

SEE:UA – connecting landscapes

We have reached the middle of our summer. Since July 26, we have been working in Seestadt, seeking ways to connect Seestadt with the elusive landscape of Mohrytsia in northeastern Ukraine. We are Natalia Matsenko, Yuri Yefanov, and Clemens Poole, a group of artists and curators with roots in Ukraine, collaborating with the Vienna-based team that has formed around the Notgalerie and the artist and curator Reinhold Zisser. Together, we have been exploring the landscape of Seestadt daily for the past two weeks, examining its significance and potential.

We are sharing this process on-site with the public: residents of Seestadt, culture enthusiasts who travel to us via the U2 over the Danube, as well as a community of young artists from Ukraine who are now based in Vienna.

Our intangible starting point for every work, given the current reality of the war in Ukraine, is the place Mohrytsia located five kilometres from the northeastern border of the country. For 25 years, it was the home of the Land Art Symposium, named after the place, and a meeting point for a community of Ukrainian artists who gathered there each year to develop new projects within and connected to the landscape and nature of the area. After the full-scale invasion, this place became inaccessible to the artists due to the constant shelling and air raids.

Now, we are working in the safety of Vienna, presenting new works every day. The project began with a ceremonial performance: a two-meter-tall egg, a concept by Lucy Ivanova and Yehor Antsyhin, was collectively built as a sculpture and rolled through Seestadt—an ancient ritual of Egg cleansing which was spread also in Ukraine. In this performance, the symbolic egg that gathered negative energies and served as a gesture of arrival in Seestadt.

For the opening, the artist Yehor Antsyhin also created the "Sketch of a Kurgan from Ukrainian Steppe", a 30-meter flat circle of earth in the middle of Seestadt's vacant lot, where he sowed seeds symbolizing the potential of a Ukrainian steppe landscape which is now under threat of extinction.

Yuri Yefanov led an interactive workshop "Sounds of Seestadt, specifically Humans" in the middle of the construction site. The first time it was conducted in Ukraine at the land art symposium Mohrytsia in 2021. Through collective practice, the work aims to expose the relationship between culture and nature. During the workshop, international participants experienced how human communication can find its way without fixed language conventions. Since communication is based on new verbal and non-verbal constructions that emerge during the collective process, a temporary society is created with its unique, newly established common language, which dissolves immediately after the happening ends.

Katya Buchatska, who travelled for her work from Kyiv to Vienna, created an intervention at the construction site, a landscape in the north of Seestadt. She arrived in Vienna with a snapshot—a photo of a bomb crater in the Mohrytsia landscape. The photo was taken a few months earlier by one of the remaining residents in Mohrytsia. In Seestadt, Katya Buchatska found a counterpart for

this landscape on a construction site, where an entire street had been broken into similarly sized, roughly 130x80 cm concrete blocks by construction machinery, which were stacked wildly upon and beside each other. She selected an area from among the thousands of blocks and mounted the photo of the bomb crater, divided into thirty elements, onto these concrete parts. The viewer stands before this impressive puzzle; the complete image only comes together in the clean setup of our exhibition space (the LLLLLL artist-run space, part of the project series) in Seestadt. The artist describes her work as an attempt to translate the unspeakable impressions of war. This remains elusive but carries in its form as an intangible image a core of what those who are confronted daily with the war experience.

These works are accompanied by pieces from Vienna-based artists who, through the concept of "Solidarity Sculpture," seek discourse and exchange with their Ukrainian colleagues and the landscape of Seestadt.

Organizer and artist Reinhold Zisser began this series with an audio installation that taps into online data about active air raid alarms in Ukraine. Every time there is an air raid alarm in the Mohrytsia region, the Donauwalzer is played over loudspeakers in Seestadt. The harmonious rhythm of the Donauwalzer is disrupted by a built-in delay and an overlay that intensifies the longer the air raid alarm lasts.

The "Festival Period" of SEE:UA – connecting landscapes continues until August 24. For the final two weeks, the founder of the Land Art Symposium, Anna Gidora, will travel to Vienna and Seestadt to create a central Land Art piece for the project, supported by the construction companies and machinery operating in Seestadt.

We warmly invite everyone to join us in experiencing this project over the next two weeks. In addition to the main events, there are almost daily activities, ranging from film screenings of past Land Art projects to karaoke nights at our Info-Bar SYMPOSIUM, located directly in front of the U2 Seestadt station by the lake.

All events and further information can be found on the website www.notgalerie.at/see-ua

After the main event on August 24, the works created this summer will remain in Seestadt until the end of October and will be presented during guided tours.

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