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***Constructing Hope: Ukraine* Opens this Spring at the Center
for Architecture
May 2–September 3, 2024**

This exhibition presents the work of over a dozen participants applying architectural thinking to support Ukraine’s reconstruction efforts.

March 7, 2024, New York, NY – The Center for Architecture is excited to present *Constructing Hope: Ukraine*, opening Thursday, May 2, 2024 at 6:00pm. In the face of Russia’s unprovoked, full-scale invasion of Ukraine—a war that has destroyed and existentially threatened Ukrainians’ lives, ecology, culture, and infrastructure—these multidisciplinary creatives regain agency over their environment by employing architectural strategies and practices as a form of resistance. Curated by Ashley Bigham, Betty Roytburd, and Sasha Topolnytska, *Constructing Hope: Ukraine* displays the power of collaboration, horizontal organizing, and knowledge exchange, illuminating architecture’s critical role in building a collective resistance that can generate hope for imperiled communities in Ukraine and beyond.



The first exhibition of this work in the United States, *Constructing Hope: Ukraine* focuses on decentralized reconstruction efforts, presenting the work and ideas of grassroots short- and long-term reconstruction initiatives happening inside and outside of Ukraine. The exhibition brings together a wide range of projects—from modular furniture designs and housing for internally displaced individuals to detailed documentation of destroyed buildings and spatial memories—to illustrate how architecture can foster mutual aid and facilitate crucial support networks for entire communities. This exhibition presents these resourceful initiatives to demonstrate how, even during wartime destruction, these actions provide the hope necessary to move forward.

“Healing from devastation requires justice, inclusivity, and environmental restoration,” says curator **Betty Roytburd**. “*Constructing Hope: Ukraine* showcases collaborative efforts, horizontal organization, and knowledge exchange, revealing architecture's vital role in reconstruction and the fostering of communal resilience. The exhibition stands as a testament to the power of action and collective resolve in shaping a sustainable future for Ukraine and beyond.”

“As we showcase this moving display of humanity and fortitude, our commitment to inviting more communities into our space takes on a heightened significance,” says **Jesse Lazar**, Assoc. AIA, Executive Director, AIANY and the Center for Architecture. “By centering Ukrainian voices, we are able to shift our focus to inspiration and community, paving the way for meaningful dialogue and action.”

“As we mark the two-year anniversary of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, it is essential to understand and learn from the ways architectural methodologies, construction practices, and design skills are used as collective resistance in Ukraine,” says curator **Ashley Bigham**. “The work of the exhibited designers has inspired us to discover new disciplinary patterns, structures, and relationships that expand our thinking on architecture agency.”

“The resilience, imagination, and inventiveness of the participants in the exhibition shows how architectural skills can serve as a tool to focus outrage and grief into effective action. And what Ukrainian people need right now is action to give them hope for the future,” says curator **Sasha Topolnytska**. “As a facilitator of discussions on complex issues and advocate of marginalized communities through the language of design, the Center for Architecture is an ideal partner for the exhibition.”



Using artifacts and other methods of architectural storytelling to imagine a hopeful future, the exhibition will include drawings, photographs, videos, furniture, and models. The double-height space of the Center for Architecture will feature a suspended full-scale prototype of a bed designed by the Ukrainian NGO [MetaLab](#), which provides temporary emergency accommodation for internally displaced people in Western Ukraine. As part of their *Co-Haty* initiative, the team has designed a ready-to-assemble, modular bed that they explain as exemplifying their commitment to thoughtful design, sustainability, and adaptability to diverse living situations. The ground-floor gallery will showcase models by the artist collective [Prykarpattian Theater](#), representing the physical embodiment of people's destroyed homes and beloved places created together with refugees through photographs and verbal testimonies.

Ukrainian graphic designer [Aliona Solomadina](#) created a visual identity for the exhibition inspired by taped windows that are typical throughout Ukrainian cities and towns during the ongoing war. Ukrainian people often tape their windows in intricate, crisscross patterns to protect their homes from shattering glass during explosions. This practical solution has become a visible symbol of resistance.

The exhibition will be on view through September 3, 2024.

Exhibition Opening

Please join us May 2, 6–8pm, Center for Architecture, 536 LaGuardia Place, New York, NY for an [opening reception](#). From 5–6pm, members of the press are invited to a VIP tour with the curators (RSVP to lkim@aiany.org).

Featured in the Exhibition

BRDA Foundation

BRDA Foundation is a non-profit organization that organizes social and humanitarian aid. They work with private entities as well as other non-profit organizations and local governments. BRDA is part of Project Okno (Polish for 'window') which collects reclaimed and new windows from across Poland and works with non-profit organizations in Ukraine to distribute the windows to where they are most needed.

Center for Spatial Technologies

The Center for Spatial Technologies (CST) is a transdisciplinary group based in Kyiv, Ukraine and Berlin, Germany, working at the intersection of architectural, investigative, anthropological, and artistic practices. With the escalation of the war between Russia and Ukraine, CST focuses on the theme of war crimes and human rights violations. The Center collaborates with artistic and research institutions, grassroots initiatives, and human rights and forensic organizations.

Drozdov&Partners

Drozdov&Partners is an international studio for architecture and urbanism founded in Kharkiv, Ukraine, in 1997 by Oleg Drozdov. The initial projects of the office emerged as a result of the first wave of private investment in Ukraine after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Due to a radical rupture of relations in the professional discourse, the office had to draft a new agenda for their work. The office's primary focus is openness and a search for new relationships between urban space, architecture, and nature.

Kharkiv School of Architecture

Kharkiv School of Architecture (KhSA) is the first private university in Ukraine to offer undergraduate (BA) and graduate (MA) degrees in architecture and urbanism. Founded in 2017 to respond to the social transformations and the need to reinvent Ukrainian cities and to reform national higher education, the School has set the goal to equip its students with globally-informed and locally-relevant knowledge to improve the quality of urban life. When Russia declared war against Ukraine, the faculty and students of the Kharkiv School of Architecture (KhSA) were forced to flee Kharkiv and move to the city of Lviv, where they are currently operating.

Livyj Bereh

The Livyj Bereh (“Left Bank” in Ukrainian) volunteer organization emerged in response to the onset of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, its name echoing the left bank of the Dnipro River. Initially focused on providing mutual aid to civilians in Kyiv, the group swiftly broadened its efforts as the push for liberation gained momentum in the spring of 2022. Their expanded initiatives encompass supplying defense units with essential resources and rebuilding structures destroyed by war.

MetaLab

MetaLab is an urban laboratory based in Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine. It includes a community united by an interest in urban living, and a desire to learn and improve the urban environment, as well as a platform for communication, urban research, and

events. After the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine MetaLab primarily focuses on war-related projects.

Natalia Mysak

Natalia Mysak is an architect, researcher and holds PhD in History and Theory of Architecture. She is currently collaborating with the Swiss Network with Ukraine and develops the Spatial Practices Lab, focusing on alternative approaches to architectural production that could foster emerging new urban commons in the context of crisis. She is primarily based in Lviv, Ukraine.

Oleksandr Burlaka

Oleksandr Burlaka works in the field of spatial design. His artistic practice includes photography, research, and installation. He lives and works in Kyiv, Ukraine. He examines history, architecture, urban planning and its transformation in Ukraine.

Prykarpattian Theater

Prykarpattian Theater is an artist collective whose members share common relations to Kolomyia, a town located in the Prykarpattian region of Ivano-Frankivsk region in western Ukraine. Their work reflects the imprints left by the four occupations of the region throughout the history, and sets them in a translocal dialogue.

Repair Together

Repair Together is a Ukrainian organization that since 2022 has been engaging volunteers from around the world to rebuild villages and homes affected by the Russian invasion. The organization's most famous initiative is *Rave Toloka* (clean-ups), during which volunteers clean up rubble caused by Russian aggression to the music of the DJ sets. The title of this project is based on the ancient Ukrainian tradition of mutual assistance called 'toloka,' where people gathered in villages to perform urgent work that required many people.

Understructures

Understructures is a collective assembled in Ukraine in 2020 that functions as a temporary support structure and a platform for artists, activists, volunteers, and people in need. At the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, Understructures together with LC Queisser Gallery published *Oberih*, a book that documents people's experience of the ongoing war through their relationship with the objects that they have chosen as their amulets of protection.



Supported by

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About the Center for Architecture

The Center for Architecture is the premier cultural venue for architecture and the built environment in New York City, informed by the complexity of the City's urban fabric and in dialogue with the global community. The Center shares a home with the AIA New York Chapter and has the unique advantage of drawing upon the ideas and experiences of practicing architects to produce thought-provoking exhibitions, informative public programs, and quality design education experiences for K-12 students. It also leads New York City's annual monthlong architecture and design festival, Archtober. The Center for Architecture's aim is to further public knowledge about New York City architecture and architects, foster exchange and collaboration among members of the design, development, building, scholarly, and policy sectors, and inspire new ideas about the role of design in communities by presenting contemporary and practical issues in architecture and urbanism to a general audience. centerforarchitecture.org