

From South to North

The Ukrainian Pavilion at the inaugural maltabiennale.art 2024

On March 14th, Ukraine's National Pavilion, entitled *From South to North*, will open at the [maltabiennale.art](#) 2024, a new European exhibition of international modern art. The project by Ukrainian artist Alevtina Kakhidze slated for exhibition at the Pavilion explores the topic of decolonization in the context of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and intricate dynamics of the Mediterranean. The Pavilion is curated by Kateryna Semenyuk and Oksana Dovgoplova.

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The maltabiennale.art

The inaugural maltabiennale.art will be held from March 13th to May 31st, 2024. The event aims to shape new narratives for the Mediterranean region as a cultural hub and reinvent the global perceptions of art and society by drawing on ideas originating in the far south of the European continent.

The Biennale is organized by MUŻA (the Malta National-Community Art Museum) on behalf of Heritage Malta (the Maltese national agency for museums, conservation practice, and cultural heritage) and Arts Council Malta (the national agency for development and investment in the cultural and creative sectors) under the patronage of UNESCO and the President of Malta.

The organizers of the maltabiennale.art 2024 have gone with the pavilion approach, allocating one for the main exhibition and thematic/national ones for the participating countries and artists. The exhibition spaces will be set up in Malta's architectural and historic heritage sites. Specifically, the Biennale's activities will take place in Valletta, the capital of Malta and a UNESCO Heritage Site, as well as in the nearby Birgu, Bormla, Senglea, and Kalkara, with their numerous palazzos, forts, churches, and museums, and the picturesque island of Gozo.

The Ukrainian Pavilion

The Ukrainian National Pavilion, entitled *From South to North*, was created by the Past / Future / Art memory culture platform in cooperation with the Odesa National Fine Arts Museum, NOS Visual Arts Production, and the Ukrainian Institute. Alevtina Kakhidze's art project is focused on working through the imperial past, a matter of relevance for Ukraine and Malta alike. It symbolically links Malta with Odesa—the gateway city that connects the Ukrainian steppe to the Mediterranean—and invites visitors to look from Malta in the direction of Ukraine, from South to North. This

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optic presents the port city of Odesa as being located not in the south of the Russian/Soviet empire but rather in the north of the Mediterranean region.

Alevtina Kakhidze's project comprises a video piece, shot in Odesa in early 2024 in collaboration with an artist Roman Khimei, and a site-specific installation, as well as the happening *From Malta to Yalta* in a public space. Through the mirror of her family's history, the artist analyzes how an empire has ruined the lives of generations and how its influence, although at times unnoticed, eventually manifests itself. Kakhidze superimposes the history of her own family on the events of the 20th century in Ukraine and Europe, while also drawing a connection to the 21st century by continuing the story via a narration of her personal experience during Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

"The Ukrainian Pavilion at the maltabiennale.art offers a glimpse at the ramifications of relationships between colonies and empires that might be less evident for Europe," Oksana Dolgopolova and Kateryna Semenyuk, who curate the Pavilion, explain. "The questions about the colonial past heard from the far south of Europe can reveal to the world Ukraine's special position as a millennium-old civilization hub living in the shadow of imperial grievances and aggression."

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Location

The Pavilion will be located in two halls of Villa Portelli, a cultural heritage site dating back to the early 19th century, when Malta became a British colony. The villa is situated on a creek overlooking a marina and the Grand Harbor in the historic village of Kalkara near Malta's capital, Valletta. In the run-up to the Biennale, the space and surrounding gardens will be renovated and opened for visitors. Later, the villa will house Malta's maritime culture and colonial history center.

Events

The opening of the Ukrainian Pavilion at Villa Portelli, Triq-il-Marina, Il-Kalkara, Malta, is scheduled at 1:00 pm local time on March 14th.

As part of the Pavilion's public program, a discussion on museum practices for working through the imperial past will be held in April in cooperation with the Ukrainian Institute and ICOM UK. More details will be announced soon.

For more news, follow the Ukrainian Pavilion at the maltabiennale.art on Instagram: [@uapavilion_maltabiennale](https://www.instagram.com/uapavilion_maltabiennale).

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Artist

Alevtina Kakhidze (b. 1973) is a multidisciplinary artist working in the fields of performance, drawing, time-based media, curatorship, and collaborative art with a focus on consumerism, plant culture, feminism, and life in conflict zones. Raised in the Donetsk Region and now based outside Kyiv in the village of Muzychi, Kakhidze has become one of the most prominent artists working in Ukraine today. Her works have been included in the collections of the Tate Modern, the Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp – M HKA, Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, SCHUNCK Museum, Art Collection Telekom, the National Art Museum of Ukraine, and others. Among the events she has participated in are EuroFestival in Liverpool (2023), Manifesta 14 (2022), Manifesta 10 (2014), the 7th Berlin Biennale (2012), and more. She has also collaborated with Albertinum, Centre Pompidou, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Ujazdowski Castle, Whitechapel Gallery and others.

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Curators

Kateryna Semenyuk and Oksana Dovgopolova are the co-founders of the Past / Future / Art memory culture platform. Kateryna Semenyuk is an experienced curator in the Ukrainian art scene, focusing on an artistic approach to collective memory. Oksana Dovgopolova has a Ph.D. in Memory Studies and combines her academic background with curatorial practice. As a curatorial duo, they perform art exhibitions, public discussions, artistic laboratories, and memorial competitions in Ukraine and abroad. Among their latest projects are the exhibitions *From 1914 till Ukraine* at Kunstmuseum Stuttgart (Germany) and *Ground Shadows* at Kazerne Dossin: Museum, Memorial and Research Centre on the Holocaust and Human Rights (Belgium). Both were on the Ukrainian Pavilion team at the Venice Biennale of Architecture 2023. Kateryna and Oksana are based in Kyiv and Odesa, respectively.

Organizer

Past / Future / Art is a memory culture platform established by the Cultural Practices NGO in Odesa, Ukraine, in 2019. It focuses on memorial, research, and art projects and develops strategies for commemorating significant phenomena of Ukrainian history, initiating public discussions to engage broader audiences in working through the past. Starting February 24, 2022, when Russia's full-scale invasion began, the project shifted focus to commemorating the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war. pastfutureart.org

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Partners

Opened in 1899, the Odesa National Fine Arts Museum (ONFAM) has become one of Ukraine's most dynamic art institutions over the past decade. The museum systematically tackles the topic of working through the past and organizes exhibitions, screenings, and educational programs dealing with the complexities of Ukrainian history. Amid Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, ONFAM is promoting and preserving its collection, and continues its exhibition, research, and educational activities. ofam.ua

NOS Visual Arts Production was established in 2018 as a design, production and promotion studio for contemporary art. By bringing together form and contents NOS acts with the curator's sensitivity and the producer's awareness to realize artworks and projects for specific contexts, cultural programmes, exhibitions, networking, responding to the special needs of artists, public and private clients. NOS challenges the several aspects every specific project needs by taking care of the whole process from design to production, or taking to the field in a collaborative way in one of these segments. nosproduction.com

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The Ukrainian Institute is a Ukrainian state institution conceived as an international representative of Ukrainian culture to shape the positive image of Ukraine worldwide. Established by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine in 2017, it operates under the administration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. ui.org.ua

Support

The Ukrainian Pavilion *From South to North* at the maltabiennale.art 2024 is implemented by the NGO Cultural Practices with support of the IZOLYATSIA foundation, Trans Europe Halles and Malý Berlín, and co-financed by the ZMINA: Rebuilding program, created with the support of the European Union under a dedicated call for proposals to support Ukrainian displaced people and the Ukrainian Cultural and Creative Sectors.

The Pavilion's special partner is Aromateque.

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