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The influence of Bernhard Waldenfels' phenomenology on the disclosure of the theme of the Russian-Ukrainian war of 2022–2025 in contemporary Ukrainian and German art

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Abstract. *The article explores how Bernhard Waldenfels' phenomenology, in particular his concepts of «intercorporeality», «shared experience» and «mutual embodiment», provides a basis for a deeper analysis of artistic practices representing the Russian-Ukrainian war of 2022–2025. The aim of the article is a philosophical and cultural analysis of the influence of Bernhard Waldenfels' phenomenology on the disclosure of the theme of the Russian-Ukrainian war of 2022–2025 in contemporary Ukrainian and German art.*

Methods. *An interdisciplinary approach was applied, combining social anthropology, philosophy of art, hermeneutics and art history. The key methodology of the research is phenomenology.*

Results. *The results of the study establish that by applying the concepts of «response to the challenge» (Antwort auf das Fremde), «shared experience», «choreography of events» and «phenomenology of the other», the study reveals how contemporary art functions as an ethical and affective form of reaction to the radical otherness of war. The article argues that Waldenfels' phenomenology provides tools for reading artistic gestures as forms of responsibility, not just representation. The analysis covers contemporary Ukrainian exhibitions (Yermilov Center, Mystetskyi Arsenal, The Naked Room gallery) and German art initiatives (for example, «Ukraine: War and Resistance» in Berlin and «What We Didn't See» in Dresden), which appear as new artistic contacts in search of cultural dialogue. The ability of art to function as a space of empathetic contact and affective responsibility, which allows us to empathize with the experience of war even beyond its direct geographical impact, is analyzed.*

Conclusions. *Visuality in contemporary art exhibitions becomes an affective zone of intersection of «I» and «you», not through identification, but through responsible coexistence. Waldenfels's phenomenology opens up an important resource for understanding art in a transnational context. War becomes not only a political or territorial event, but a way of radically reformatting sensuality. In the dialogue between Ukrainian and German art, one can trace not only solidarity, but also the process of mutual embodiment of war in images that become common, not through direct experience, but through the ethics of responsibility and involvement. The philosophy of responsibility that emerges from Bernhard Waldenfels's phenomenology of challenge is clearly evident in the activities of the Yermilov Center and the Municipal Gallery of Kharkiv. Through exhibition practices that combine documentary, intimacy, and social involvement, these institutions create a*

space for collective reflection on war. Art here appears not as a representation of suffering, but as an ethical gesture, a response to what goes beyond the boundaries of ordinary experience.

Keywords: *phenomenology, philosophy of art, Russian-Ukrainian war, shared experience, hermeneutics, contemporary art, philosophy of the Other, philosophy of the Stranger.*

Вплив феноменології Бернхарда Валденфельса на розкриття теми російсько-української війни 2022–2025 років в сучасному українському і німецькому мистецтві

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Анотація. *Стаття досліджує, яким чином феноменологія Бернхарда Вальденфельса, зокрема його концепти «інтеркорпоральності», «розділеного досвіду» та «взаємного втілення», дає підґрунтя для глибшого аналізу мистецьких практик, що репрезентують російсько-українську війну 2022–2025 років. Мета статті – філософський та культурологічний аналіз впливу феноменології Бернхарда Вальденфельса на розкриття теми російсько-*

української війни 2022–2025 років в сучасному українському і німецькому мистецтві.

Методи. Застосовано міждисциплінарний підхід, що поєднує соціальну антропологію, філософію мистецтва, герменевтику та мистецтвознавство. Ключовою методологією дослідження є феноменологія.

Результати. У результатах дослідження встановлено, що застосовуючи концепти «відповіді на виклик» (*Antwort auf das Fremde*), «розділеного досвіду», «хореографії подій» та «феноменології іншого», дослідження розкриває, як сучасне мистецтво функціонує як етична й афективна форма реакції на радикальну інішість війни. Стаття аргументує, що феноменологія Вальденфельса надає інструменти для прочитання художніх жестів як форм відповідальності, а не лише репрезентації. Аналіз охоплює сучасні українські виставки (ЄрміловЦентр, Мистецький Арсенал, галерея *The Naked Room*) та німецькі мистецькі ініціативи (наприклад, «*Ukraine: War and Resistance*» у Берліні та «*What We Didn't See*» у Дрездені), що постають як нові мистецькі контакти у пошуках культурного діалогу. Проаналізована здатність мистецтва функціонувати як простір емпатичного контакту й афективної відповідальності, що дозволяє співпереживати досвід війни навіть поза межами її прямого географічного впливу.

Висновки. Візуальність в виставках сучасного мистецтва стає афективною зоною перетину «я» і «ти», не шляхом ідентифікації, а через відповідальне співбуття. Феноменологія Вальденфельса відкриває важливий ресурс для осмислення мистецтва в транснаціональному контексті. Війна стає не лише політичною чи територіальною подією, а способом радикального переформатування чуттєвості. У діалозі між українським і німецьким мистецтвом, простежується не лише солідарність, але і процес взаємного втілення війни в образах, які стають спільними, не за прямим

досвідом, а за етикою відповідальності і співпричетності.

У діяльності ЄрміловЦентру та Муніципальної галереї Харкова виразно виявляється філософія відповідальності, яка постає з феноменології виклику Бернхарда Вальденфельса. Через виставкові практики, що поєднують документальність, інтимність та соціальну залученість, ці інституції створюють простір для колективної рефлексії над війною. Мистецтво тут постає не як репрезентація страждання, а як етичний жест є відповідь на те, що виходить за межі звичного досвіду.

Ключові слова: феноменологія, філософія мистецтва, російсько-українська війна, розділений досвід, герменевтика, сучасне мистецтво, філософія Іншого, філософія Чужого.

Problem statement. Bernhard Waldenfels's phenomenology has significantly transformed the notion of corporeality, the perception of the other, and ethical communication over the past decades. In his works, such as «Topologie des Fremden» (1997) [14], «Verkörperungen» (2014) [17], «Otherness and the question of ethics» (2020) [19], he proposes a way of thinking that overcomes the «I – other» dichotomy in favor of complex configurations of intercorporeal coexistence. This becomes especially relevant in the artistic understanding of war, as a radical break in experience and the embodiment of the «alien», which cannot be fully represented but can be phenomenologically approximated. In the concept of «divided experience» [18], Waldenfels analyzes situations where intersubjectivity loses its usual form of symmetry. This is precisely the situation of war, when the experience of a victim, refugee, soldier or artist is radically different, but at the same time seeks to be heard and embodied in another. This challenge of representation, both ethical and artistic, becomes the subject of art in Ukraine and Germany. The war of 2022-2025 is a certain intersubjective break, therefore it is important to analyze the changes in subjectivity and intersubjectivity that occurred at this time.

We have chosen the period 2020–2025 for philosophical analysis in view of our hypothesis that it was during this period that significant changes occurred in the system of aesthetic expression and moral tasks of art, since this period was marked by a profound transformation of Ukrainian artistic discourse, caused by war, pandemic crisis, global cultural shift, and rapid digitalization. In this context, interpretive schemes based on formal analysis or structuralist-poststructuralist models often prove insufficient for an adequate reading of an artistic gesture that appeals to affective experience, intersubjective empathy, and value-based experience. That is why Bernhard Waldenfels' phenomenology, with its emphasis on emotional-value intentionality, appears as a relevant tool for the hermeneutics of contemporary Ukrainian art.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Recently, a new attitude towards Ukrainian art has been forming, when, for example, T. Mironova [2] speaks of the beginning of the XXIst century as the «Second Renaissance», in the context of the culture of the early XXth century as the first «Shooteed Renaissance» (Yu. Lavrinenko). There is also an attempt to look at contemporary Ukrainian art more deeply, to reveal its deep aesthetic and phenomenological foundations, as is done in the works of O. Akkash [1], A. Davydenko [3]. A serious theoretical justification of the new representation of contemporary art through phenomenological aesthetics is presented in the works of D. Zahavi [20].

The events of the Russian-Ukrainian war of 2014-2025, especially its acute stage of 2022-2025, provoke a new understanding of contemporary relevant Ukrainian art, capable of responding to the challenges of the time. Various media outlets are becoming the first to talk about news on the aesthetic front, including the publications «Gwara Media» [5], «Le Monde» [9], «The Guardian» [6], «The Art Newspaper» [12]. Representative art institutions are also trying to provide an overview of their work through social networks, for example, the Kharkiv Municipal Gallery informs about its exhibitions and significant cultural events through

Facebook [4] and Instagram [7].

Since new artistic realities require philosophical understanding, there are attempts to define the phenomenological aspects of this aesthetics in the context of the works of B. Waldenfels [14-19]. L. Lang speaks of Waldenfels' special ethics of responsibility, which influences new aesthetic searches [8]. O. Shapoval tries to apply these concepts to Ukrainian art [10]. This is also an expansion of the boundaries of traditional philosophical anthropology, in particular Max Scheler's [11], where art plays the role of a catalyst and at the same time a therapy for traumatic experience. In particular, the new role of art institutions is analyzed, and front-line Kharkiv and its art are considered [12].

Identification of previously unresolved parts of the general scientific problem. Based on the analysis of recent research and publications, it can be argued that the art that arises in Ukraine during the war forms a new aesthetics: not the aesthetics of beauty, but the aesthetics of trauma [9], vulnerability [8], and vulnerable time. And this aesthetics is no longer read through the paradigm of representation, but requires new approaches, in particular, such as Waldenfels' phenomenology [10], which focuses on the «experienced disturbance» («erlebte Störung») [18] and the meaning that arises in contradiction to the organized order. This problem is new for both modern philosophy and modern aesthetics, because the analysis of beauty must also include moral issues, moral responsibility for war, so such problems require philosophical reflection and a number of philosophical solutions within the framework of the new humanism.

Formulation of the objectives of the article (Problem statement).

The purpose of the article is a philosophical and culturological analysis of the influence of Bernhard Waldenfels' phenomenology on the disclosure of the theme of the Russian-Ukrainian war of 2022–2025 in modern Ukrainian and German art.

This goal leads to a number of research tasks

- 1) Identification of key concepts in modern phenomenology that are

implemented in current art

2) Identification of key significant artistic practices that represent the Russian-Ukrainian war of 2022–2025: on the example of exhibitions at the Yermilov Center, Mystetskyi Arsenal, the Kharkiv Municipal Gallery, The Naked Room Gallery, and on the example of German art initiatives (for example, «Ukraine: War and Resistance» in Berlin and «What We Didn't See» in Dresden).

3) analysis of the concepts of empathy, artistic empathy.

Presentation of the main material of the study. The war that has been going on between Russia and Ukraine since 2022 is not only a political and military event, but also a phenomenological crisis, a violation of the world order, which appeals to the very structure of experience. In this situation, a philosophy that is able to comprehend the experience of war as an invasion of the other as radical, hostile [14], and at the same time internally rooted in the structure of our responsibility, becomes particularly relevant. In this context, the philosophy of Bernhard Waldenfels, with its emphasis on «responses to the challenge» [15] and «the place of the other» [16], appears as a productive basis for the analysis of contemporary art that is unfolding in Ukraine as a reaction to the war.

Waldenfels' philosophy is distinguished by its attention to what he calls the «challenge» («Herausforderung»), which is neither an event nor an object, but above all a disruption of the usual order, the emergence of something that does not fit into any previous structure of meaning. In «Topography of the Other» [14] and «Otherness and the Question of Ethics» [19] Waldenfels describes how the experience of the other is always excessive, it exceeds both the structures of thought and the practices of perception.

This experience is not passive; it provokes a response that is neither a reflex-style reaction nor a fully intentional act. The response to the challenge is always partly unpredictable, not entirely controllable, but at the same time deeply rooted in the ethical dimension of subjectivity. This opens up the possibility of considering art

not as a representation of horror, but as a conscious or unconscious response, trace, gesture, image, act that emerges from a place of ethical encounter with the radical [15].

Contemporary Ukrainian art, particularly after 2022, not only documents war, but also transforms into a form of responsibility. This is visible both in socially engaged performances (for example, actions in public space on the ruins of Irpin or Bakhmut), and in visual art (for example, the works of Nikita Kadan or Yuriy Yefanov). In these practices, a logic is noticeable, which Waldenfels would call «choreography of response» [18]: the artistic gesture does not represent war, but builds a space for an encounter with its radical otherness.

In particular, the performance «Body Without a Home» (2023) by Maria Proshkovska does not reconstruct the event of losing one's home due to shelling, but allows one to experience the instability of being through bodily positions and temporary architecture on stage. This is a response in the sense of Waldenfels, not a logical articulation, but an affective configuration.

Kateryna Gornostay's film «Where Were You When...» (2024) forms a narrative in which trauma is not overcome, but is comprehended in the form of repetition, echo, and failure of language. Such a structure corresponds to Waldenfels' phenomenology of the «negative trace», a place where the experience of the other can neither be assimilated nor excluded, but it is precisely in this that the possibility of ethics opens up [19].

An important point is the transfer of analysis from representational logic to affective-perceptual logic. In Waldenfels' philosophy, there is a clear departure from the Cartesian model of the subject to a subject immersed in a network of «alien» impulses. Contemporary war art in Ukraine is not a simple expression of pain, but rather an attempt to contain the uncontained [3], through forms that allow for experiencing, not just contemplation [6].

In the context of the full-scale war in Ukraine, the cultural institutions of

Kharkiv, the Yermilov Center and the Municipal Gallery, have become centers not only of artistic resistance, but also of phenomenological understanding of the experience of war. Their exhibition projects for 2022–2025 demonstrate how art can become a response to a challenge that is not amenable to representation but requires an ethical response [6].

According to the philosophy of art (including the phenomenological tradition – Scheler, Waldenfels), art performs the function of mediation between personal experience and collective meaning. Through image, color, form, or narrative, the artist brings inner experience into the space of intersubjective dialogue. In the context of war, this is extremely important: art allows us to experience and express what it is not always possible to articulate in language. Contemporary Ukrainian art in recent years (2022–2025) has increasingly focused on themes of loss, pain, survival, refugeehood, corporeality under fire, and adaptation to a new life [13]. At the same time, it appeals to strength, resilience, memory, and hope. This creates conditions for reflection on experience, where the viewer can recognize themselves and their emotions; emotional catharsis, where they can experience and release accumulated tension; as well as collective solidarity [6], that is, a humanistic understanding that «I am not alone in this trauma»; narrative recovery as the construction of a new, meaningful history of their own experience.

For example, the work of Maria Kulikovska, who uses her own body as an object of art, creating plaster casts that symbolize vulnerability and loss of bodily security, is a combination of life experience and art. Her actions are often performative in nature, aimed at liberation from pain. Alevtina Kakhidze, through graphic diaries, ironic comics and autobiographical stories, broadcasts her personal experience of life on the brink of war (Donetsk region) [3]. Her art balances between humor and pain, thereby working with post-traumatic states.

The project «War is not art» (curated by Olesya Ostapenko and Darya Dobryan), which has become a platform for the expression of artists from the front,

displaced persons, volunteers and directly includes psychotherapeutic work with participants, says that the true function of art is to record what exceeds us, so it is art and at the same time not art, but the tragedy of Ukrainian life [3].

No less important is the form of participation in the creation of art. For example, workshops for internally displaced persons, children, veterans, where everyone can create «their own story» through painting, collage, body in space. This process is not only artistic, but also therapeutic as the construction of an internal narrative where there was chaos and fear. Nikita Kadan's installation «Excavation» (PinchukArtCentre, Kyiv, 2022-2023) is an example of an artistic response to destruction as a phenomenon that carries within itself the trace of another. Kadan works with ceramic fragments found among the ruins of civilian objects in Bucha and Kharkiv [13]. At the center of the composition is a fragmented figure that does not come together into a single whole, but instead suggests seeing in the absence an existing (transparent) presence. Waldenfels' concept of «answer without full understanding» [18] is here revealed literally: the viewer cannot “read” the work linearly, he is forced to remain in the space of an unfinished answer.

This series of drawings and short comics by Alevtina Kakhidze: «Things We Didn't Have Time to Pick Up» (2023) presents abandoned belongings of residents of Donetsk and Kherson regions. Each object (a kettle, a toy, socks) is accompanied by an irrational comment, sometimes absurdist. This form corresponds to Waldenfels's «gap between challenge and response» [17]: comments do not explain things, but themselves reveal the impossibility of responding to their silence. Because of this, the work becomes a topology of a trace, a sign of a disturbed being.

In Vlad Krasinskiy's photo project «The House That Doesn't Exist» (2024), the interiors of destroyed apartments are documented from the perspective of «remnants of life», traces of half-burnt icons, open diaries, and children's drawings. Krasinskiy leaves the composition almost unchanged, refusing artistic staging. This coincides with Waldenfels' idea that a true response should allow the other to remain

another [15]. Here, the camera does not intrude, does not simplify, but only records the challenge, opening up the viewer the possibility for ethical co-presence. In this series of paintings «Internal Mobilization» (2023), Kateryna Lysovenko creates multi-figure compositions with female volunteers, doctors, and mothers, whose bodies are depicted in excessive detail, with veins, bruises, and skin blemishes. Such corporeality reveals the «body's response» to the challenge of war. In Waldenfels, the body is something greater, on a phenomenological basis, a place of reception of the other [16]. Through this picturesque bodily «oversaturation», Lysovenko activates the affective experience of the viewer as a container of split responsibility.

The highlighted problems acquire particular sharpness in theatrical productions and video art. The post-documentary performance «Silence» by the theater «Postplay» (2023) [3] is built as a cycle of voices, testimonies of those who survived the occupation in Kherson, Mariupol, Izyum. The actors do not act, but reproduce voices, imitating intonations, pauses, even the beating of the breath. However, the stage space remains almost empty, leaving room for those who did not survive, cannot hold their speech, elements of refracted light that cut through the darkness, give hope in total darkness. This creates a phenomenological situation of a «voice without a body», where the viewer is confronted not with a representation but with episodes of a challenge. Waldenfels emphasizes that the challenge does not necessarily take the form of an image, sometimes it is an «inexpressible» that nevertheless demands a response. In «Silence» we are dealing with exactly this: testimony is not for understanding, since the scale of the tragedy exceeds human comprehension, it is epic and majestic, like an ancient tragedy, but there must be a shared non-understanding, a co-presence in a torn sense.

The performance «Transition» (2024) by the «Sklad Theater-Laboratory» (Lviv) takes place in a real underground passage in the center of Lviv, where the audience becomes part of a route that, as in ancient mysteries, leads from darkness to light. On the way, they encounter actors who repeat automatic phrases from

instructions during an air raid. This repetition, mechanical, disorienting, alienating, works as what Waldenfels calls a «break in responsibility»: the audience cannot react in a standard way, is forced to look for a new answer. In the finale, everyone ends up in a room where children read excerpts from diaries. And this childish naivety, intertwined with the automatism of anxiety, is a «place of the other», a place where the answer does not restore integrity, but reveals trauma, an open spiritual wound as a form of presence.

In the video art of Ani Na and Lisa Paperna «Pulse of Kherson» (2023), the viewer finds himself in the space of an empty Kherson during evacuation, the frames are shaky, fragmentary, shot on a smartphone. But the main focus of the authors is on sound: amplified heartbeats, rhythms of footsteps, the noise of the wind. As a result, the image becomes secondary to auditory affectivity. This creates a situation where perception is destabilized, and this instability is the response. According to Waldenfels, the response does not always mean articulation; it is often an «affective oscillation» that disrupts the usual sensory hierarchy. «Pulse of Kherson» demonstrates precisely such a «choreography of disorientation» [18], which allows the other, that is, the experience of war, to appear not in the form of an image, but in the form of bodily disturbance.

Alexey Radinsky's video essay «The Destroyed Future» (2024) analyzes the architectural remains of Soviet modernist projects destroyed during shelling. Radinsky combines archival footage of construction with filming of current ruins. The video essay is based on a cyclical and disorienting montage. This violation of the linearity of time is the embodiment of what Waldenfels calls the «anomalous temporal experience» of the challenge. The viewer does not understand what is past and what is present, where there is life and where only a shadow. And this is precisely the key: the experience of war is not an event that «has happened», it remains in the field of the potential, the open, the dangerous. Radinsky thereby creates the possibility not of «completion», but of the constant return of the other as an ethical

task.

The phenomenology of challenge, according to Bernhard Waldenfels, suggests considering the experience of war not as an «event that has occurred» [16], but as an event that demands a response, without allowing for full understanding [18]. It is in this vein that contemporary Ukrainian and German-language literature of 2022–2025 is shaping a new transnational ethic, through silence, bodily memory, and the deformation of language as a gesture of responsibility.

Thus, Ukrainian art today is not only an arena for political expression, but also a deeply empathetic, interactive platform for living, speaking, and transforming trauma. It can become an engagement with art not only for the individual, but also for an entire generation.

In the projects «Culture of Resistance», «Personal Composition» (Yermilov Center, 2022, 2023) [5] and the exhibition «Ukrainian Song» (The Naked Room, 2023), artists work with visual fragments, fragments of infrastructure, bodies, documents. These are not only images of destruction, but also an attempt to return experience to the space of sensuality. Waldenfels' concept of «mutual embodiment» [17] is manifested here in the creation of objects that provoke an empathetic bodily reaction of the viewer, tension, rejection, an influx of pain.

Waldenfels's phenomenology emphasizes experience that comes «from outside», «als Anruf», that is, as a call to which we are not always ready to respond. The essence of ethics here lies not in moral norms, but in the ability to withstand the challenge of the other without reducing it to one's own horizon.

In the context of German-Ukrainian artistic interactions after 2022, this theory becomes extremely relevant. It allows us to comprehend not only artistic reactions, but also structural silence, silence, ignorance as elements of ethical space.

For example, the exhibition «Fragments of War» at the KW Institute for Contemporary Art (Berlin, 2023), which became a platform for the voices of Ukrainian artists such as Yulia Kovalchuk and Lera Polyanska. Art here appears not

as an illustration of war, but as an articulation of a broken experience, *Verstörung*, according to Waldenfels. The German public encounters what cannot be translated, which becomes a moment of ethical pause.

The Potsdam Kunstverein and the project «UFOKUS: Counting down the war» (2022) depict art, the «Opera" of death, associated with war.

How often in its history has art failed to look away, turning the suffering of its victims into images in drawings, paintings, and photographs? «Counting War», on the other hand, shows neither the bodies nor the faces, nor the stories nor the course of history to which each war refers. The work represents an entirely different kind of world painting because it refuses to narrow its focus. This painting wants to see everything at once. No, it wants us, the viewer, to see everything at once: «That we cannot decide which conflict is important, which dominates our thoughts, and which is distant. That we, stripped of all relativization and classification, must see indiscriminately all those victims who do not make it into the news and social media feeds. That the dead, to whose suffering we have gradually become desensitized, whom we suppress out of prejudice, self-defense, geographical distance, misunderstanding, unacknowledged or overt racism, as if they did not exist, are seen side by side in equality of numbers» [13].

Waldenfels's phenomenology emphasizes that the response is not identical with the reaction. In the artistic field, this means not «responding to war with art», but recognizing that the act of responding itself is traumatized. German art 2022–2025 forms new modalities of this listening and reception, when the ethics of hearing replaces visual exploitation, and the space of silence replaces the declarative position;

Institutions such as the Akademie der Künste or the Goethe-Institut are rethinking the role of support. Instead of «representing Ukraine», creating conditions for self-representation. This corresponds to the Waldenfelsian idea of «Verantwortung» «responsibility», which does not close the other in its own frame.

German art after 2022 demonstrates not only solidarity, but also a deeper ethical willingness to be vulnerable to the trauma of others. In the light of Waldenfels' phenomenology, this means openness to the unpredictable, to «alien pain» that cannot be integrated, but which cannot be avoided either.

In the exhibition «Ukraine: War and Resistance» (Berlin, Kunsthaus Bethanien, 2023) and the project «What We Didn't See» (Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, 2024) [12], the key theme is the ethics of the gaze: whether and how a European viewer can responsibly look at a war that he did not experience, even though the war is taking place nearby, in the European space. Here, Waldenfels's «topology of the foreign» is revealed through spatial solutions, namely through the involvement of Ukrainian refugees in artistic performances, the representation of multilingual archives, and the use of a sound environment that cannot be fully localized.

Conclusions. Visuality in contemporary art exhibitions becomes an affective zone of intersection of «I» and «you», not through identification, but through responsible coexistence. Waldenfels's phenomenology opens up an important resource for understanding art in a transnational context. War becomes not only a political or territorial event, but a way of radically reformatting sensuality.

In the dialogue between Ukrainian and German art, one can trace not only solidarity, but also the process of mutual embodiment of war in images that become common, not through direct experience, but through the ethics of responsibility and involvement.

In the activities of the Yermilov Center and the Municipal Gallery of Kharkiv, the philosophy of responsibility that arises from the phenomenology of Bernhard Waldenfels's challenge is clearly manifested. Through exhibition practices that combine documentary, intimacy, and social involvement, these institutions create a space for collective reflection on war. Art here appears not as a representation of suffering, but as an ethical gesture, a response to something that goes beyond the

boundaries of ordinary experience.

Waldenfels' philosophy allows us to consider contemporary Ukrainian and German art not as an illustration of events, but as a form of participation, a response that is at once ethical, bodily, affective, and existential. In this sense, art is a place where philosophy «meets» war, not in order to explain it, but in order to prevent it from remaining silent, devoid of expression.

Waldenfels' concepts, such as «intercorporeality», «bodily inscription into the experiences of others», and «topology of the other», allow us not only to interpret artistic responses to war, but also to propose a new paradigm of ethical responsibility in an era of global vulnerability. Contemporary Ukrainian and German art in this context act not as «mirrors» of tragedy, but as attempts to embody its presence in the space of mutual responsibility.

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