

Kettle's Yard Presents: A G E N D A

Yevheniia Laptii 'Deti' (2023)

Launching 12 March 2024



Yevheniia Laptii, *Deti*, 2023. Photographic print.

Kettle's Yard is pleased to announce A G E N D A, a new series of artist projects that respond to global events and address pressing issues of our time. Launching on 12 March 2024, the series aims to show how a single work of art can offer insight and understanding beyond the 24-hour news cycle. The first project will display *Deti* (2023) by Ukrainian artist Yevheniia Laptii (b. 1992, Kharkiv), alongside a selection of photographic works presented on the Kettle's Yard website.

Following the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Yevheniia Laptii's practice radically shifted its focus. Moving away from imaginative, digitally-enhanced scenes of the Ukrainian countryside, Laptii adapted the same skills and software to make images of a country at war. Kharkiv, Ukraine's second largest city, is close to the front line and subject to frequent Russian missile attacks. Laptii's most recent work confronts viewers with stark images of Kharkiv's bombed, typically residential, buildings. Using digital editing, she colours parts of each image, highlighting features that have been damaged, as if to retrieve them from destruction and suggest the potential for new life. Her works act as sites of reclamation and personal resistance.

At the time of the invasion, Laptii was living in a village near Kharkiv, which became Russian occupied territory. Travelling via Moscow, the artist eventually returned to Ukraine in the autumn of 2022, by which time the Ukrainian army had reclaimed most of the territory east of Kharkiv. *Deti* responds to this moment in the artist's life, inspired by a photograph she took on her return to the 'deoccupied' territories. Picturing a village house in Eastern Ukraine, the work takes the form of a digitally

tinted photograph with the word 'deti' (or 'children' in Russian) written on a gate, a sign to soldiers that children live there. At Kettle's Yard the work will be presented as a diptych, splitting the word in two. With a space in between, 'De ti' means 'where are you?' in Ukrainian, referencing the thousands of Ukrainian children illegally taken to Russia since the war began.

Laptii writes: "*At the very beginning of the occupation, Russian soldiers told us to write 'People' or 'Children' on the gate so that it would be clear where people live. Inscriptions began to appear on the gates throughout the village, indicating that there was someone in the house, that the house was alive. We saw some sacred meaning in these inscriptions, as if by writing 'Children' on the gate you cast a spell that can protect you from death. But in fact, when the Russian soldiers needed to enter the house, the 'Children' did not stop them.*"

The catalyst for Laptii's display is an article by James Meek in the London Review of Books ([Vol. 45 No. 16](#)).

Deti was originally exhibited at the Ukrainian House in Kyiv in 2023. It has been remade for Kettle's Yard in discussion with the artist. A selection of the artist's photographic works made between 2017-2024 will be presented on the Kettle's Yard website. From October 2024 - February 2025 a second artwork by Laptii will be displayed as part of A G E N D A. Project curated by Megan Breckell, Andrew Nairne and Naomi Polonsky.

For further information
and images

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About Yevheniia Laptii

'I don't perceive reality, I generate it.'

Yevheniia Laptii (b. 1992, Kharkiv, Ukraine) studied at the Kharkiv Art Academy of Design and Arts specialising in art history. She began her career making digitally altered photographic images in 2016. She has participated in various group and solo exhibitions in Ukraine, Italy, Germany, Portugal, Poland and Austria. She is a laureate of the 2018 NonStopMedia contest. She lives and works in Kharkiv.

Her project at Kettle's Yard is the artist's first presentation of her work in the UK.

About Kettle's Yard

Kettle's Yard, part of the University of Cambridge, is a leading gallery and unique house with a remarkable collection of 20th-century art. Its founders Jim and Helen Ede believed in art's ability to transform lives, a vision upheld today through critically acclaimed exhibitions, pioneering community and learning programmes, and research of the highest quality. Our aim is to offer an inspiring and enriching experience for everyone who visits. Find out more and get involved at: www.kettlesyard.cam.uk



Yevheniia Laptii, *Kharkiv*, 2023-24. Photographic print.



Yevheniia Laptii, *Donbas*, 2023. Photographic print.

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