

Gaskin, Sam. "Zelenskyy to Venice: 'There Are No Tyrannies That Would Not Try to Limit Art'" *Ocula*, April 22, 2022.

## OCULA

The Ukrainian President spoke at the opening of an exhibition featuring works by artists including JR, Damien Hirst, Marina Abramović, and Takashi Murakami.



*JR, Valeriia (2022). Original tarp from the Lviv action. 50 metres long. Courtesy of the Artist.*

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called on the art world to support Ukraine in its war against Russia at the opening of the exhibition *This is Ukraine: Defending Freedom in Venice* last night.

'There are no tyrannies that would not try to limit art, because they can see the power of art,' he said in a video address.

'Art can tell the world things that cannot be shared otherwise. It is art that conveys feelings. If you are free yourself, how can you understand other people who fight for their freedom? If you live in a country at peace, how will you empathise with those who can only dream of peace, and help them? How can you thank those who fought on their soil – for your freedom? Every single one of these questions is about art.'



*Damien Hirst, Wretched War (2005). Bronze. Edition of 10. Private Collection © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd. All rights reserved, DACS 2022. Takashi Murakami, Ukraine: War and Peace (2018). Acrylic, platinum leaf and gold leaf on canvas mounted on alumi*

# SEANKELLY

Artists participating in This is Ukraine: Defending Freedom include Yevgenia Belorusets, Nikita Kadan, and Lesia Khomenko, all of whom continue to live and work in Ukraine. It also features international artists [Marina Abramović](#), [Takashi Murakami](#), [Damien Hirst](#), and [JR](#). The French street artist exhibited the head and shoulders of a 50-metre-tall portrait of five-year-old Ukrainian refugee Valeriia, which he unveiled in Lviv in March.

The exhibition runs from 23 April to 7 August at the Scuola Grande della Misericordia as a collateral event at the 59th Venice Biennale. It is presented by the PinchukArtCentre and Victor Pinchuk Foundation in partnership with the Office of the President of Ukraine and Ukraine's Ministry of Culture and Information Policy.



*Lesia Khomenko from Max in the army series (2022). Acrylic on canvas. Created during the residency at the Ujazdowski Castle (Warsaw) and Asortymentna Kimnata (Ivano - Frankivsk, Ukraine). Courtesy of the Artist.*

Ukrainian businessman Victor Pinchuk said, 'As a collector I know what inspires artists the most: love and tragedy. I know that war will inspire you, artists, maybe for centuries ahead but we don't need your inspiration in 100 years. We need your inspiration now because you have [the] capacity to inspire people, the decision makers who can save lives of Ukrainians, to send [weapons] to Ukraine now, today.'

'I am sure the exhibition will allow people to feel what it means for Ukraine to defend freedom, Zelesnkyy said in his concluding remarks. 'Support us with your art, but also support us with your words and your influence.' —[O]