digital icons
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Visuals and the Invisible in the 'Forgotten' War in Ukraine: Combating Clichés of War Photography through Social Media

A VISUAL ESSAY BY ALISA SOPOVA
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Abstract: Media coverage of war relies on military clichés, or tropes of war photography—tanks, soldiers, explosions, crying women, pitiable refugees—which make the situation immediately recognisable for the readers. This practice produces a distorted picture that excludes most of the actual, non-sensational day-to-day experiences of war. Digital circulation of images that exoticise and dehumanise victims of war normalises public perception of such populations as the new 'savages' and 'primitives' who, supposedly, belong in the landscape of war. This essay explores a social media initiative that aims to challenge the conventional media coverage of war and to provide an alternative that is truer to the actual situation on the ground. The project, titled #5Kfromthefrontline, based in Facebook and Instagram, and produced by the author in collaboration with a photojournalist Anastasia Taylor-Lind, focuses on portraying the everyday reality in the war zone in Eastern Ukraine routinely overlooked by the mainstream media. Engaging in an exercise of media self-analysis, the author argues that social media are a double-edged sword: they may endanger vulnerable populations—but may also empower them.

Keywords: Ukraine, Donbas, war, conflict, resilience, media, photography

'There is nothing to photograph here. Can we go somewhere that actually looks like a war zone?'—I often hear such complaints from the Western photojournalists I work with when covering the war in Ukraine for the Western media.

While the conflict was in its active phase, in 2014–2016, photographers would compete with each other to take the bloodiest shot or to get closest to the frontlines. But as the war had gradually evolved into a stalemate, many found themselves at a loss. Landmine pollution, disrupted infrastructure, lack of access to basic services, lawlessness, lost jobs, lost loved ones, painful memories, unhealed traumas, hopelessness, despair—these realities, very tangible for the millions of Ukrainians who continue to suffer from the ongoing conflict, are too abstract or perhaps not spectacular enough to be captured on camera. As a result, the war in Ukraine has been branded by the media as ‘forgotten’ and largely disappeared from the public discourse.

Media coverage of war relies on military clichés, or tropes of war photography (Zarzycka and Kleppe 2013)—tanks, soldiers, explosions, crying women, pitiable refugees—which make the situation immediately recognizable for the readers casually scrolling their news feed. Only the most spectacular events have the potential to impress the jaded audience, the rest remains unreported. This practice produces a distorted picture that excludes most of the actual, non-sensational day-to-day experiences of war.

Feminist and post-colonialist authors have increasingly pointed out that visual technologies, photography first and foremost, function as imperial instruments of othering (Azoulay 2012, Haraway 1988, Rony 1996) deployed in such ways that ‘populations whose susceptibility to being photographed as dispossessed are visually confirmed through photography, while imperial others are allowed to regard their pain with the enjoyment of power or of sympathy’ (Azoulay 2019: 305). In this way, the subaltern are assigned the roles of extras in the spectacle of suffering produced for the consumption of the imperial citizens, based on a script that reinforces the unequal status quo.

Visual representations of war are potentially traumatizing, politically charged, ethically ambiguous, and hard to verify since only few people have access to the physical spaces where the original events take place. These features, I argue, make such representations especially prone to distorting reality in favour of political agendas or aesthetic clichés. As a result, digital images of wars and of their victims have grown apart from the actual ‘body of war’ and embodied experiences of violence, failing to capture their complexity.

In this sense, they may be viewed as the closest successors to the anthropological conventions of portraying exotic, faraway peoples and their ‘savage’ lifeways. As Michel-Rolph Trouillot (2003: 24) puts it, the conventional ‘savage’ of the XXI century is not the Australian aborigine anymore—‘The primitive has become terrorist, refugee, freedom fighter, opium or coca grower, or parasite’. Victims of military conflicts certainly belong to this list. Digital circulation of images that exoticise and dehumanise victims of war facilitates the normalisation of such perceptions.

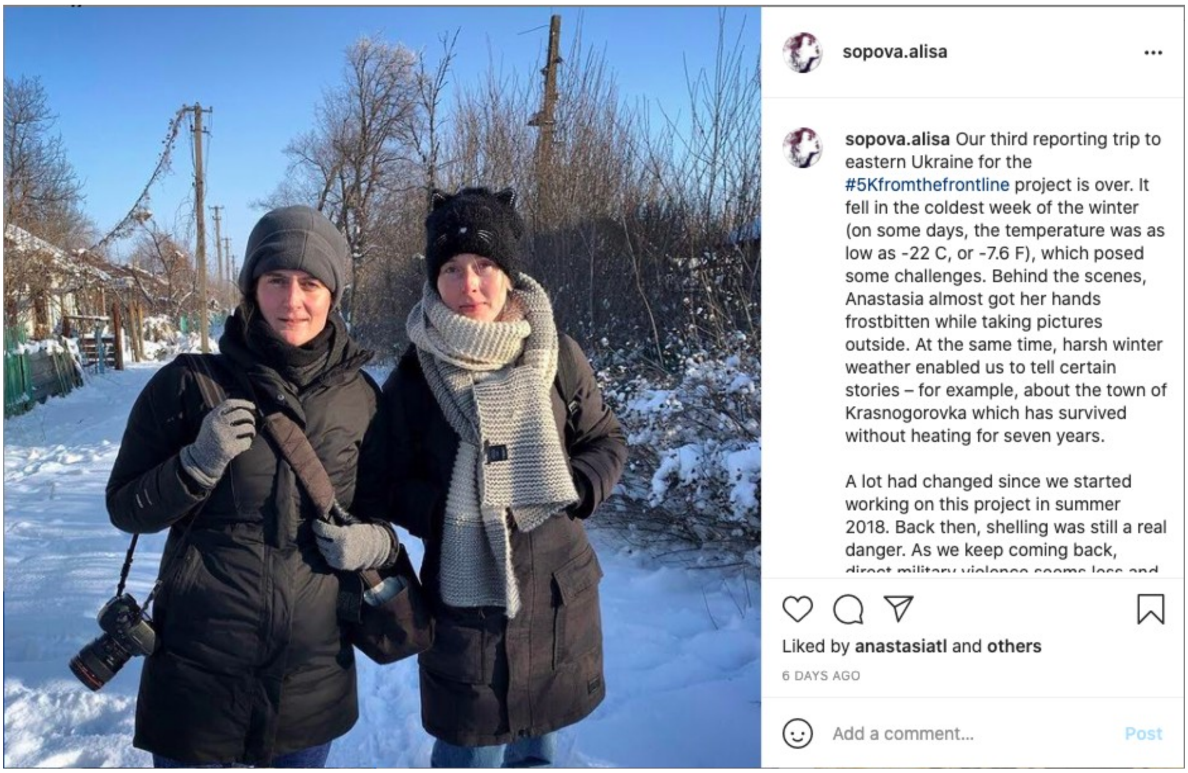
As a civilian from the war zone in Ukraine and a local journalist, I have found myself in a situation where the war exists for me but it does not exist for the Western audience whose awareness and attention implicitly legitimise the reality of any event in the world. This experience of living through violence that is not recognised as such and trying to tell stories that nobody is interested in hearing has become my point of entry into the problem of the crisis of representation. It has also become a cause of my growing frustration with conventional journalism, and especially photojournalism, and search for alternative ways of conveying what it is like to live in a war zone.

In 2018, together with a renowned British photojournalist Anastasia Taylor-Lind who had been grappling with similar questions, we launched the #5Kfromthefrontline project. We were in Ukraine together on an assignment for the International Bar Association (IBA), testing a smartphone app for documenting human rights violations in the war zones. It did not take up all our time, and the IBA kindly encouraged us to do any kind of reporting we saw fit on the side. We decided to use this opportunity to work without enforced editorial frameworks and experiment with our own vision of war reporting, to challenge the conventional ways of portraying violence and people living under its impact.

Since our approach was essentially anti-mainstream, we did not expect mass media to immediately support or publish it. Therefore, we chose social media as our primary platform. As a famous photographer, Anastasia has a large Instagram audience—over 120 thousand followers. Her account (https://www.instagram.com/anastasiatl/) has become the project's main medium, while my Instagram (https://www.instagram.com/sopova.alisa/) and reposting to Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/alisa.sopova, https://www.facebook.com/anastasia.taylorlind) add several more thousand to the audience.

In the summers of 2018 and 2019 and in January 2021, Anastasia and I spent an average of two weeks in the war zone in Ukraine. As the name of the project indicates, we worked in the immediate vicinity of the frontline—from zero metres to approximately five kilometres. Every day, we published one to two social media posts, each consisting of a photo and a short text (as long as the Instagram word limit allows) with a hashtag #5Kfromthefrontline. Together, these two components form a snapshot of daily life in the Ukrainian war zone.

Image 1. An Instagram post summarising our third trip to Ukraine in January 2021. Anastasia Taylor-Lind (left) and Alisa Sopova (right).



sopova.alisa Our third reporting trip to eastern Ukraine for the #5Kfromthefrontline project is over. It fell in the coldest week of the winter (on some days, the temperature was as low as -22 C, or -7.6 F), which posed some challenges. Behind the scenes, Anastasia almost got her hands frostbitten while taking pictures outside. At the same time, harsh winter weather enabled us to tell certain stories – for example, about the town of Krasnogorovka which has survived without heating for seven years.

A lot had changed since we started working on this project in summer 2018. Back then, shelling was still a real danger. As we keep coming back,

Image description: Authors of #5Kfromthefrontline project Anastasia Taylor-Lind and Alisa Sopova on snow-covered street in frontline village.

Source: Rodion Lebedev/Instagram.

Image 2. A bus departing from the Ukrainian-controlled town of Kurakhovo to the entry checkpoint into non-government-controlled Donetsk. After reaching the checkpoint, passengers will have to queue for many hours in the middle of a minefield, waiting for their turn to cross. Over a million people cross the line every month. One of the major reasons for travelling—to visit family members on the other side. In most war zones, movement across the frontline is impossible: people who live on one side normally never travel to the other. Ukraine is a striking exception to this rule. Even though traveling is restricted and full of hardships, civilians continue to move back and forth. Through these small everyday acts, people reject the legitimacy of the frontline that arbitrarily divides them. Such behaviour indicates great potential for reconciliation and peace-building in Eastern Ukraine.

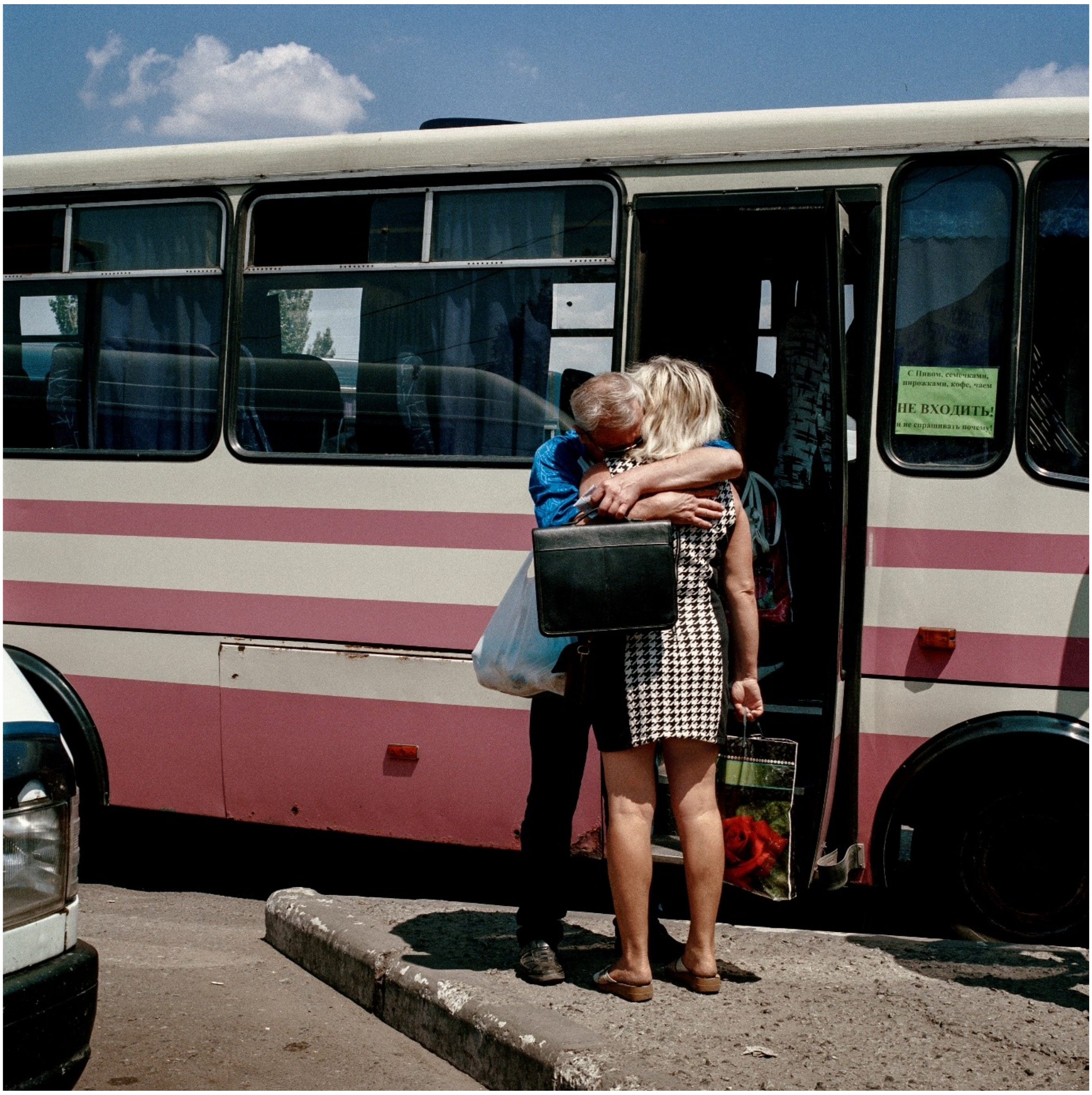

С Пивом, семечками, пирожками, кофе, чаем
НЕ ВХОДИТЬ!
и не спрашивать почему!

Image description: Man and woman embracing on platform near bus.

Source: Anastasia Taylor-Lind/Instagram

As opposed to the unwritten rule of the war photojournalism that requires the presence of a person in the shot in order to create 'juxtapositions of the human face and images of the destructive technological violence of modern warfare' (Hüppauf 1995: 96), our snapshots feature people, animals, landscapes and even inanimate objects (see Image 3).

The summary of snapshots, as we see it, provides an account of what it is like to live in the war zone—an account that is both realistic and different from the conventional media portrayals.

We started this project with the general audience in mind, as well as the professional audience of our colleagues, journalists, photographers and editors whose reporting protocols we wanted to challenge. Every time we published a post we were anxious whether people would notice it, whether they would get what we were trying to say, whether they would find it meaningful. So far, the response has been overwhelmingly positive and empathetic. I can say that working on this project has made me a much bigger believer in people's emotional intelligence than I was before. In their responses, the readers most often characterise our reporting as 'touching', 'heartwarming', 'heartbreaking', 'always touching a nerve'. Often, they express frustration by the fact that they never see such stories in mass media—which demonstrates that there is a demand for this kind of reporting. Questions about how to help people referenced in our posts is another popular type of response. We have noticed that, when we revisit the same places and people and post updates about their lives, some of the readers recognise them and express vivid interest in the developments. At the same time, we often receive critical, and even angry, comments from people who strongly support one or another side of the conflict and accuse us of not being explicit enough in regard to which side is responsible for the suffering we describe.

Image 3. When I first saw artillery shrapnel in 2014, somebody told me: ‘Touch it. Do you feel how sharp the edges are? It is designed to tear your body apart’. When I first saw bodies of people killed by shelling later that summer, I understood what that person meant. Human flesh blown inside out by such shrapnel is terrifying and looks completely different from any other wounds. People who live by the frontlines know the deadly qualities of reactive artillery too well. However, for some reason, people always gather and keep pieces of shrapnel that they find in their backyards and gardens. Maybe it’s that feeling of ‘This thing could have killed me but I am still alive’! Some gather their private collections and keep them in a drawer or a casket. Others bring them together and organise some sort of impromptu local museums of shelling. The piece on this picture is a part of such a makeshift museum organised in the office of the mayor of Novgorodskoye, a frontline village between government-controlled Toretsk and rebel-controlled Gorlovka.

Image description: Close-up of a piece of artillery shrapnel.

Source: Anastasia Taylor-Lind/Instagram

Sometimes I write about things that, I am afraid, might not be very clear or recognizable, and people recognise them and respond by describing similar experiences they or their family members have had. For example, the post about a piece of shrapnel (Image 3) received an Instagram comment from a journalist who lived and worked in Yemen. She wrote:

> I used to do the same. Collect all the pieces of bomb remnants that landed on my roof after air strikes in the neighbourhood. In September 2015 they were pretty much every night. Every morning I'd go shrapnel hunting on the roof. Kept them on my desk. I've never thought about why. But yes, I think part of it was a [middle finger symbol], we made it through the night.

The queer nature of the war survivors' experiences and coping mechanisms they deploy in response may cause alienation and stigma because they often do not make sense outside of the context. But the engagement of our readers provided a comparative perspective and demonstrated that many of these phenomena are universal and shared across different war zones and even generations. For instance, when we posted about the town of Krasnogorovka that has no heating in winter due to destroyed infrastructure and described the bodily feeling of the 'dull, fettering cold of the chilled rooms', user lissymae11 (https://www.instagram.com/lissymae11/) commented saying that this post helped her better understand her grandmother who grew up in Nazi Germany without heating and for the rest of her life insisted on setting thermostat really high, even though it was expensive.

Our work on this project began before I started my training in anthropology. It is not therefore a scholarly activity but rather experimental journalism—or experimental civic journalism, since it is published on social media. The current essay, then, belongs to the genre of media analysis—or, to be precise, media self-analysis. Our choice of subjects, themes and approaches has been mostly intuitive, especially during the early stages of work on the project. We knew we wanted to do a different kind of war reporting but we had nothing like a plan, a program or a list of what we expected to achieve. We were simply trying to tell the stories we thought were worth telling, even if they did not fit journalistic conventions we were socialised to follow. Eventually we realised we were onto something. In this essay, I attempt to conceptualise this 'something'—what it is that we are challenging and what occluded pieces of reality we are trying to uncover. In what follows, I present some of the #5Kfromthefrontline posts and explain the ways we deploy them to challenge conventional portrayals of war. These challenges are enabled by the reach of social media platforms as a format for civic journalism that allowed an audience to congregate for our posts.

1. The war zone does not have to look like a war zone

There are certain visual signifiers that are supposed to be present in the frame so that the viewer can recognise the place as the war zone. Such signifiers include weapons, armoured vehicles, people in military uniforms, ruins, refugee camps, human remains. The trade secret of war journalists is that often they have to spend whole days looking for these recognizable settings, leaving out of the frame what war zones actually look like for the most part—like any other place on Earth. If the place, however devastated, is unable, for one reason or another, to provide enough conventional military visuals, photographers and their audiences fail to recognise them as places of war, and they become virtually invisible for the media representation.

Related to this is another convention—that the impact of war is always physical and obvious. For instance, Western media have devoted a lot of attention to the hospitals damaged by the artillery shelling in Ukraine. *The Washington Post* once allocated significant time and resources to map every medical facility hit by shelling (https://wapo.st/386htBd: 03.01.2021). This was treated as the main problem with the medical services in the war zone. However, on the ground, the situation appeared very different. Shell damages were quickly and relatively easily repaired. At the same time, warzone populations suffered from a whole range of less obvious, structural healthcare failures: medical facilities cut off by the frontline, lack of medical specialists, ambulances refusing to go to no-man's-land or places with many landmines.

In the snapshots like the following one, we try to emphasise not the explicit visual signs of war but rather the contrast between the apparent normalcy of the scene and the abnormal, traumatic experiences of the people inhabiting it.

Image 4. For all women, having a baby presents some challenges. But if you happen to live in Avdeevka, things get even more complicated. During the war, only one gynaecologist remained in town. She was in charge of the gynaecological department as well as the maternity ward and had to be on duty on all night shifts by herself. Overloaded with work, she was not able to perform her job properly. In March this year, a mother and baby died in labour. Since then, the maternity department closed. Women in labour have to travel 50 miles to a hospital in another town. Because major roads in and out of Avdeevka are inaccessible due to the war, they have to use a dirt road through the field. This road is in such bad disrepair that locals compare the experience of travelling it to riding a washboard. Local authorities don't allow the use of ambulance cars for women in labour and so pregnant women have to arrange the trip in advance, hiring a driver. This is what Irina Linnik (in the photo) did. She planned everything beforehand. Still, she was having nightmares throughout the third trimester worrying that something would go wrong on the road. Luckily, everything was fine. The only thing she regrets is that her husband wasn't able to stay with her during such an important moment: his travel and lodging away from home would be too expensive for their family budget.

ОПТОВИ
ШУКАЄТЕ
ЦІНИ!?

Image description: Young couple with a stroller at a playground with railways, grocery store and apartment building in background.

Source: Anastasia Taylor-Lind/Instagram

2. People in the war zone do not suffer at all times

People in war photographs usually appear crying, traumatised and distressed, displaced from their normal surroundings and activities. If, in the war context, someone exhibits positive emotions or seems to experience joy, this is often framed as a sign of immorality or malevolence.

Neutral or obvious as it might seem, this formula is dangerous because, masquerading as a mere representation, it actually works as a prescription. Designating whole populations as obliged to always exhibit suffering denies them the right to enjoy life or even experience authentic emotions. As Arthur Kleinman and Joan Kleinman (1996) point out, through the reproduction of this cliché, the experience gets commodified and distorted to fit the formula.

People in the war zone in Ukraine are well-aware of these expectations and often try to play by the imposed rules. They often hesitate to be photographed in the moments of joy or celebration, voicing concerns that they will be judged as immoral or inappropriate.

Contrary to the convention, we attempt to portray such moments as signs of strength and resilience, and as a reminder that reality is more diverse than photographic formulas and nobody in real life experiences only negative emotions for years in a row.

Image 5. While in Avdeevka, we spent some time with the Grinik family. We met Ol'ga, Nikolai and their two kids, 3-year old Kirill and 5-year old Miroslava, last summer. Now they are not only the subjects of our reporting but also our friends. The Griniks live in a suburban neighbourhood called 'old Avdeevka' which is very close to the frontline. They have a Ukrainian frontline military position as close as 50 meters away from their home. Despite that, they are a happy and laidback young family. Like always, they invited us to a picnic that involved barbecue, fishing and party games. There was only one downside to this beautiful day out: we had to drive about 20 minutes to get to a site relatively free from landmines. The beautiful forest next to Griniks' where they used to hike and picnic before the war is still mined and will likely remain so for years to come. According to UNOCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), Eastern Ukraine is currently one of the areas most contaminated by landmines in the world.

Image description: Man and two children fishing in a pond.

Source: Anastasia Taylor-Lind/Instagram

3. Civilians are not always passive and dependent

Humanitarian organizations rely on the image of helpless victims of war to urge their audiences to donate or otherwise participate in the life of someone who, the implication is, has no chance to pull through otherwise. Sometimes, this practice does indeed help someone to pull through. But along the way it has created another cliché that reinforces unequal power dynamics—what Kleinman and Kleinman (1996: 7) characterise as 'an almost neocolonial ideology of failure, inadequacy, passivity, fatalism, and inevitability' that such portrayals attach to communities in distress. The authors point out that calls for intervention in this context always imply the erasure of local acts and voices, leaving the group in a non-agentive position in which it has to be helped, as well as represented, by others. Furthermore, this creates incentives to portray the subaltern as parasites, sapping social resources from others—an increasingly popular trope in the right-wing, anti-migrant rhetoric. In the Ukrainian public discourse on war, this trend increasingly takes form of accusations that affected populations in Donbas 'parade' their misery for the purpose of getting humanitarian aid or other free services. What this judgment overlooks is that such 'parading' usually comes not from the civilians themselves but from the ways they are portrayed by those outsiders who aspire to represent them.

In our practice, we have made sure that gestures of agency and dignity by the supposedly hapless victims of war are so widespread that they do not need to be dug out or emphasised—it is enough to mention them, against the convention.

Image 6. If you are covering the war in Eastern Ukraine in summer, you will return home every night with bags full of fruit and vegetables. People who live by the frontlines and have no access to basic services won't let you go away empty-handed. Maria Fedorovna (or Baba Masha as she calls herself) lives in the village of Opytnoe in the grey zone. Only a mud road through a minefield connects the village to the rest of the world. There is no electricity, water or gas here, and people don't light candles in front of the windows because it may attract sniper fire. Baba Masha's house and garden got six artillery hits, and her son was killed by shelling in front of her. She insisted that we take a bunch of cucumbers and plums when we left her. 'Girls, I am ok, I have plenty of everything here', she said, 'I just want them to leave us alone, and also the electricity back'. By 'them' she refers to whoever is in charge of the war. She doesn't care who exactly.

People in the war zone are always trying to treat you, from soldiers offering their lunch, to civilians handing you fruits from their gardens. I remember once joining an ICRC convoy (International Committee of the Red Cross) with food supplies to a village that suffered heavily from recent fighting. When we arrived, we found a feast prepared for us in the shelled village council. It's not just about hospitality, but also about dignity. People who get into difficult situations don't automatically turn into miserable refugees that TV coverage often depicts. They don't want to be viewed as pitiful victims but rather as those who can still contribute to society in one way or another.

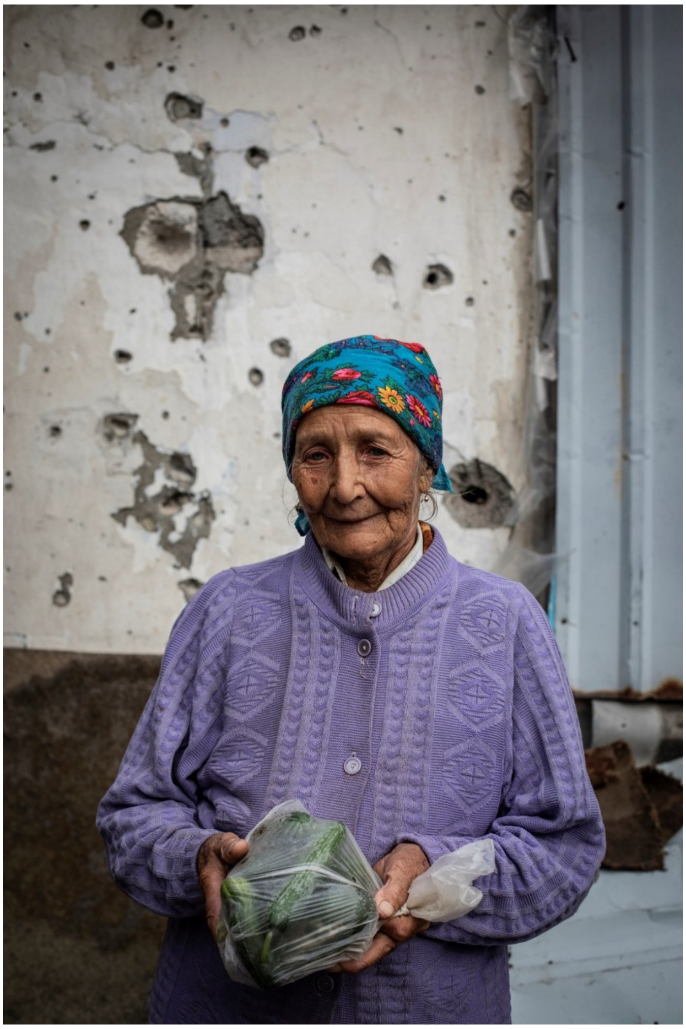


Image description: An elderly woman holding a bag of cucumbers in front of a wall with marks of an artillery impact.

Source: Anastasia Taylor-Lind/Instagram.

4. Men can also be civilians

The notion of victimised women and children has grown to be such a significant element of conventional wisdom about war as to shape public perceptions, political and humanitarian interventions. The phrase ‘women and children’ is used almost as a synonym of the word ‘civilians’, and the visual representations of war reflect this convention. R. Charli Carpenter (2005) points out the problematic influence of the gendered stereotypes of victimhood on civilian protection. By imposing an assumption that all the women are victims and all the men are combatants, such stereotypes deprive civilian men of protection and deprive women of agency to choose to be combatants.

We attempt to challenge this stereotype by being true to reality—many men are civilians who, on top of the other experiences of war, also suffer from violence inflicted by suspicions about their non-combatant status.

Image 7. Rodion Lebedev lives in Opytnoe, a suburb of Donetsk that has become the frontline. He used to be a small business owner. He had three children and a house that he built with his own hands and finished decorating three months before the war started. He also had three dogs, two cats, a guinea pig, a parrot and a turtle. All the pets died during the war—some from shelling, others from stress. The oldest son, the one who would always help Rodion in business and housework, moved away when the war started, and the family hasn't seen him in two years. Their house was shelled multiple times. Rodion walked us around to show the furniture, wallpaper and beautiful ironworks, all mutilated by shell hits.

Rodion was harassed by members of the Ukrainian volunteer battalions who suspected him of helping the enemy. They beat and humiliated him, looted his house in his presence and threatened to rape his wife. Despite these traumatic experiences, Rodion stayed in the village and began helping neighbours, elderly people more vulnerable than himself. His yellow minivan is the only connection between Opytnoe and the outer world, driving free of charge people, groceries, cash and humanitarian aid along the mud road through the minefield to nearby Avdeevka. Currently, Opytnoe has no electricity, gas or water supplies, and little prospect of them resuming. But Rodion stays there, and for all the grandmas depending on him, it means that the village is still alive. The authorities make it clear that the heavily damaged infrastructure in the grey zone won't be repaired in the foreseeable future. But Rodion is stubborn and resourceful. 'I saved some money and I am ready to rebuild my house', he says, 'And I am planning to install a solar panel on the roof'.

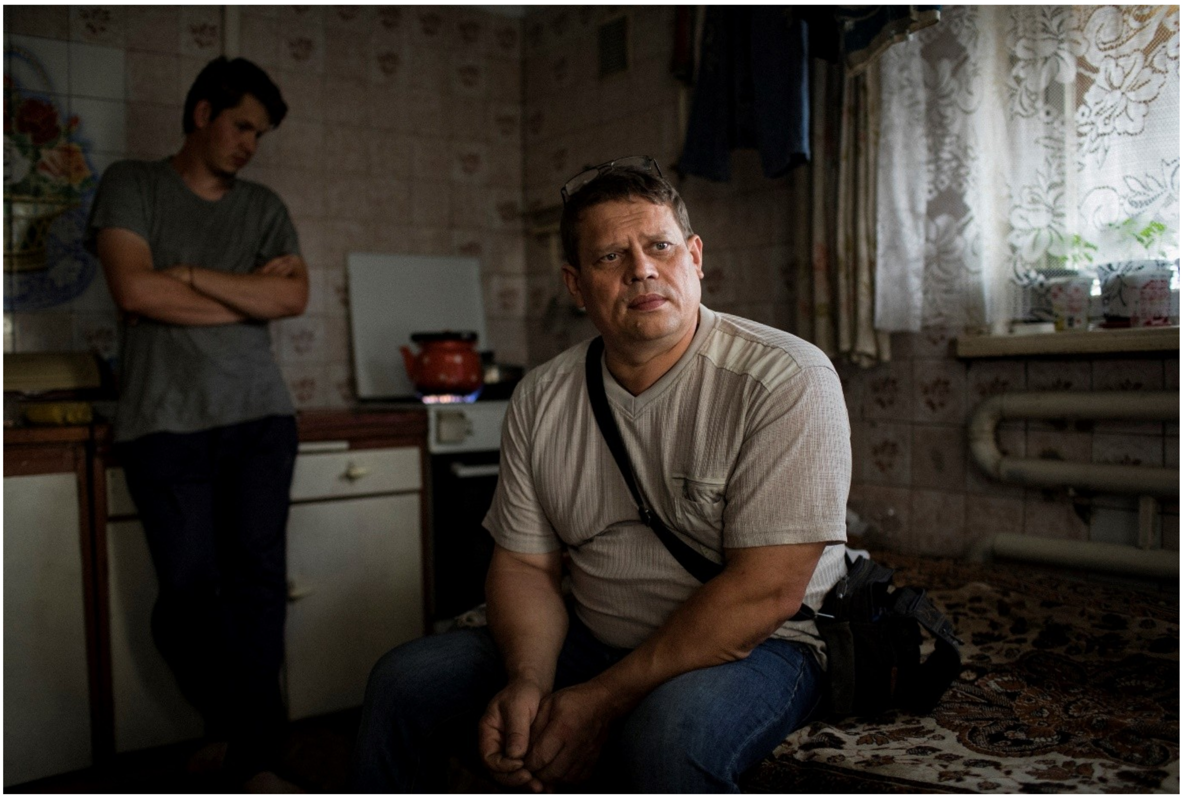


Image description: A sombre middle-age man sitting in a dark kitchen.

Source: Anastasia Taylor-Lind/Instagram.

5. People who look urban and Western can also be victims of war

Visual representations of the war in Ukraine in Western media are heavily dominated by images of *babushka*—an elderly Slavic woman wearing a headscarf, dressed in shabby dark clothes, usually portrayed in a context of misery and distress. A visual emphasis on a woman with a head covering is widely considered to be a part of the orientalist discourse (Khalid 2011, Roushanzamir 2004, Zabel 2001). According to Maryam Khalid (2011), at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the gendered and orientalist visual representations of the 'veiled oppressed Muslim woman' have become a major trend in the informational discourse of the War on Terror. By the time of the outbreak of the conflict in Ukraine in 2014, there was a whole generation of photojournalists for whom the visual representation of war was intertwined with the image of a covered woman. *Babushka* with her headscarf perfectly fits into the aesthetic cliché of war that has formed over the last two decades.

Photojournalists often justify this aesthetic choice by the search for recognizable local features. If you photograph young urban Ukrainians, even though they have suffered from war, they will look like any other young urban people in the globalised world. But is this really a legible reason to deny them recognition of their suffering? Unlike many legacy media photo-editors, who might pass over these images because they are not immediately legible as images of war, for our photo project, we took the opposite approach. We publish these quotidian images on our feeds, with the hope that it might be (part of) a solution to the problem of othering.

Image 8. Dasha Zelenina is 28 years old. She works at a pizzeria in Toretsk situated along the highway, the place where people used to stop for a lunch on their way to Gorlovka. Now that Gorlovka is out of government control, the road runs into the frontline instead and as a result, the pizzeria suffered a drop in clientele. However, the place is still popular among the locals. Dasha doesn’t speak English. In this photo she is wearing a t-shirt with the words ‘Choose Peace’. She didn’t realise what was written on her T-shirt and how symbolic it was until we told her. When Dasha needs translation, she usually consults her colleague Iulia who speaks perfect English. Iulia has recently graduated from Gorlovka Institute for Foreign Languages but could only get a job as a waitress. The reason for this is typical for wartime Eastern Ukraine: her diploma was issued by the Ministry of Education of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People’s Republic and therefore is invalid in mainland Ukraine. She has moved out of the separatist-controlled territory but still suffers from the warzone’s lack of opportunities for young people—especially for the young people with invalid diplomas.

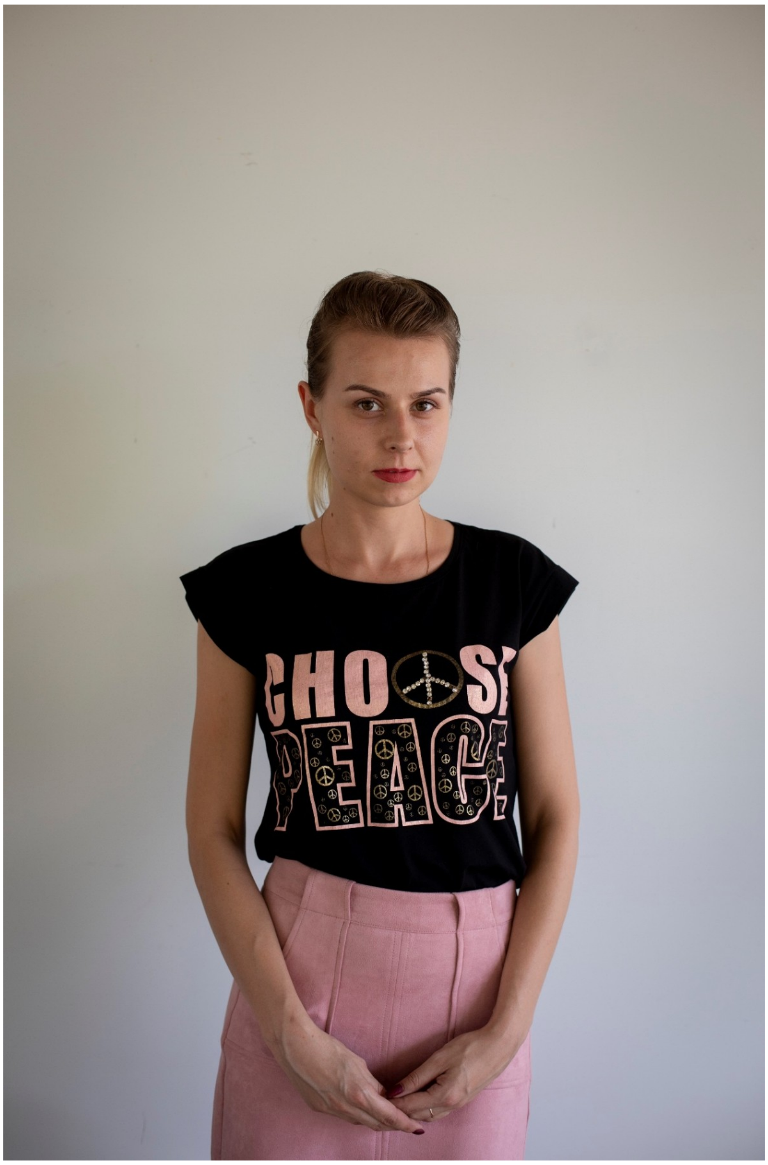


Image description: A young woman wearing a t-shirt with the print ‘Choose Peace’, looking straight into camera.

Source: Anastasia Taylor-Lind/Instagram.

Looking back, looking forward

Social media have a dubious reputation. They are widely viewed as infantilising and mind-numbing; they are associated with scandals around disinformation and data mining. At times, I myself feel hesitant to acknowledge that the #5Kfromthefrontline project operates on Facebook and Instagram, and not through more 'respectable' media. That said, I argue that the enthusiasm of the 1990s which celebrated the then-new era of the internet for its democratization of public discourse was not as naïve or ungrounded as it might appear. For all their faults, social media platforms do challenge the monopoly of conventional media and give the floor to marginalised perspectives that would not otherwise reach the public realm. Moreover, their ubiquity pushes professional media to consider such perspectives and engage with user-generated content. Thus, such outlets as The New York Times and Time magazine ventured to publish stories based on #5Kfromthefrontline after their editors saw our coverage on social media. This way, we effectively reminded the gatekeepers of mass media discourse about the 'forgotten' war and demonstrated that journalistic coverage of violence does not have to rely on damaging clichés to be interesting to wide audiences.

The current, historically unprecedented, degree of public access to digital technologies and communication networks is a double-edged sword. It may endanger vulnerable populations—but it may also empower them. Rather than shortsightedly applaud this mass technological liberation or engage in a moral panic about its dangers, it is perhaps worth acknowledging both its hazards and its powers and working towards a culture of using them for good causes.

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