

Comebacks and Reunions: Art Communities Of Non-Capital Cities During The Full-Scale War

Vinnytsia, Ukraine, 30-31.08.2024

EU4Culture Network Festival: City Stories, Diverse Voices in Vinnytsia brought together a vast tapestry of cultural activities and discussions focused on the theme *Comebacks and Reunions: Art Communities of Non-Capital Cities During the Full-Scale War* from 30 to 31 August 2024. The EU4Culture Festival was an opportunity for cultural professionals, curators, performers, journalists, and critics from across Ukraine and Europe to connect, collaborate, and explore strategies for comebacks and reunions for Ukraine's non-capital cities.

The festival's theme is inspired by the current challenges faced by Ukrainian culture, particularly in smaller cities, such as the loss of cultural actors and the shrinking of artistic communities. Prior to the full-scale invasion, non-capital cities already lacked sustainable cultural infrastructures and often had breakthroughs thanks to artistic local grassroots communities and informal initiatives. Although these cities offered shelter for displaced artists at the beginning of the full-scale invasion, they struggled to retain a significant portion of the creative professionals in the long term. Moreover, some of those cities – especially those closer to military zones – have lost a significant amount of local artistic communities and their key members, who moved abroad or to bigger cities. This festival aims to facilitate the discussion about the value of local artistic communities and be a place for their partial reunion.

Festival Highlights:

1. **Exhibition *Heating Season*:** Featuring artist Vasyl Dmytruk and curated by Kyryl Lipatov, this exhibition explores the theme of art communities, showcasing the SRZ-2 art community's journey in Odesa.
2. **Land Art Workshop:** A collaborative land art intervention led by Vinnytsia artist Oleksandr Nykytiuk.
3. **Performance *The Story of One Body*:** A dance performance by Viktoriia Khoroshylova from Odesa, this piece reflects the individual's journey to find their place in society.
4. **Musical Performance:** Featuring musician, artist, and poet *Ap2eks* from Rivne.
5. **Community Development Sessions:** Walk through Vinnytsia with NGO *Plai* and Oleksandra Vensalovska on how local bottom-up initiatives can transform the city through work with cultural infrastructure.
6. **Cultural Myths and Interdisciplinary Hubs:** Sessions on Odesa's local cultural myths and the potential of interdisciplinary hubs in Rivne as cultural development centers
7. **Mobility Matters:** A sharing session on the literature translation scene in Ukraine and Europe, featuring *Translatorium*.
8. **Film Screening:** A special selection from the “Місто мрії” (*A Dream City*) film festival from Rivne, focusing on themes of community, reunion, and reconnection.



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9. **Discussions** on shrinking artistic communities in non-capital cities, their return, and comeback solutions with cultural professionals from Odesa, Vinnytsia, and Rivne.

Additional information:

EU4Culture Network Festival: City Stories, Diverse Voices is organised under the [EU4Culture](#) four-year project funded by the European Union to support the culture and creative sector, with a special focus on non-capital cities and towns in the Eastern Partnership Countries. In Ukraine, Odesa, Vinnytsia, and Rivne were awarded grants for the creation and implementation of their Cultural Development Strategies. In each city the municipalities were working closely with local cultural and creative sector stakeholders to create an effective roadmap, the EU4Culture Festival was the celebration of cities' achievements. The project is implemented by Goethe-Institut (Lead), Czech Centers, Danish Cultural Institute, and Institut Français de Géorgie.

