned to be a shift in the prevailing value system and the way individuals interact with one another. In this envisioned future, the Ukrainian socio-political system would be characterized by a free and emancipated populace, rather than the current system, which he views as a relic of the Soviet era and a form of colonial rule.

For Mann, the ongoing protests represent a crucial phase in this transformation process. Additionally, his artistic perspective, which has previously been critical of aspects of Ukrainian society, is undergoing a shift. This shift is evident in his interactions with individuals in his immediate surroundings: "One thing is obvious: Ukrainians are no longer the same people they were even a week ago. This is not a submissive melancholic herd, beautifully singing sad songs, which the sheep herders are actively trying to make of it. These are different

citizens; you can't treat them like before" (Mukharskyi, 2014, p. 213). Olexa Mann sees the protest as a return to one's pre-colonial self and breaking patterns of thinking which were planted by colonial systems.

In the more violent phase of the Revolution of Dignity, Olexa Mann rethinks the old motto "Glory to Ukraine, Glory to heroes," which was disseminated in the revolutionary space. Mann believes that this motto, which was originally intended to evoke a sense of pride and honor, has been misused as a kitsch representation in Ukraine for decades. For the artist, this motto serves as a unifying cry for those engaged in combat for the sake of freedom. In conclusion, the artist posits that the Revolution of Dignity resulted in the "spatting out of Soviet Union" (Mukharskyi, 2014, p. 213), which he interprets as a decolonization process entwined with pain and struggle.

Thus, in the blog posts by Olexa Mann, which constitute discursive interventions into the Revolution of Dignity, one can discern the evolution of the author's perception of the process in the country, particularly in its epicenter, on Independence Square in Kyiv. The artist views the Revolution of Dignity as a positive phenomenon, perceiving it as an opportunity for change and decolonization in Ukraine.

Anti-Nostalgia and Emancipation

The decolonization choice was an integral aspect of the work of representatives of the Artistic Barbican, including artists Ivan Semesiuk, Andriy Yermolenko, and poet Artem Polezhaka. This was particularly evident in the years preceding the Revolution of Dignity, especially during the tenure of Viktor Yanukovych. This encompasses an understanding of Ukrainian history, an examination of the colonial legacy of the Soviet Union in artistic works, the de-sacralization of imperial myths, and a critique of the hybrid Homo Sovieticus identity with the Soviet nostalgia. Ivan Semesiuk works with such identities that can be considered an anti-hero. Conversely, the post-Soviet anti-hero represents an archetypal individual who has not undergone decolonization, remaining anchored in Soviet coordinates while simultaneously struggling to adapt to the new reality of material abundance. This suggests a failure to accept the shifting rules of the socio-economic landscape. The primary issue is that the work has not been done on the self. This phenomenon is characteristic of a transitional period, yet there is a concern that it may result in a prolonged period of stagnation. Consequently, the anthropological diagnosis proposed by Semesiuk represents a crucial initial step towards decolonization. This entails acknowledging the existence of the problem, describing it in detail, and identifying areas for improvement, while recognizing the need for further research and development. This project is not intended to marginalize or incite hatred towards any particular groups of people; rather, it is designed to provoke action and encourage transformation. Consequently, Andriy Yermolenko identifies the Revolution of Dignity as a protest against post-soviet inertia and its consequential identities (Mystetskyi Barbakan, 2015, p. 76).

The decolonization process in the artistic practice of Artistic Barbican is designed to disassociate Ukraine from any colonial connotations. This encompasses the prefiguration of a future free Ukraine, the transformation of values and social relations, and the alteration of the existing socio-political order. It is therefore evident that the subject of anti-heroics is reaching its conclusion, and that the time has come for the emergence of a new Ukrainian hero who is liberated from the colonial yoke and hybrid post-Soviet identity. The new Ukrainian heroic represents a form of Ukrainian identity that was established during the

Revolution of Dignity and continues to evolve. An illustrative example is Andriy Yermolen-ko's posters, entitled "Freedom" (Mystetskyi Barbakan, 2015, p. 78) and "The God Speaks Through the Voices of People" (Belska and Mukharskyi, 2014, p. 15). The first poster pays homage to Eugene Delacroix's "Liberty Leading the People". Yermolenko's work also features a female figure at its center. However, she is depicted holding a European flag in one hand and no firearm in the other. The absence of weaponry represents a significant divergence between Yermolenko's conceptualization of the Revolution of Dignity and the French Revolution. Despite the smoky, battle-scarred landscape of Kyiv in the background and the barricades in the foreground evoking a battlefield, there are no corpses and no weapons in the hands of protestors. The sole weaponry depicted is linguistic: one figure in the piece is holding a poster reading "Ukraine is Europe" (in the original English). It is noteworthy that Yermolenko's work was created in 2013, prior to the fatalities that occurred during protests. His aspiration was for a peaceful transformation and pro-European integration of Ukraine.

However, the development of the protests was far from peaceful. On January 22, 2014, Serhiy Nihoian, a participant in the Revolution of Dignity, succumbed to gunshot wounds. His charisma attracted considerable attention from fellow protestors and artists in the square. His recitation of Taras Shevchenko's poem gained considerable traction online, while his glance inspired a series of artworks created on the square. Yermolenko's poster, "The God Speaks Through the Voices of People," serves to immortalize Nihoian. The image depicts Nihoian seated on the Maidan barricades, constructed from wood, wires, and car tires. He is clad in a holy robe and a builder's helmet, a common form of head protection among Maidan protestors. A halo encircles his head. In the background, one can discern the presence of thick clouds of smoke and fire. In the image, Nihoian's hands are depicted levitating a paving stone and a burning bottle containing a Molotov cocktail. In this way, Nihoian becomes a personification of the sacrifice inherent in the pursuit of freedom. The two posters by Andriy Yermolenko serve as constructive contributions to the discourse surrounding the Revolution of Dignity. He represents individuals prepared to engage in direct action to facilitate the transformation and decolonization of Ukraine, thereby establishing a new code of heroic conduct within Ukrainian culture. Thus, Andriy Yermolenko's posters are an example of how artistic production contributes to activist actions and builds their performative side.

Humor and Relief

As Mykola Ryabchuk posits, the consciousness traumatized by colonialism is characterized by a paucity of self-reflection, self-criticism, and self-irony, which can be attributed to the effects of trauma (Riabchuk, 2011, p. 14). This is why decolonizing humor has the effect of challenging established norms, inciting debate, and provoking reactions. It constitutes a subversion of socio-cultural stereotypes, achieved through the de-tabooing of verbal games and carnivalesque behavior. Such carnivalesque behavior may be regarded as an integral aspect of the artistic process of decolonization. The decolonization is accompanied by a redistribution of roles and a reversal of the prevailing hierarchies. In Bakhtin's theory of the carnival, laughter is identified as a transgressive act that disrupts established hierarchies and reclaims the origins of established traditions (Bakhtin, 1990, pp. 10-12). Consequently, laughter can facilitate a return to pre-colonial experiences. Carnival laughter serves as a form of resistance against the dominant, hegemonic state and its associated practices. Similarly, decolonization strives for inclusion and the re-evaluation of interpersonal relationships and their underlying paradigms of action, in a manner analogous to that of carnival.

The return to oneself that occurs through the practice of carnival and the laughter associated with it is comparable to the process of decolonization.

The Art Barbican was a venue that embraced a variety of artistic practices, including those that incorporated elements of humor and self-irony. For example, humor was a prominent feature of the performances of Artem Polezhaka, a Ukrainian poet who had gained renown in the oral poetry scene in Ukraine for his use of humor. During the Revolution of Dignity, he also produced a work entitled "Testament," among his other poems. This poem represents a comprehensive postmodern quotation and parody of several poems by Taras Shevchenko. However, whereas Shevchenko's poems are regarded as exemplars of elevated Ukrainian literature, Polezhaka's piece is presented in a carnival form, situating it within the context of everyday life and materialistic concerns.

The poem unfolds itself as an ironic instruction for future generations of Ukrainians: "For the unborn / for the dead / for the alive / I'd leave advice as legacy:" (Mystetskyi Barbakan, 2015, p. 232). Polezhaka presents a collage of diverse everyday scenarios, including street construction and the judicious use of bricks for pavements, the responsible disposal of glass bottles after a picnic, and the provision of sufficient space in the garage for spare car tires. The final section of the piece elucidates the rationale behind these instructions "…Until the two-headed cock is not dead yet / till friends and times unstable / better keep a balaclava in your cupboard…" (Mystetskyi Barbakan, 2015, p. 232). This serves as a cautionary message to future generations of Ukrainians that the period of transformation is not yet complete. The possibility of the state's dissolution persists, as Russia's neocolonial aspirations remain a concern. The two-headed cock serves as a metaphor for Russia, which is being diminished and rendered less formidable.

The ironic expression functions on the level of recognizability of the aesthetics of the fight during the Revolution of Dignity, including the use of stones, glass bottles filled with Molotov cocktails, burning tires as barricades, helmets, and baseball bats as means of self-defense. Consequently, the irony will be effective when the recipient is aware of the discourse of the Revolution of Dignity. For those unfamiliar with the context, the combination of seemingly disparate and superfluous elements may appear somewhat incongruous and implausible. This ironic expression serves to diminish the emotional impact of the discourse of the Revolution of Dignity by eschewing the glorification of the protesters and instead situating their actions within the realm of normality. The work of Artem Polezhaka functions as a humorous intervention in which he creates a transgressive moment in an ironic way and delegitimizes certain authorities.

In conclusion, the artistic practices carried out by representatives of Art Barbican during the Revolution of Dignity were intended to serve the purpose of supporting the protests. Artists have played a pivotal role in reframing the revolution and infusing it with new meanings and ideas. It is also important to note that artists and writers have gained significant societal trust and have become influential voices that are widely listened to. This was achieved by rethinking the relationship between art and social processes, exploring ways to create participatory, bottom-up forms of cooperation, and introducing new, contemporary, socially relevant aesthetic approaches. During the Revolution of Dignity, cultural agents intervened in the political field by supporting the protest. They engaged in direct contact with their audience, being in the middle of the crowd and communicating ideas through it. The Maidan experience of bottom-up organization, cooperation, and mobilization of society became es-

pecially useful after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2014 and helped to resist that invasion. Artists on Maidan shaped the image of a new Ukrainian heroism, free from colonial stereotypes. Artistic practices during the Revolution of Dignity helped to shape Ukrainian cultural discourse by reflecting the shared experience gained during the protest, anchoring new symbols of Ukrainian history that represent the aspirations of the revolution, and offering narratives that provide a vision for a decolonized Ukrainian future.

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