

Press Release

## CAN ART HELP FIGHT A WAR?

**Shepard Fairey, local artists and curator Iryna Kanishcheva stand for Ukraine with a powerful action and fundraising in Gainesville, Florida.**

**The power of public art in connecting people, raising awareness and positive social change is illustrated by a documentary launched now.**

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”*

*Margaret Mead*



**Gainesville, Florida- Iryna Kanishcheva** (native from Lviv, Ukraine, public art curator and producer), **The Florida-based public art platform, [Monochronicle](#), with the support of [Shepard Fairey](#), organized a mural project to fundraise for Ukraine. The design [Make Art Not War](#) was executed by a team of local artists, [Visionary Fam](#). Raised money was sent to Ukrainians directly, without any big charities involved.**

### THE BACKGROUND

The war in Ukraine started in 2014 following the Ukrainian Revolution of Dignity. The first eight years of the conflict included the annexation of Crimea, cyber attacks, political tension, and the war in Donbas... But it wasn't covered by the media all the time. That's

why a public art project [Art United Us](#) was launched in 2016-2017 to remind people that the war is still going on. About 50 big-scale murals, among them a mural in Avdiivka, a hot spot in the East of Ukraine were created. See selected artworks in [Street Art News archive](#). Many artists painted in that dangerous area in the next several years.

## THE IDEA

Famous artists can make a huge impact. Following the successful story of attracting media attention to Ukraine through public art, Iryna Kanishcheva decided to create another mural as soon as Russia's assault with a series of missile attacks began on February 24, 2022.

Shepard Fairey, well known for his involvement in social issues, was going to come to Gainesville, in 2020. He had some political ideas for a mural but it never happened because of the Covid. When asked to paint a mural for Ukraine, they replied that they couldn't but were [releasing the Make Art Not War design for free](#), for non-commercial purposes to support Ukraine. As anybody with the design and a wall could act, the Can Art Help Fight a War team chose one in the most visible location of the town.

The mural was painted by local artists, Visionary Fam, with the following unveiling event. The whole project took several months to complete. Some property owners didn't want to provide space for a mural or support the project financially as it was not benefiting their business. The city of Gainesville's process does not allocate any money for such a project and any requests must go through a committee and city commissioners. The wall for the mural was provided by Scott Shillington of [The Top](#) who has been supporting public art in the community for a long time. The mural is located at 20 N Main St, Gainesville, FL 32601 by the Woolly event hall.

## THE ACTION

Apart from this mural intervention, Iryna offered visitors free Borscht (typical soup) and Ukrainian vodka to introduce people to Ukrainian culture. People discussed the situation in Ukraine and were very supportive. As a result, money was raised and immediately sent to some individuals in Ukraine. That helped them get some military supplies and contribute to building repairs.

## PEOPLE FOR THE PEOPLE

Because of this initiative, \$3,000 were collected. This money was sent to some individuals directly just to provide some immediate support, instead of choosing big charities. The idea was to show how people can contribute directly by sending small amounts of money, and also show Ukrainians that here, on the other side of the world, people care.

Direct action for direct effect on Ukrainians life.

For example:

- Some individuals could rebuild their home
- An activist like Vadim Bulik (volunteering since 2014 by evacuating people and delivering medicines and military supplies to the most dangerous areas, also

helping to evacuate abandoned animals from the war zone) could buy helmets and other equipment to protect the fighters

- Marina, a volunteer at the humanitarian aid hub in Lviv could buy shoes and clothes for the soldiers on the frontline, as there is shortage of such, and help better people coming every day (around 600 refugees)
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***“One person at the event said, “This mural is not going to help”. And I agreed. Sure. But it’s a great tool for connecting people and raising awareness. Public art can deliver a message, save a moment in history, remind people what’s important and, if used wisely, influence and motivate.***

***Even in a small town like Gainesville, Florida, a small group of people was able to collect some funds and help to buy a helmet, shoes for the frontline soldiers and also contribute to fixing the damaged roof of an apartment complex. Maybe it is just one insignificant action, but there are many of us and we are powerful together.”***

***Iryna Kanishcheva***

## **A CALL FOR ACTION**

Iryna Kanishcheva and all the team of Can Art Help Fight A War deeply hope that the initiative can be followed in other places around the world through forums and panel discussions, various media and designs, and public art programs. Highlight the problem of war and misinformation through propaganda, encourage people to stand against violation of human rights and freedom.

As an example, Iryna Kanishcheva introduced Can Art Help Fight A War project at The Concert of Colors Forum on Community, Culture & Race in Detroit, MI. It is one of the Arab American National Museum’s signature annual events, a dynamic gathering of artists, activists and advocates who use art and dialogue as a tool for advocacy and community building. This year’s program featured [NO WAR ANYWHERE | How Artists Are Advocating for Peace](#) panel.



As the war is not likely to end soon, all the people involved in this project wish to see this powerful image inspiring people all over the world. Let's make it happen...

### **VIDEO *Can Art Help Fight a War?***

[Full](#)

[Teaser 1](#), [Teaser 2](#)

Monochronicle, 2022

Produced and edited by Charles Alan Rye

Music: DakhaBrakha – Khima (Ukraine)

Vadim Bulik - The War and We Will Win (Ukraine)

**PICTURES** by Charles Alan Rye: [LINK](#)

To learn more about the project, visit <https://monochronicle.com/ukraine/>

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***WE DO BELIEVE THAT ART CAN CHANGE THE WORLD***

## Social Media Message and Tags

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For more information how to support Ukrainians, visit <https://monochronicle.com/ukraine/>

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TAGS

***Irina Kanishcheva @Irina\_Kanishcheva  
Monochronicle @Monochronicle\_network  
Shepard Fairey @obeygiant  
Visionary Farm @Visionary\_Farm  
Audrey Garcia @audreyghgarcia  
Charles Alan Rye @charlaise  
Vadim Bulik @bulikkyiv  
Hector Puig @hectorframing  
Marina Portus @globalviv***

***#CanArtHelpFightAWar #ShepardFairey #obeygiant #Ukraine #stopwarinukraine  
#stopputin #standwithukraine #makeartnotwar #Florida #publicart  
#artinpublicplaces #modernart #contemporaryart #muralism #callforaction  
#IrinaKanishcheva #Monochronicle\_network #VisionaryFarm  
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