

ICONS ON AMMUNITION BOXES

A conceptual project launched in 2014, the icons are painted on fragments from ammunition boxes from the war zones in Ukraine and serve as silent war witnesses as well as symbols of the victory of life over death.

You can watch a short video about the context in which the icons are created by scanning the QR code:



Responding to the icons

PRAY: Please continue to pray for all those caught up in the world's conflicts. You can light a candle, or leave a prayer on the prayer tree, or spend some time in church praying for peace.

REFLECT: The icons bring close to us the reality of war and its human impact. You may wish to write down your thoughts after viewing the icons and share them with us – there are postcards available for you to do this.

DONATE: Donations from this exhibition in Cambridge will help fund charitable and humanitarian aid for those in Ukraine most affected by the war, with a focus on supporting people associated with the University in Mariupol who have lost their homes.



You can donate in cash, by card, or by scanning the QR code above.

Icons are also for sale; the proceeds of icon sales are divided between the artists (30%) and the charitable causes that the project supports (70%).

**Please ask at the front desk if you are
interested in purchasing an icon.**

"ICONS ON AMMUNITION BOXES

is a project by Kyiv-based artists Sonya Atlantova, Oleksandr Klymenko and Herman Klymenko, dedicated to artistic reflections on the Ukrainian-Russian war. The project's central idea is to transform death—symbolized by an ammo box—into life, traditionally represented by icons in Ukrainian culture. The boxes used as canvases for the icons were sourced from the frontlines, making the painted fragments symbolic witnesses to the war in Ukraine. This project combines seemingly incompatible elements: the attributes of modern warfare and an ancient artistic language that dates back to the European Middle Ages. In doing so, it reevaluates the armed conflict against the backdrop of Ukrainian and European history over the last millennium. Importantly, the icon on the ammo box serves not only as a religious symbol but also as a cultural one. By transcending the boundaries of religious contexts, it becomes accessible to all, both in Ukraine and beyond, in Europe and America. The exhibition of icons painted on ammo boxes from the combat zone has been displayed in prominent venues, across Europe and beyond, covering 24 countries, 122 cities, and 228 locations.

MARIAN ICONS ON AMMUNITION BOXES

This series is dedicated to Ukrainian children held in Russian captivity.

Among the most vulnerable to the consequences of the war are mothers and children. A mother holding her child becomes a powerful symbol of innocent suffering and unending grief, embodying the struggles of those who wander, flee, and live in exile or captivity. This image serves as a compelling call for protection and a cry for help, marking the crucial distinction between good and evil: by saving and protecting children, we safeguard the light. The image of the Mother of God with her Child perfectly encapsulates the symbolic battle between good and evil, love and hatred, life and death.

It's essential that the portrayal of a woman with a baby transcends the typical ecclesiastical interpretation and even extends beyond the Christian tradition. The icon of the Theotokos is not just a sacred image; it represents an archetypal figure. Motherhood, a vital and foundational concept in society, transforms into an anti-war statement, becoming the antithesis of conflict and a symbol of hope. When depicted on an ammunition box, the image of the Mother and Child brings this hope to life, transforming what once symbolized death into the representation of life par excellence. Paradoxically, the image of the Mother with the Infant symbolizes not only the victory of life over death but also serves as a powerful image of liberation. Marian icons not only reflect the suffering of the innocent but also embody hope for future freedom from the confines of hell and the joy of being released from captivity—especially in the context of the hellish Russian captivity faced by Ukrainians.

Primarily dedicated to Ukrainian children held in Russian captivity, this exhibition of Marian icons highlights the widespread kidnapping perpetrated not by individuals or small groups, but by an entire nation. It also addresses the urgent issue of bringing these children home, as tens of thousands of young Ukrainian citizens remain held hostage. Now, more than ever, we need the collective efforts of all humanity—people with compassionate hearts—to help free these little hostages from Russian control. We must hold onto hope that Ukrainian children will one day return to their homeland.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

SONYA ATLANTOVA is an artist and writer born on December 14, 1981, in Kyiv. She studied at the Taras Shevchenko Art School and the National Academy of Fine Arts and Architecture. Sonya works in monumental and easel painting, book graphics, and installations, and has participated in numerous exhibitions both in Ukraine and internationally. Her prose has been included in the short and long lists of several literary awards, including the BBC Book of the Year. Sonya was awarded the third-degree Order of Merit for her work on the project "Icons on Ammo Boxes" and has been nominated twice for the Shevchenko National Prize.

OLEKSANDR KLYMENKO, born on July 5, 1976, in Kyiv, is an artist, art critic, and writer (under the pseudonym Olaf Clemensen). He is a member of the National Union of Artists of Ukraine. Oleksandr graduated from the National Academy of Fine Arts and Architecture in 1998 and completed postgraduate studies at the M. Rylsky Institute of Art History, Folklore, and Ethnology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in 2002. He has taught at the M. Boychuk Kyiv State Institute of Decorative and Applied Art and Design and at the Higher Humanitarian Theological Courses in Kyiv. He is the author of the introductory article for the "Jewellery Art of Ukraine" album (Kyiv, 2000), as well as several art history articles and the prose and poetry collections "LITO-ATO" (Kyiv, 2015) and "The Names That Remained" (Kyiv, 2023). Oleksandr works in easel and monumental painting and installation, has exhibited in Ukraine and abroad, and has organized various literary and artistic events and performances. He is the author of the idea and one of the curators of the "Icons on Ammo Boxes" project. Oleksandr Klymenko received the third-degree Order of Merit and holds three nominations for Ukraine's Shevchenko National Prize.

HERMAN KLYMENKO is an artist and musician. He was born on January 6, 2000 in Kyiv. Herman graduated from the State Art School named after T.G.Shevchenko, majoring in painting. He studied at the National Academy of Fine Arts and Architecture, where he received a bachelor's degree in painting and a master's degree in restoration of sculpture and works of decorative and applied art. Herman works in the field of painting, performance and decorative and applied art. He is a participant of exhibitions in Ukraine and abroad.

**Please ask at the front desk if you
are interested in purchasing an icon.**