

Manifestement Peint Vite presents
as part of a «carte blanche» given to L'île d'en face

Exhibition

17/16
Sep./ Oct.

Blockhaus DY10

MYKOLA RIDNYI

Forecast

for yesterday



© Blind Spot - Mykola Ridnyi - 2014/2015

Free entry
Wednesday to Sunday
2pm to 7pm

Opens September
16th at 6:30

40, rue La Noue
Bras de Fer, Nantes

liledenface.org
mpvite.org



Forecast for yesterday is the first exhibition of Ukrainian artist Mykola Ridnyi in France.

It is presented as part of a “carte blanche“ given by the association Manifestement Peint Vite to L'île d'en face, curatorial association.

Since the start of the Orange Revolution in 2004, Ukraine has experienced prolonged periods of heightened social tension resulting in several months of demonstrations and riots in 2013/14. The riots were led by members of the public who felt their prospects receding at the hand of a corrupt government. These uprisings, crystallized around Maïdan Square in Kiev were triggered following the government's decision to shift away from the European Union. Thus, the divide between Europe and Russia has strengthened, inciting discord within the revolting populations.

Forecast for yesterday bears out this troubled socio-political context, denouncing and examining mechanisms of propaganda, manipulation and repression. A paradox of vision, the title of the exhibition seeks to point out the inherent contradictions of governance processes as well as our own tendencies to obscure our own reality. In a way a forecast or perspective of past can be; thanks to a deviation of vision, a possible access to the complexity of our present.

Mykola Ridnyi's work borrows from documentary movies and surveillance footage for their brutal reality, highlighting the power of media and a society of control. By using photography and video, Mykola Ridnyi asks the question of our relation to history and its potential construction in reverse. What can we deduce from history's failings to help us live in the present and build a future? What marks or scars of these past events remain in society ? How do individual narratives subsist when faced with collective, authoritarian and dominant histories ?

1 - *Blind spot*

According to the assumptions of ophthalmology, there is a blank area called the blind spot in our eyesight, between right and left eye. Accordingly to this phenomenon, we are unable to fully see what is happening around us. We construct the missing image of reality and try to fill the blind spot, relying on our knowledge, memory or compelling influence of information. Usually we are not aware of this constant construction of reality. Exception of the rule is the disease, when the blind spot is perceptible and becomes genuine darkness absorbing the reality. Everything may start from small, a gradually expanding black dot or like a tapering tunnel which consequently devours vision as long as everything is obscured.

When it spreads about the society, inability or limitations in the vision become the mechanism of human self-defense that brings about unsolicited blindness against escalating violence. There is also another form of blindness – one imposed by the machine of war propaganda which produces a binary vision of reality and creates «us» and «them», «brothers» and «enemies», «citizens» and «aliens». Those divisions do not have any reasonable basis in reality. As we move into the future, it seems that we are destined to 'repeat the mistakes of history' because we refuse to see our past. Tragic events will be engulfed by fading light and our memory will keep only chosen heroes, leaving behind unsung victims. Victims are always omitted, and the price of human life becomes devaluated, while sides of the conflict remain engaged in defending their rightwards.

In the *Blind spot* series, photographs taken from a number of reports about the war on the East of Ukraine are interlinked with the phenomenon of gradually going blind and a resulting narrowed field of vision: the imagery is almost completely obscured by black ink.

2 - *Shelter*

During the Cold war political propaganda of USSR and US was producing a social phobia connected with threat of nuclear war and a cult of defense. In modern Ukraine a lot of shelters made in a past as a fallout refuge are sealed. Some of them turned into new functions, according to situate necessity, adapted by personal creativity within lack of facilities. The main object in the video is an underground shelter using for a school subject called Pre-service training. The main character, an old teacher, which subject was very close connected with Soviet ideology do not really care about new political situation but true to own principles of a military man. His students also do not really care about patriotism from schoolbook in their teenage but has a big interest for shooting entourage. Somehow an example of the shelter shows different social traces of government ideology and mass-media influence.

1 - *Blind spot*,
acrylic spray on c-print, 42 x 59,4 cm each
pen on paper, 21 x 29,7 cm each
2014 - 2015
Courtesy Mykola Ridnyi et Nova gallery, Krakow

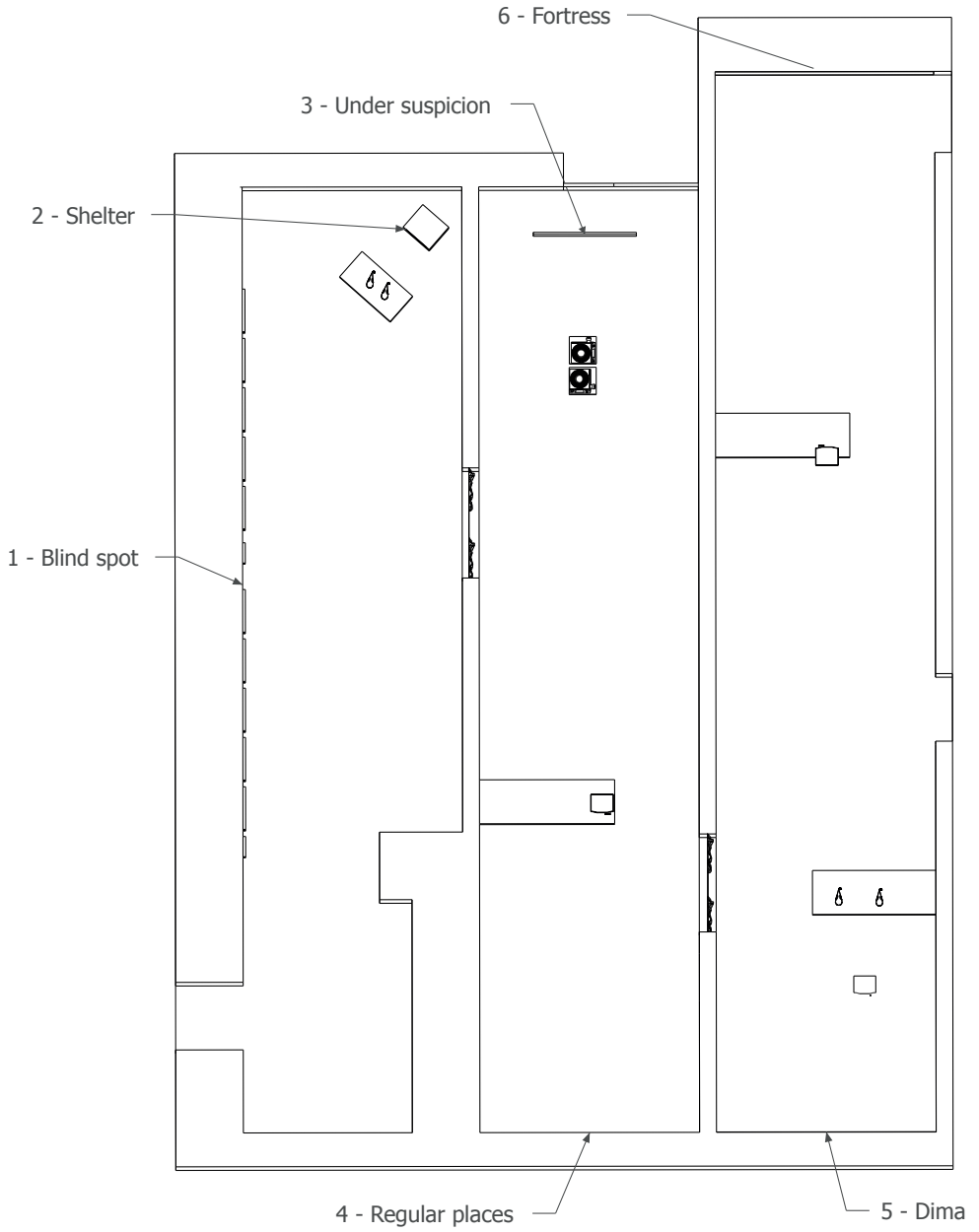
2 - *Shelter*,
Video SD, 6:13 min,
2012
Courtesy Mykola Ridnyi

3 - *Under suspicion*,
Projection of 33 slides
2015
Courtesy Mykola Ridnyi et Edel Assanti, Londres

4 - *Regular places*,
Video HD, 15:23 min,
2014 - 2015
Courtesy Mykola Ridnyi

5 - *Dima*,
Video SD, 07:57 min,
2013
Courtesy Mykola Ridnyi

6 - *Fortress*,
Video HD, 16:17 min,
2013 - 2014
Courtesy Mykola Ridnyi



3 - *Under suspicion*

Under Suspicion presents a series of photographic slides of everyday public scenes. Manually rendered pen markings highlight potentially suspicious objects or behaviours.

The work manifests the impact of government initiatives instructing citizens on how to recognize suspicious targets, whilst simultaneously drawing attention to the resulting shift in the optics of public perception of reality. Previously non-descript articles become signifiers, as the intangible presence of the invisible enemy is imported into peaceful life. Although indicative of the current climate, the project was initiated in 2011 to articulate the paranoiac state response to the series of social protests in Ukraine. State surveillance and control mechanisms heightened in a bid to amass a vast archive, capable of being used for prosecution of those individuals implicated.

Ridnyi interprets this hidden police archive as the quintessence of paranoid state control; its secrecy provoked the creation of his fictitious archive, where almost any individual documented in certain circumstances becomes the subject of suspicion, and patterns are defined where they previously did not exist.

4 - *Regular places*

Five places in the center of Kharkiv shows a big city which was on the verge of war on the East of Ukraine. We see people going to work, walking with children or riding a bicycle. Without knowledge of the context, it's almost impossible to imagine fights with smoke bombs and baseball bats, public punishment and humiliation that took place here between the activists of the Maidan and Antimaydan just a few months ago.

With a try to save comfort around themselves, people now are trying to erase the memory of the recent confrontation and being dissociated from the conflict that is still ongoing in the neighbor regions. But the evidence in the documentary videos on YouTube or transmitted in spoken private stories will express a phantom pain which raises questions about the fragility of society under influence of affects. Norms and rules of everyday life are questioned after appearance of a logic of violence and right of a force. Echo of violence existed in a memory of the place, remind of the conventions of civil norms, when citizens refuse to compromise, immersed in the search for enemies among their own kind.

5 - *Dima*

Dima is a record of the artist's interview with the eponymous Dima, an ex-policeman who abandoned the police service and works as a stonemason. Dima is an idealist – his service in the police was motivated by his willingness to fight evil. Yet, this experience left him disappointed with the lawlessness and corruption that he witnessed. During the conversation, he talks about the deficiencies of the system and the mechanisms that can easily turn a victim into a suspect, while they can also turn officers of the authorities into people whose aim is not to administer justice but to add an extra 20 hryvnias to their meagre salaries. Dima believes that only a civic protest can counter the decay of the system. This goal cannot be achieved through the law, which has long been dysfunctional.

Ridnyi's work was created just before the beginning of the Maidan protests. The video shows that the sense of the imminence of those events was common among the citizens of Ukraine – and corresponded to the conviction that authorities that disregard the needs of the people, and deprive them of their basic rights and dignity, need to be removed. However, as Dima summarises, the system won't change by itself. People need to take to the streets and change it.

6 - *Fortress*

The video based on documentary materials filmed during events of Maidan in Kiev in December 2013 - February 2014. Author's voice over comments the episodes with quotation of texts on the history of the Middle Ages (including works by Georges Duby, Ewart Oakeshott, Henry Suso and others). Thematic associations caused parallels between the development of contemporary neoliberalism in post-Soviet countries with a system of feudal monarchy in Europe, and the aesthetics and ethics of contemporary political protest with a struggle of medieval free cities against the rustless barons.

Association Manifestement Peint Vite

www.mpvite.org

L'île d'en face

www.liledenface.org

Opening hours

Free entry

Open Wednesday to Sunday, 2p.m - 7 p.m.

Out of hours visits by request

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L'île d'en face team thank the artist, Mykola Rindyj for this collaboration, MPVite association, Blockhaus DY10, -HAUS, les Abattoirs - Frac Midi-Pyrénées and Edel Assanti gallery.