

MUSEUMS FOR UKRAINE

#StandWithUkraine

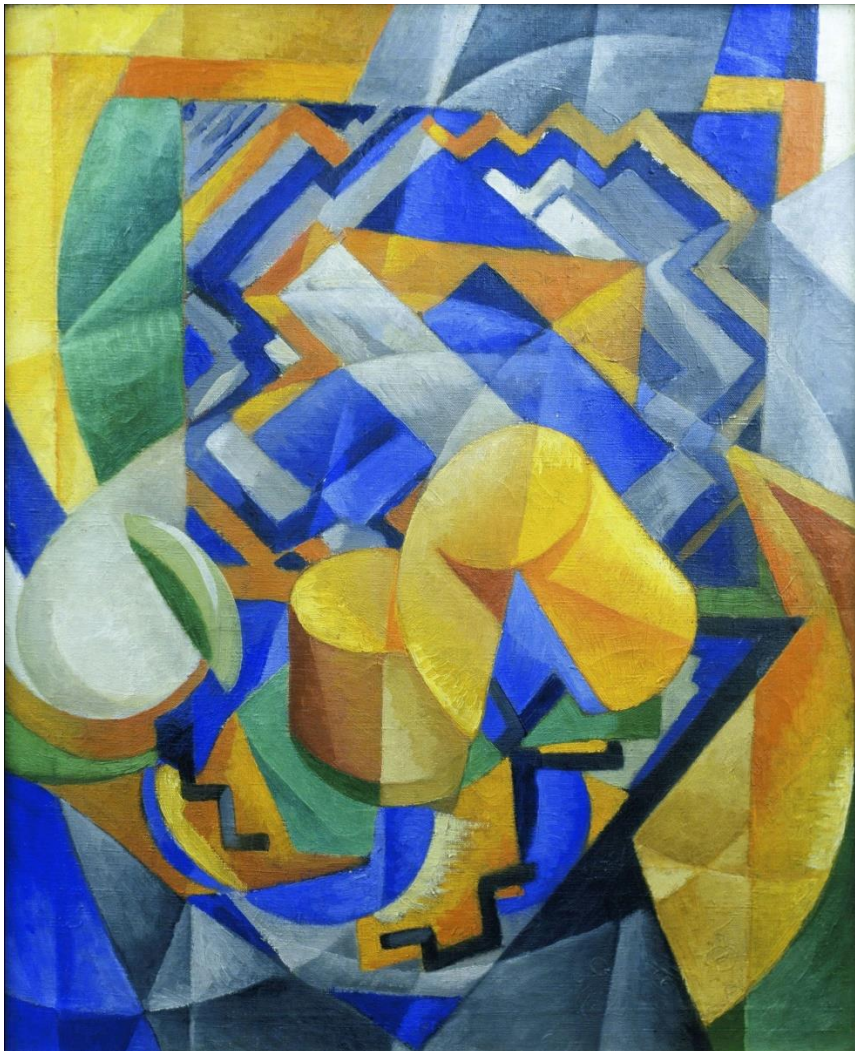
Announcement

In the Eye of the Storm: Modernism in Ukraine, 1900 – 1930s
A survey exhibition at Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid

Under the high patronage of the Office of the President of Ukraine
and the Spanish Ministry of Culture

29 November 2022 – 30 April 2023

Curated by Konstantin Akinsha, Katia Denysova, Olena Kashuba-Volvach



Vadym Meller
Composition, 1919-20
Oil on canvas, 74 x 60 cm
National Art Museum of Ukraine

The exhibition **"In the Eye of the Storm: Modernism in Ukraine, 1900–1930s"** presents ground-breaking art produced in Ukraine in the first decades of the 20th century, showcasing trends that range from figurative to abstract art. In the most comprehensive survey of Ukrainian modern art to date – with many works on loan from the **National Art Museum of Ukraine** and the **Museum of Theatre, Music and Cinema Arts of Ukraine**, and the **Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza** – the exhibition celebrates the dynamism and diversity of the artistic scene in Ukraine, while safeguarding the country's heritage during the inadmissible, present-day occupation of parts of its territory by Russia.

The development of Ukrainian modernism took place against a complicated socio-political backdrop of collapsing empires, the First World War, the revolutions of 1917 with the ensuing Ukrainian War of Independence (1917–21), and the eventual creation of Soviet Ukraine. The ruthless Stalinist repressions against Ukrainian intelligentsia led to the execution of dozens of writers, theater directors and artists, while the Holodomor, the man-made famine of 1932–33, killed millions of Ukrainians.

Despite these tragic circumstances, Ukrainian art of the period lived through a true renaissance of creative experimentation. "In the Eye of the Storm" reclaims this essential – though little-known in the West – chapter of European modernism, displaying around 70 works in a **full range of media, from oil paintings and sketches to collages, and theater designs**. Following a chronological order, the show presents works by masters of Ukrainian modernism, such as **Oleksandr Bohomazov, Vasyl Yermilov, Vadym Meller, Viktor Palmov, and Anatol Petrytskyi**. Exploring the polyphony of styles and identities, the exhibition includes neo-Byzantine paintings by the followers of **Mykhailo Boichuk** and experimental works by members of the **Kultur Lige**, who sought to promote their vision of contemporary Ukrainian and Yiddish art, respectively. It features pieces by **Kazymyr Malevych** and **El Lissitzky**, quintessential artists of the international avant-garde who worked in Ukraine and left a significant imprint on the development of the national art scene. The exhibition also showcases artworks of internationally renowned artists who were born and started their careers in Ukraine but became famous abroad, among them **Alexandra Exter, Wladimir Baranoff-Rossiné, and Sonia Delaunay**.

In a seminal exhibition catalog published by **Thames & Hudson**, twelve internationally renowned scholars, including curators from the National Art Museum of Ukraine, bring to life this astonishing period of creativity in Ukraine and all the movements it encompassed.

The exhibition is under the high patronage of the Office of the President of Ukraine and the Spanish Ministry of Culture; organised with the support of PinchukArtCentre.

Note to Editors

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List of artists in the exhibition: Wladimir Baranoff-Rossiné, Oleksandr Bohomazov, Mykhailo Boichuk, Tymofii Boichuk, Davyd Burluk, Volodymyr Burluk, Sonia Delaunay, Marko Epshtein, Alexandra Exter, Kyrylo Hvozdyk, Mykola Kasperovych, Oleksandr Khvostenko-Khvostov, Borys Kosarev, El Lissitzky, Kazymyr Malevych, Vadym Meller, Ivan Padalka, Viktor Palmov, Anatol Petrytskyi, Issakhar Ber Ryback, Vasyl Sedliar, Manuil Shekhtman, Oleksandr Syrotenko, Kostiantyn Yeleva, Vasyl Yermilov, Semen Yoffe.

About Konstantin Akinsha

An independent art historian, curator, and journalist, Konstantin Akinsha received the Georg Polk Award for cultural reporting in 1991. His curatorial projects include "Russian Modernism: Cross-Currents of German and Russian Art, 1907–1917" (Neue Galerie, New York, 2015), "Permanent Revolution: Ukrainian Art Today" (Ludwig Museum, Budapest, 2018), and "Between Fire and Fire: Ukrainian Art Now" (Semperdepot, Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Vienna, 2019). Akinsha is the founding director of the Avant-Garde Art Research Project (UK) and the author of several books, including *Beautiful Loot: The Soviet Plunder of Europe's Art Treasures* (1995).

About Katia Denysova

A PhD candidate at the Courtauld Institute of Art, London. Her research investigates the influence of socio-political factors on early 20th-century art in Ukraine. She has contributed to the H-SHERA, ArtHist and Dash Arts podcast series, and the journals Arts, Art & the Public Sphere and immediations.

About Olena Kashuba-Volvach

The head of the Department of 19th and early 20th-Century Art at the National Art Museum of Ukraine (NAMU). She holds a PhD in art history from the Institute of Art Studies, Folklore and Ethnology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine and was the senior research fellow at the National Academy of Arts of Ukraine. She is the author of numerous articles and has published several books, including *Oleksandr Bohomazov: A Self-Portrait* (2012), *The Ukrainian Academy of Art: A Brief History* (2015) and *Art Pages of the New Generation, 1927–1930* (2016). In 2019–20, Kashuba-Volvach curated the multi-venue exhibition “Oleksandr Bohomazov: The Artistic Laboratory”.

About Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza

The Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza houses one of the finest and most varied collections of Western painting. Van Eyck, Dürer, Titian, Caravaggio, Rubens, Rembrandt, Canaletto, Monet, Degas, Morisot, Cézanne, Van Gogh, Picasso, Kirchner, Kandinsky, Goncharova, O’Keeffe, Hopper, Dalí, and Pollock are just some of the names on the long list of great masters represented in its holdings. Acquired by the Spanish state in 1993, the privately assembled Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection was designed from the outset to be as broad-ranging as that of a museum. Its encyclopaedic holdings provide an overview of Western painting and span most European and American styles from the fourteenth to the twentieth century. Even though the paintings were purchased over the course of only two generations and number no more than a thousand, a large proportion of them are masterpieces.

About Museums for Ukraine

Museums for Ukraine is an urgent initiative formed to protect, preserve and celebrate the cultural objects and collections of Ukraine. Founded by Francesca Thyssen-Bornemisza and supported by leading European and international museums, galleries, as well as prominent curators and partners, the coalition has two core objectives: to protect and preserve the cultural objects and museum collections in Ukraine, and to call on European and other international museums to organise exhibitions, performances, readings and screenings of artistic works from Ukraine, in a show of solidarity.

About Francesca Thyssen-Bornemisza

Founder and Chair of Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary (TBA21), Francesca Thyssen-Bornemisza is an activist, philanthropist and patron of the arts. Driven by a belief in the power of art to serve as an agent of change, Thyssen-Bornemisza has supported artists throughout her career in the production and creation of new work that fuels engagement with the most pressing issues of our times. Her sustained commitment to the cultural realm extends a long tradition of collecting and philanthropy in the Thyssen family that dates back generations. In March 2022 she founded Museums for Ukraine with a coalition of museum professionals and supporters.