

ESRA stands with Ukraine

We are sharing with you (see below):

1. the appeal from our colleagues from the Ukrainian Shakespeare Centre
2. the anti-war letter signed by Shakespeare scholars in Russia, who openly assumed the risk of repressive action when protesting: <http://project5259210.tilda.ws/>
3. the statement to artist and art institutions in the West that Olesya Ostrovska, director at the Mystetsky Arsenal in Kyiv (Ukraine's largest artistic venue), has written (and we have received courtesy of Irena Makaryk).
4. a useful Unicef address: www.unicef.org/ukraine/en

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1. The appeal from our colleagues from the Ukrainian Shakespeare Centre.

They are running ‘a campaign supporting the Ukrainian soldiers who are fighting to protect the civilian population of Ukraine. The list of items that are urgently needed at the front lines includes:

1. karemats
2. sleeping bags
3. wet wipes
4. toilet paper
5. soap
6. towels
7. medicines
8. flashlights
9. batteries
10. food supplies with long shelf life

Thank you very much for always standing with Ukraine!’

An account in USD and one in EURO have been opened for donations to buy all the necessary supplies and send them to the front lines. If you would like to donate, please email europeshakespeare@gmail.com directly for the account details.

2. Against War with Ukraine [A Statement by Russian Scholars of Shakespeare](#)

We, Russian and Russian-speaking Shakespeare scholars, researchers and practitioners of Shakespearean theater and specialists in the culture of the Elizabethan era draw inspiration and strength from the works of the author who embodies the totality of humanistic values, a monstrous violation of which is war, especially fratricidal war. We are writing this to express our solidarity with Ukraine and our Ukrainian colleagues from the [Ukrainian Shakespeare Center](#). We call for an immediate cessation of bloodshed and a return to the negotiation process.

Shakespeare studies in Russia and Ukraine began with Nikolai Ivanovich Storozhenko, a native of Poltava and professor at Moscow University, who was the first literary critic from Russia and Ukraine to write a doctoral dissertation on Shakespeare in England. Also, the founder of the Shakespeare Committee Aleksandr Abramovich Anikst did everything to help Ukrainian Shakespeare scholars to gain organizational independence. The Collected Works of Shakespeare in Ukrainian is the latest in the former USSR (even though it is almost forty years old).

Long-standing ties between Russian and Ukrainian theaters and Shakespearean productions are too numerous to discuss here. It is enough to recall that without Ukrainian director, Les Kurbas, most likely, there would be no Mikhoels’s “Lear” (albeit under sad circumstances).

We are ashamed that the Russian troops have done what until recently seemed impossible. We are ashamed to hear the never-ending tirades about the supposed cultural “degradation” of Europe and the “West” from high-profile figures in Russia. We know what the society relying solely on “our own path” in research cannot but stagnate. Without open interaction between researchers from different countries, Russian humanities are doomed to degradation.

This war is not being fought in our name. Today, explosions are thundering in Ukraine, but they will inevitably be followed by a tightening of repression in Russia. We often say that “Shakespeare unites people”. But it is not Shakespeare that does it, but good will and a sense of a shared academic space. It simply cannot be destroyed.

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Дарья Холопова, магистр
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Конкина А. К., магистр
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Bartoshevich, A. V.
Makarov, V. S.
Ivanov, D. A.
Gaydin, B. N.
Artemieva, L. S.
Vasilieva, E. S.
Savchenko, M. M.
Lutsenko, E. M.
Lesnuzhin, A. J.
Feigina, E. V.
Smirnov, a.
Kovalev, V. A.
Skorochood, N.
Pervushina, E. A.
Grinina, E. N.
Krylova, E. E.
Musvik, V. A.
Pachsariyan, N. T.
Krylov, K. E.
Gulbis, E. O.
Kusnetsov, N. J.
Kholopova, D.

Makeev, D. V.
Radlov, S. D.
Konkina, A. K.
Mikeladze, N. E.
Mamonova, S. K.

3. The statement to artists and art institutions in the West written by Olesya Ostrovska, director at the Mystetsky Arsenal in Kyiv (Ukraine's largest artistic venue), which we received courtesy of Irena Makaryk

Dear colleagues and partners, friends!

This morning, on February 24, Russia launched a full-scale war against Ukraine. Explosions are heard in many cities of Ukraine, and the enemy's tanks and heavy artillery crossed the Ukrainian border from the north, the south, and the east. There already are casualties among Ukrainian soldiers and civilians, including children. By invading the territory of Ukraine, Russia is attacking the basic, fundamental principles of international peace and security, the pillars of the UN, the very existence of the Ukrainian state.

We should be preparing now the Book Arsenal to be held in May, exhibitions, and cross-sectoral projects — instead our team focuses the efforts to ensure the safety of our staff, our families, as well as to guard our collection, museum objects (paintings, graphics, fine art), including the artworks by Malevych, Yermilov, Bohomazov, Petrytskyi, Zaretskyi, etc., works of modern art, archaeological finds, and the Old Arsenal building, which is a historical and architectural monument of national importance.

At this time, we need your solidarity and support more than ever. Today's invasion has the potential of becoming bigger and even deadlier than anything we have seen since World War II. All this will definitely have a global impact on the whole world and very likely — for generations to come.

Every one of you can help and support us in the following ways:

- Including the information about an ongoing Russian war in Ukraine in your public talks and speeches — during art and literature events, festivals, book fairs, exhibitions; the war that already became a war against the whole civilized world, free thought, democratic values and truth.
- Initiating joint public statements from civil organizations, institutions, and industry associations — writers, publishers, and booksellers, artists and museums; sharing information on the war and the current situation in social media with the hashtag [#StandWithUkraine](#), providing truthful commentaries to international media.
- Sharing the information on human rights and lives of Kremlin's Ukrainian political prisoners with a hashtag [#SolidarityWords](#). Currently, 127 Ukrainian citizens, including 89 Crimean Tatars, are in prisons or under house arrest in Russia and temporarily occupied Crimea — for political reasons. Moreover, at least 300 Ukrainians are imprisoned for their identity and disagreement with Russian occupation in the territories in Donetsk and Luhansk regions.
- We ask you to share publicly the successful stories of cooperation with Ukraine. In recent years our country achieved essential progress in arts and literature, cultural diplomacy, sharing and promoting European values. We would like to protect this important vector and defend the positive milestones we have mutually achieved.
- Highlight contemporary Ukrainian art and discussing the books of modern writers, who wrote and continue writing about the war in Ukraine, which has been going on for 8 years. On our part, as a leading art institution we are eager to provide you with all the information we have.

- Show your solidarity with Ukraine, support peace and draw attention of your fellow citizens, media and politicians by using the facades of your offices and other available spaces for artistic and symbolic actions showing the colours of Ukrainian flag.

The mission of Mystetskyi Arsenal and one of its main projects - the Book Arsenal Festival is to create such interactions between people, communities, and institutions that empower an individual and society. This mission is clearly not about aggression or its escalation, it is not about the forces of evil and destruction either. Although we are resisting the invasion as best as possible, we are trying to remain calm and do everything we need in order to be prepared.

We believe above all that our Armed Forces, with the support of everyone involved, will stop the enemy and we will be able to meet in Kyiv this spring. We look forward to acknowledging and appreciating together the principles of humanism, freedom, and critical thinking during the events.

We Ukrainians, are a peace-loving nation. We will defend our land, our families, and our right to freedom and independence. We will defend our European choice.

Olesiya Ostrovska director
Mystetskyi Arsenal,
Kyiv, Ukraine

4. Unicef address

www.unicef.org/ukraine/en