

# Freedom Taking Place

War, Women, and Culture  
at the Intersection of  
Ukraine, Poland, and Belarus

Edited with an Introduction by

**Jessica Zychowicz**

Series in Sociology



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This book is dedicated to  
forging peace in Ukraine  
the 2020-2021 demonstrations in Belarus and Poland  
and all who defend democracy



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## Author Biographies



**Dr. Svitlana Biedarieva** is an art historian, artist, and curator with an interest in Eastern European and Latin American art. She has taught art history and global history at the Universidad de las Américas Puebla, the Universidad Iberoamericana, the Universidad de Anáhuac Norte, and the Courtauld Institute of Art. Biedarieva is a member of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies and the Society of Historians of Eastern European, Eurasian, and Russian Art. In 2019-2020, she has curated the exhibition *At the Front Line: Ukrainian Art, 2013-2019* in Mexico City and Winnipeg, Canada. Her edited books include *Contemporary Ukrainian and Baltic Art: Political and Social Perspectives, 1991-2021* (Stuttgart: ibidem Press, 2021) and *At the Front Line: Ukrainian Art, 2013-2019* (Mexico City: Editorial 17, 2020, co-edited with Hanna Deikun). Biedarieva's papers have been published by, among other outlets, *October* (MIT Press), *Art Margins Online* (MIT Press), *Space and Culture* (SAGE), *post at MoMA*, and *Revue Critique d'Art* (University of Rennes 2). In 2022, Biedarieva was selected as the CEC ArtsLink International Fellow" to "In 2022/23, Biedarieva was selected as the George F. Kennan Fellow at the Kennan Institute, Wilson Center, and the Non-Resident Visiting Fellow at the George Washington University for her research, the CEC ArtsLink International Fellow for her curatorial work, and the Prince Claus Seed Award Laureate for her artistic work.



**Oksana Briukhovetska** – born, lived and has worked predominantly in Kyiv, Ukraine. She graduated from National Academy of Visual Arts and Architecture in Kyiv in 2003. She worked as an artist, curator, graphic designer, participated in exhibitions in Ukraine and abroad, and published articles about art as well as short prose. From 2009 to 2019, she worked as a curator at the Visual Culture Research Center (VCRC), Kyiv, where she curated exhibitions, public events and publishing projects. Some of the early exhibitions that she co-curated – *Ukrainian Body* (2012) and *Lockout* (2014) had a significant public resonance. From 2011 she became involved in feminism and from 2015-2017 has organized three international feminist exhibitions in VCRC: *Motherhood; What in me is Feminine?* and *TEXTUS: Embroidery, Textile, Feminism*, which aimed at strengthening the voices of women artists within the Ukrainian art scene and in international collaboration. In 2017-2019 she participated in research on feminist art in East Europe and France within the Tandem-Ukraine project and co-edited and published a collection of interviews, *The Right to Truth: Conversations on Art and Feminism*. (VCRC, 2019). In 2018 she was a co-curator of the *Warsaw Under Construction X* festival (collaboration of VCRC and Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw) where she curated the “I am Ukrainka” poster campaign about Ukrainian women migrant workers in Poland that was widely discussed in the media and in Ukrainian television. In 2020 she came to the United States, where she started to work on the book on race and racism interviewing people in the U.S. about Black Lives Matter protests. In 2021 she was a co-curator of the Ukrainian chapter of the Secondary Archive project, which represents women artists of East Europe. In 2021 she entered the MFA program at Stamps School of Art and Design at the University of Michigan.



**Dr. Joanna Dobkowska-Kubacka** holds a Ph.D. from the Faculty of Philosophy and History at the University of Łódź. From 2018-2019 she conducted research at the Facultad de Geografía e Historia, the University of Santiago de Compostela in Spain. The final thesis she wrote in Spanish was a comparative analysis of the situation of Spanish and Polish female artists in the second half of the nineteenth century. In 2019-2021 she held the position of Polish Doctoral Fellow at the Wirth Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies at the University of Alberta. She also holds an MA in art history from Warsaw University along with postgraduate studies in history. In her thesis, she analyzed the iconography of heretics in Latin Europe's art from the 9-16th centuries. Her research interests include women's studies, critical art studies, and the phenomenon of rebellion in the context of art and religion. Joanna works also as a journalist and editor, collaborating with many Polish magazines (including *Polityka. Salon*). She is also an author. She has published three books: two novels and one in popular science; the most recent (co-authored with Joanna Wasilewska) is entitled, *W cieniu koronkowej parasolki: O modzie i obyczajach w XIX wieku* (*In the shade of a lace umbrella. About fashion and customs in the nineteenth century*) and received an award at the Popular Science Book Fair 2017, organized by Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań (Poland).



**Dr. hab. Agnieszka Graff** is a feminist scholar as well as activist and media commentator living in Poland. An associate professor at the American Studies Center, University of Warsaw, she teaches courses in US culture, literature and film, African American studies, feminism and gender studies. Her articles on gender in Polish and US culture have appeared in collected volumes and academic journals, including *Public Culture*, *Feminist Studies*, *Signs*, and *East European Politics and Societies*. She has authored several books of feminist essays in Polish: *Świat bez kobiet* (*World without Women*, 2001, new edition 2021); *Rykoszetem* (*Stray Bullets – Gender, Sexuality and Nation*, 2008), *Magma* (*The Quagmire Effect*, 2010), *Matka Feministka* (*Mother and Feminist*, 2014). She writes for major journals and newspapers, including *Oko.press* and *Gazeta Wyborcza*. She has also authored introductions to Polish editions of feminist classics: Betty Friedan's *Feminine Mystique* (2012), Susan Faludi's *Backlash* (2013), and Audre Lorde's *Sister Outsider* (2015). Her most recent book is *Anti-gender Politics in the Populist Moment*, co-authored by Elżbieta Korolczuk (Routledge, 2021, open access).



**Kateryna Iakovlenko** is a Ukrainian visual culture researcher, writer, and curator focusing on art and culture during sociopolitical transformation and war. Among her publications is the book *Why There Are Great Women Artists in Ukrainian Art* (2019) and *Euphoria and Fatigue: Ukrainian Art and Society after 2014* (special issue of *Obiegmagazine*, coedited with Tatiana Kochubinska, 2019). Currently, she is Cultural Editor-in-Chief of *Suspilne.media* (Kyiv) and a visiting scholar at the UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies (2022–23).



**Dr. Małgorzata Jankowska** – art historian, lecturer and curator. Associate Professor at the Academy of Fine Arts Gdańsk (Department of History and Theory of Art). Associated with the Nicolaus Copernicus University (2002-2019). Her early research was based on the film experiments of Polish female and male artists (Artists' film. Sketches from the history of the visual film and photo-media movement in Poland 1957 – 1981). Main research interests focus on the issues of contemporary art in a broadly defined cultural context, with particular emphasis on new media art (bio art) and relationships between art, science and technology, especially the position of female artists in the field of new media art. She is a member of the Polish section of the International Association of Art Critics (AICA). From 2001-2016 she cooperated with Wozownia Art Gallery in Toruń, creating exhibitions and programs dedicated to, among others, performance and new media art. Organizer of interdisciplinary conferences: *Twilight of the Anthropocene* (2020, Academy of Fine Arts Gdańsk), and the conference *Bio-presence. Art in the Biotechnological World* (2021, Academy of Fine Arts Gdańsk). She has published numerous articles and essays in journals, such as: “Algorithmic revolution. Art, gender and machine” or “Bacteria in the service of art and art for the love of bacteria. About Anna Dumitru's oeuvre.”



**Dr. Magdalena Furmanik-Kowalska** – art critic and historian. Since 2021 she has been the research manager of Art & Modern Foundation (Fundacja Art & Modern). In 2014 she completed her PhD in the field of Art Studies at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun. The postgraduate course Gender Studies graduated at the University of Warsaw in 2009. From 2016 to 2020, the Associate Director of the Study Centre of the Polish Institute of World Art Studies. Member of the Polish section of International Association of Art Critics (AICA). Co-organizer of several international conferences on Asian art. Curator of many exhibitions of Polish contemporary art. Author of the book *Uwikłane w kulturę. O twórczości współczesnych artystek japońskich i chińskich* [Culture trouble: The Contemporary Art of Japanese and Chinese Women] and many articles on contemporary art. Co-editor of the publications *Costume – mirror of culture*, *The art of dress, dress in art*, and *What does (not) suit a man? Male clothes in art and culture*.



**Veranika Laputska** was most recently a research fellow at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. She is a Ph.D. Candidate at the Graduate School for Social Research, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the Polish Academy of Sciences and is a Co-Founder of the EAST Center. Her dissertation examines visual propaganda at national commemorations in modern Belarus. Laputska holds a Specialist Diploma in International Relations from Belarusian State University, an MA in European Studies from European Humanities University, an MA in East European Studies from Warsaw University, and an MA in Economy and Society from Lancaster University. Laputska was a recipient of the Rothschild Scholarship for the Naomi Prawer Kadar International Yiddish Summer Program at Tel Aviv University in 2019 and YIVO Full Scholarship for Uriel Weinreich Program in Yiddish Language, Literature and Culture in 2018. She holds a diploma in Gender Studies from Lund University (2009), and also completed an American Institute on Political and Economic Systems program at Georgetown / Charles Universities (2011). Laputska consults international and regional organizations and funds on media and democratization. In addition, she is working on two book projects about Belarus with Distinguished Professor David R. Marples at the University of Alberta, Canada; one on the politics of memory around sites of mass extermination in Belarus and another on the 2020 Belarusian protests. In 2022 she was a Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies Fellow at the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, working on the project “Maly Traścianiec and Other Forgotten Holocaust Sites in Belarus.” Her research interests include the study of nationalism and the politics of memory as well as media, visual, and Jewish studies.



**Dr. Maria Mayerchyk** has a double affiliation with the University of Greifswald (Alexander von Humboldt Fellow) and the Ethnology Institute of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (Senior Research Fellow). In the past, she was visiting professor at the University of Alberta (Canada) and visiting researcher at Harvard University (USA), Lund University (Sweden), and the University of South Florida (USA). Dr. Mayerchyk holds a Candidate of Sciences degree in History specializing in Ethnology. She teaches courses on queer, gender, feminism, diaspora, folklore and Ukrainian culture in Germany, Canada, and Ukraine. Maria authored/edited seven books in English and Ukrainian. Her current monograph, "Coloniality of the Indecent: Erotic Folklore in the Modern Design of Sexuality," is being translated into English. Her research interests include decolonial option, queer and feminist epistemologies, Eastern European studies, diaspora studies, and critical folklore studies.



**Dr. Olga Plakhotnik** is a researcher and Chair of Ukrainian Cultural Studies at the University of Greifswald. She is also a PI of the BMBF-funded project “(Un)Disciplined: Pluralizing Ukrainian Studies—Understanding the War in Ukraine”— a research network comprising scholars from the universities of Greifswald, Regensburg, and Giessen. Olga’s area of expertise includes feminist epistemologies and methodologies, feminist and queer pedagogies, contemporary feminist, LGBT+ and queer activism in Ukraine. She holds a Ph.D. in sociology from the Open University (UK) and a Candidate of Sciences degree in philosophy from the National Aerospace University in Kharkiv (Ukraine). **Drs. Plakhotnik and Mayerchyk** are editors-in-chief of the refereed journal *Feminist Critique: East European Journal of Feminist and Queer Studies* (<http://feminist.krytyka.com/en>). They co-authored a number of publications in feminist and queer studies. Their recent joint publications include chapters “‘Uneventful’ Feminist Protest in Post-Maidan Ukraine: Nation and Coloniality Revisited” (in *Postcolonial and Postsocialist Dialogues*, Routledge 2021) and “Pride Contested: Geopolitics of Liberation at the Buffer Periphery of Europe” (forthcoming in *lambda nordica*).



**Dr. Natallia Paulovich** holds a doctorate in Sociology from the Graduate School for Social Research of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, as well as an MA from the Belarusian State University in Minsk (Faculty of History). Her doctoral dissertation focused on the socio-cultural changes in Georgia after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and their connection to the transformation of female position in society under the new, neo(liberal) regime. Her current research interests focus on the gendered aspects of the Belarusian protests in 2020 and their aftermath. She is also researching feminist critiques of sports culture. Natallia's articles have appeared in: *Anthropology of the Contemporary Middle East and Central Eurasia*; *Journal of Caucasian Studies*, Special Issue: *Gender in the Caucasus and Diaspora* and *Slavic Review*. Dr. Paulovich is currently pursuing postdoctoral research and is also teaching yoga.



**Dr. Iryna Shuvalova** is a Postdoctoral Fellow at University of Oslo, Norway. She holds a PhD in Slavonic Studies from the University of Cambridge, where she was a Gates Cambridge scholar, and an MA in Comparative Literature from Dartmouth College, where she was a Fulbright scholar. Her most recent publications in *REGION: Regional Studies of Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia* (2021) and in *East/West: Journal of Ukrainian Studies* (2022) explore the construction of identity narratives during the Russo-Ukrainian war through the prism of popular songs, while her 2021 essay “The Mova I Live In” featured in the *Los Angeles Review of Books* examined multilingualism in Ukrainian society. Her forthcoming book is entitled “*Donbas Is My Sparta*”: *Identity and Belonging in the Songs of the Russo-Ukrainian War*. Shuvalova is also an award-winning poet and translator. Her most recent and fifth book of poetry *Stoneorchardwoods* (“*Kamin'sadlis*”) has been named book of the year by Ukraine’s Litakcent Prize for Literature and received the Special Prize of the Lviv UNESCO City of Literature Book Award. In 2009, she co-edited *120 Pages of “Sodom,”* the first anthology of queer writing in Ukraine. Her research interests lie at the intersection of politics and culture in Eastern Europe and Eurasia, particularly as viewed through the prism of conflict and dissent.



**Antonina Stebur** is a curator, art historian, art critic. She holds an MA in Visual and Cultural Studies from the European Humanities University and graduated from the School of Engaged Art “Chto Delat” (What is to be done?). She lectures on activist practices in contemporary arts at the Universität der Künste Berlin and the European College of Liberal Art (Minsk, Belarus). Antonina is a co-founder of the #damaudobnayavbytu (convenient woman in everyday life) project on gender discrimination in Belarus and other ex-Soviet countries, a co-founder Spaika.media, a research platform about activist political art and performance, co-initiator of The International Coalition of Cultural Workers Against the War in Ukraine ([www.antiwarcoalition.art](http://www.antiwarcoalition.art)). The authors of *The History of Belarusian Photography* book, co-author Hanna Samarskaya. She is a co-curator of the exhibitions *Every Day. Art. Solidarity. Resistance*, which is currently on view in Mistetsky Arsenal, (Kyiv, Ukraine), exhibitions on inclusion in art— *Names* (Brest, Minsk, Vitebsk, Belarus), *I was approaching the city that I hadn't known yet*, Dnipro (Ukraine), and others. Her research interests include feminism, post-Soviet studies, political art, performance studies, grassroots activism, access to public space, tactics of resistance and solidarity, creating social infrastructures.



**Dr. Nataliya Tchernalykh** is a visual and legal anthropologist. She is currently a postdoctoral teaching and research fellow at the Interdisciplinary Center for Children's Rights Studies at the University of Geneva. In 2019, she completed her doctoral degree in Anthropology and Sociology at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva (Switzerland). Her research interests encompass socio-legal studies, legal anthropology, visual anthropology and art. In 2014 she published *Paysages Instables. Des Artistes Ukrainiens entre Révolution et Guerre* [*Shifting Landscapes. Ukrainian Artists between Revolution and War*], published jointly by Editions de la Galerie Pangée (Montreal) and Rodovid (Kyiv).



**Dr. Jessica Zychowicz** is the Director of Fulbright Ukraine & IIE: Institute of International Education, Kyiv Office. She recently published her monograph, *Superfluous Women: Art, Feminism, and Revolution in Twenty-First Century Ukraine* (University of Toronto Press 2020). The book has been reviewed in multiple languages and countries; it won the American Association for Ukrainian Studies Book Prize; the Honorable Mention for the Omelijan Pritsak Prize for Ukrainian Studies from Harvard University; and the Honorable Mention for the Scaglione Prize in Slavic Studies at the Modern Languages Association (MLA)—the first ever to win this award for any book on Ukraine since the prize was established in 1992. The book will soon be published in Poland by the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw with Karakter Press; and in Ukraine on Krytyka Press. In 2017-2018 Dr. Zychowicz was a U.S. Fulbright Scholar to Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, where she taught courses in sociology and conducted archival research toward another monograph. She has authored numerous articles on revolution and women/gender studies. She has also been a Research Fellow at the University of Toronto Munk School of Global Affairs (2015-2016), a Visiting Scholar at Uppsala University's Institute for Russian and East European Studies in Sweden (Fall 2019), and a Visiting Scholar as the 2018-2021 Stasiuk Fellow of the University of Alberta in the Contemporary Ukraine Studies Program (CUSP). Dr. Zychowicz is a Board Member of the Association for Women in Slavic Studies (AWSS), an Advisory Board member of H-Net H-Ukraine, and is a founding co-editor of the Forum for Race and Postcolonialism at *Krytyka.com*. Over the past five years, she has been an invited keynote speaker at the Ireland Museum of Modern Art, and invited speaker at Cultural Foundation Schloss Wiepersdorf in Germany, University of St. Andrew's in

Edinburgh, Scotland, NYU's Center for European and Mediterranean Studies, University of Arkansas, and many others. She earned her doctorate at the University of Michigan and holds a degree in English literature from U.C. Berkeley. For more information: <https://www.jes-zychowicz.com/>.

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