

# **Lada Nakonechna**

## ***Studium des Menschen***

**March 26 - April 23, 2022**  
**Galerie EIGEN + ART Leipzig**

The classic training in painting and drawing at the National Academy of Visual Arts Kyiv comprises the study of the human body using the example of ancient sculptures. Their standard bodily proportions should train the artistic gaze in the ability to transpose what is seen into a depiction of the human being. Students learn based on uniform, supposedly universal and timeless male bodies, not on particular bodies or those marked by history and the present. From each of these objects of study, Lada Nakonechna molded one body part, the knee, in paper mâché.

The knee is the largest joint in the human body.

The artist connects the knee forms to black metal tubes that leave the joint on both sides. A pipe almost six meters long draws the gaze and body of the exhibition visitors to the group of objects.

The kneecap extends the lever of the hamstring, thereby improving the force transfer.

The exhibition was set up before Russia invaded the whole of Ukraine. "But for me, for us," says the artist, "the war has been here for eight years."

The materials used for the objects – paper mâché and metal – are extremely divergent in terms of haptics, weight, and stability. The knee shapes connect with the tubes, or the tubes penetrate the shapes. Coolly illuminated, they appear quite different from the models from which the artist molded them: simultaneously elemental and extremely vulnerable and precarious.

Many bones, muscles, and ligaments come together in the knee and make it possible to bend, stretch, and twist. That's why the knee is termed a swivel-hinge joint , in German a "Dreh-Scharniergelenk".

We are familiar with "hub", in German "Drehscheibe", as a geopolitical term. And others related to it: maneuvering mass, territory, venue. Is something recognizable from the content of these words?

The large-format pictures that comprise a second group of works in the space are inspired by the aesthetics of the woodcut. This printing technique is seldom used for mimetic or realistic depictions; instead, the hand with the cutting tool pares something out of the material, which has a kind of will of its own. Lada Nakonechna, too, pares something out of the photos of the Belorussian-Polish border that she found in the Internet. Her cutouts are created when she manually scores and removes the upper layer from segments of the photo paper. In the carved out forms, the viewer recognizes already at first glance and from a distance the abstracted branches and boughs. A second glance from close up also recognizes branches and boughs in the original photographs. The third glance recognizes people, blurred.

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A forest, a nowhere. “Unrecognizable,” says Lada Nakonechna, “is the experience of the border, the experience of being expelled

and lost, the experience of people who are a political pawn, of people in places that are not subjects within world politics.”

The abstraction of the cutout poses questions to realism, which gins to glitch. We hear the questions as the crackling of branches or in the joint. Where is subjectivity recognized, and to whom acknowledged? Who is regarded as political subject, and where?

Text: Carolin Krahl

Translation: Mitch Cohen

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**Lada Nakonechna** (\*1981 in Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine) studied at the National Academy of Fine Arts and Architecture in Kyiv. Her works have been shown nationally and internationally in solo and group exhibitions, including the 54th Venice Biennale, the National Art Museum of Ukraine in Kyiv, the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, the Kyiv Biennale, the Kunsthalle Trondheim and the Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst Leipzig. She is part of the artists' collective Revolutionary Experimental Space (R.E.P.) and co-founder of Hudrada and the ISTM initiative for artists in Ukraine.

„Studium des Menschen“ is already the 6th solo exhibition at Galerie EIGEN + ART since the first cooperation in 2012.