

## ***A thread that leads home: turning Ukrainian narratives of displacement into textile paintings***

### **Textile workshops facilitated by Darya Tsymbalyuk**

On May the 5<sup>th</sup> and May 20<sup>th</sup> Darya Tsymbalyuk, a PhD student at the University of St Andrews and a co-author of *Donbas Odyssey* art project, led two textile workshops *a thread that leads home: turning Ukrainian narratives of displacement into textile paintings*.

Darya's research and artistic practice focus on oral histories of the internally displaced in Ukraine. She and her colleagues from *Donbas Odyssey*, Julia Filipieva and Victor Zasyplin, interview displaced persons and ask them to draw maps of their hometowns. These maps and interviews are later used for making art exhibitions and art interventions.

For the workshop Darya brought some of the maps and quotes associated with them. She also brought elements of stories printed out on fabric, which was originally used for the *Donbas Odyssey* exhibition in January-February 2019. She cut out the fabric, separating the various map elements printed on it, thus recycling some exhibition materials. She also brought some colourful scraps of fabric and threads.

The idea of the workshops was to share Ukrainian narratives and allow each participant to engage with them as a starting point, respond to them and eventually contribute their own stories to the conversation.

The sessions were drop-in and in total 11 people attended. The sessions were made possible with the generous support by the Centre for Arts and Politics at the University of St

Andrews. A third informal session took place in the kitchen of Darya's house for the people who attended the workshops and who wanted to continue working on their pieces.



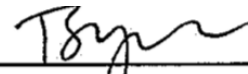
**A participant working on her piece during one of the workshops. (Photo: Darya Tsymbalyuk)**

Even though no finished piece was produced in the course of the sessions, as they require much more time and most of the pieces are still work-in-progress, the meetings were really productive in terms of creative engagement with narratives of displacement. Discussions drifted between Ukrainian political context and personal narratives of the participants, and they were inspiring and stimulating.

A local resident came for the second session and brought an arpillera that he had acquired in the 1970s. He also brought a book of Neruda's poems and read aloud his favourite one. In the course of the sessions Darya also became friends with Nicola from Dundee Embroiderers Guild. On May 18 Darya was invited to the Embroiderers Guild to talk about

the textile sessions and *Donbas Odyssey*, which further strengthened links formed in the workshops. At the moment Nicola is working on several pieces inspired by the maps and Darya hopes to continue their collaboration.

Friday, 19<sup>th</sup> of July 2019

  
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DARYA Tymbalyuk