



## Art from Regions in Conflict

**Art from Ukraine.** In the past year, we have seen countless images of war and destruction since Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022. Despite the massive conflict infrastructure, many artists have used art to document the conflicts and inspire hope.

- Ukrainian artist, Matvii Vaisberg, fled to Poland and Germany after the Russian invasion in February 2022. Vaisberg did several works while in Germany, but he returned to his home country after several months and now paints from Kyiv. His work captures both heartbreaking images of the war and the beauty and resilience of the people. You can view albums of his work on Flickr: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/139066164@N02/albums>, and a collection of his work dedicated to the war in Ukraine was exhibited at the Ukraine Embassy in 2022.
- Like Vaisberg's work, artist Vadim Grinchenko has recently documented the conflict in Ukraine in his work. In the video, Ukraine War: Artist Paints 'Horror' which 'Photos Can't Express', Grinchenko is standing amid a destroyed area of Kyiv, painting what he sees around him to document the pain and his own emotions to share the story of his country's trials and life with future generations.
- While some artists capture the devastation on the ground, others, like the Ukrainian Quilter's Association, continue to engage in their craft and share their works virtually and in person even while areas of their country are under attack. You can see some of their work on the Ukraine Quilters Association Facebook page: Ukrainian Quilter's Association | Kyiv | Facebook (requires account login). In addition, quilting organizations worldwide have created quilts in the colors of the Ukrainian flag or with sunflowers in solidarity with the nation. These quilts have been donated to refugees or sold to raise funds for humanitarian efforts. Learn about one of these efforts by visiting Quilts For Ukraine | The Freedom Quilt Project For Ukraine.
- Other Ukrainians have used this time to show the country's traditional art. Decorative Folk Art of Ukraine, an exhibit at the Barron Arts Center in Woodbridge, New Jersey, in the summer of 2021, showcased vibrant, traditional art from the personal collection of Ukrainian Yuri Mischenko and his wife. Mischenko shares how they began their collection, returning to Ukraine and seeing someone use a ritual cloth as a cleaning rag. He also explains the cultural significance and historical background of several pieces.

**Art from Afghanistan.** In September 2021, the world witnessed the chaotic evacuation of US Military and Afghan civilians as the Taliban continued regaining control. While the country continues to experience a loss of human rights and a lack of resources, we can still view examples of artistic expression from the Afghan people.

- Murad Khani is a neighborhood in Afghanistan historically known for its architecture and ancient crafts. Watch this video, [Murad Khani: The ancient arts of Afghanistan are being reborn - YouTube](#), to learn about the efforts in 2006 to uncover many of the area's structures from debris and reconstruct them while reviving the traditional arts such as ceramics and jewelry. These efforts provided much-needed jobs for the local people. You can view several rebuilt structures on [The Transformation of Murad Khani](#) via Google Arts and Culture.
- While the US occupation in Afghanistan opened the door for more opportunities for creative expression, many artists, particularly women, still faced challenges. The [Kabul Art Project](#), started in 2013 by German artist Christina Hallmann, created space for Afghan artists to connect to resources to help promote, exhibit and sell their work to foreign collectors and venues. The project has supported more than two dozen contemporary artists. You can learn about some artists and their stories in a 2016 article, [A New Generation of Afghan Artists The Kabul Art Project](#), and view some of their work on the [Kabul Art Project Facebook page](#).
- Known as Afghanistan's first female graffiti artist, [Shamsia Hassan's](#) work has appeared on walls across Afghanistan and other parts of the world. Believing that painting on walls can bring art to people who did not have access to museums, much of Hassan's art features women engaging in music, education, and having freedom in society. In the video [Meet Kabul's Female Graffiti Master - YouTube](#), she explains the motivation for her work. In addition, we see how the focus of her work shifted in 2021 as conditions in her country changed (see [Heartbreaking Art from Afghanistan's First Street Artist Shamsia Hassani](#)).
- Another female artist, Hangama Amiri, is an Afghan-Canadian textile artist based in New Haven, CT. Her work represents experiences from life in her homeland, from which her family fled when she was a child. Among the works in a current exhibit, [Hangama Amiri: Homage to Home](#) at the Aldridge Contemporary Arts Museum, is a detailed, colorful depiction of a bazaar in Kabul. The piece's size and detail draw the viewer in as if they were browsing through the marketplace. Other works by the artist send a message of women's empowerment and a call for freedom and rights for women, as described in the *Culture* magazine article [Hangama Amiri Will Not Let Freedom for Afghanistan Women Be Forgotten](#).

*May we avoid blaming or bias based on our circumstance and continue to be grateful for the gifts of the global community.*

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