

Russian Kiss

In Situ Installation
by Ukrainian Artist,
Vasyl Grubliak

Atelier 11 in Solidarity with Ukraine

A safe haven to a multicultural artists' community during the war-torn 20th century, Atelier 11 Cité Falguière remains committed to promoting peace and international solidarity through cross-cultural artistic dialogue and exchange.

Having provided refuge and gathering place for creatives affected by the recent war in Ukraine, Atelier 11 continues this tradition by welcoming an exiled Ukrainian artist, Vasyl Grubliak. Born in 1984 in Kyiv, Vasyl Grubliak graduated from the National Academy of Fine Arts and Architecture. His preferred material and endless source of inspiration is light. As part of the residency, he will be creating a site-specific installation to shed light, literally and figuratively, on the war atrocities in his home country.

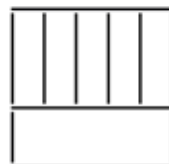
Organized in partnership with Artists at Risk, Vasyl Grubliak will be in residency with L'AIR Arts at Atelier 11 in February and March, 2023. We look forward to welcoming you to the opening of his new show Baiser russe on Friday, February, 24th.



24.02–04.03.2023

Atelier 11 Cité Falguière,
75015 Paris, France





"I want to reveal the power of light, to use it as a universal way of communication between living beings."

Ukrainian artist Vasyly Grubliak is known for his "objects of light" and his installations that incorporate deeply personal themes with social commentary. The project *Baiser russe* or "Russian Kiss" demonstrates his ongoing artistic practice of creating multi-layered themes that include different media.

Russian military aggression was the catalyst for this project: Since the 24th of February 2022, towns and villages across Ukraine have been bombarded by daily attacks. Rockets and missiles have targeted residential buildings and national infrastructure; their fragments mutilate, cut faces, crush bones, and tear off body parts. In Ukraine, the fragments of rockets have become such a familiar sight that these objects became artistic materials, despite Grubliak having never seen them before.

The shards from two S-300 missiles were brought by a soldier of the Armed Forces of Ukraine from the island of Khortytsya. In the 16th-18th centuries, at this very place, was located Zaporizhzhya Sich—the military camp of Ukrainian Cossacks, well known symbol of the indestructible spirit of the Ukrainian people. The shards were collected in two stages. After investigation of the blast site, the first part was collected from the crater. It was packed and waiting to be sent by mail when the second missile hit the base where Ukrainian forces were located. Fortunately, there were no fatalities, but the package containing the shards was lacerated in the blast. This added new histories and meaning to the objects as the project was being developed.



Grubliak found the shards to be very light, even beautiful in their way. Made from an alloy of aluminum, copper, titanium and iron, they exhibit the artist's preference for "mixed media" very literally.

The installation is created through a long and technical process. Each shard is manually suspended from an almost invisible thread to create the impression of the objects hanging in the air—ready to complete their fatal mission. Exhibited in Paris, a city that symbolizes art de vivre, and artistic freedom, these rocket fragments once held the potential to kill, yet they remain forever suspended, as a reminder of their initial purpose: deadly weapons of war, sent to kill as many Ukrainians as possible.

Vitaly, most of the debris collected from the missiles in this artwork is now part of the evidence that is assembled in the ongoing investigations into crimes committed by the Russian Army during the war in Ukraine. This adds another dimension to the poignancy of the work; the installation itself has become evidence, exposing the impact of the war crimes.

Presented as a solidarity initiative, the collected proceeds will support the relief efforts and the fight for independence of Ukraine, contributing to humanitarian help and the investigation of war crimes through the Clooney Foundation for Justice, as well as future residencies for arts workers at risk/in exile at Atelier 11 in Paris.

The first impression of Grubliak's work can be purely aesthetic: an immersive, kinetic sculpture that reminds us of the visual and physical realities of an ongoing war. But the work goes beyond this conceptually; it immerses the viewer in a reality created just for the viewing. The viewer discovers what it might be like at the center of an explosion, surrounded by murderous pieces. It is in the disruption of the first impression of the art object with the conceptual essence of the installation that gives the viewer the sense of immersion, involvement, or even complicity.

The Baiser russe remains incomplete and will continue to evolve as long as Russian missiles are fired at Ukraine. It will continue to grow, mirroring the ever increasing toll of victims. Still, this exhibit can never encompass the grief the Ukrainian people continue to suffer as a result of this war.

Text: Svitlana Starostenko





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Open hours & events:

24 February, 6-9 pm, Vernissage featuring
Solidarity Borscht

25 February, 4-7 pm, Open Studio with the artist
and curator

1 March, 4-7:30 pm, from 18h30 featuring
a talk: Waging Justice in Ukraine with the
Clooney Foundation for Justice

2 March, 4-7 pm, Open Studio with the artist

3 March, 4-7 pm, Open Studio with the artist

4 March, 4-7 pm, Closing event featuring
a multimedia presentation: Art, War & the
Community of Montparnasse



Waging Justice in Ukraine with the Clooney Foundation for Justice

1 March, 6:30-7:30 pm

The installation *Baiser russe* by Vasyl Grubliak shows the realities of the war and reinforces the pertinence of ongoing investigations into war crimes committed in Ukraine. We have invited Anya Neistat, Legal Director of The Docket initiative at the Clooney Foundation for Justice, who has worked in Ukraine to collect evidence of war crimes. In this talk, Anya Neistat will focus on the scale of these crimes, the need for accountability and the importance of keeping the focus on the war in Ukraine as the world's attention moves elsewhere.

Art, War & the Community of Montparnasse

4 March, 4:30-6 pm

Vasyl's Grubliak's poignant installation "*Baiser Russe*" constitutes the most recent chapter in Atelier 11's history of shielding artists from war and geopolitical crisis. In the closing days of the exhibition, the artist is joined by art historian and educator Dr. Stephanie Nadalo, and writer and veteran Matt Jones, for a multimedia presentation that combines historical analysis, a poetic performance, a panel discussion, and a chance to engage directly with the artists.