

Press Release

Kateryna Lysovenko
Noch eine Welle

13 June – 5 September 2026
Opening 12 June, 6 – 8 pm

Early formation and adolescence of Kateryna Lysovenko fall into the late 1990s, a period of historical rupture marked by the reconfiguration of the geopolitical map of the world and characterized by widespread waves of migration, including within post-Soviet Ukraine. It felt as though we were living inside a single historical moment, trying to count successive waves of migration, attempting to understand who we were and where we stood in time.

Migration always implies a rupture with the ground, but it also raises the question of memory: whether any trace will remain, whether there will be something that preserves our existence within history. These processes once seemed to belong to the past, as the world increasingly understood itself as nomadic, post-national, and based on freedom of movement and choice. Yet this illusion collapses when migration becomes forced.

The wave is one of the fundamental concepts in physics, used to describe a vast range of phenomena in nature, from sound to light and quantum processes. At the same time, it has become deeply embedded in many languages as a metaphor for anger, violence, unrest, and migration: they do not begin or end abruptly but surge, propagate, subside, and return. Forced migration, especially in the context of war, is not only a geographical displacement but also a bodily rupture. The body is thrown out of its familiar environment and loses its stable coordinates: it no longer knows how to speak, how to move, where to belong, or in what way to be visible, becoming an unidentifiable polyform, like a giant crawling snail in *Baroque Autumn in Vienna*. In this work, the snail occupies almost the entire canvas, a viscous, slow-moving organism that seems to generate new cells as it expands. Its body unfolds—or rather proliferates—before our eyes in a continuous process of multiplication, where growth is inseparable from division. These cellular formations are simultaneously perceived as nourishing breasts, collapsing distinctions between reproduction, bodily excess, and sustenance.

The theme of bodily alienation is also present in Kateryna's ongoing series *Soldiers and Stars*. Soldier figures remain recognizably human even as they merge with the surrounding landscape, being transformed into plants and gradually absorbed by the humus. Where do their bodies belong? To the state, to history, or to the environment that absorbs them? In the work *Right to Be*, this logic becomes even more condensed: a closed, compressed bodily form appears as a mass folded into itself. Painted in purple-cinnabar tones traditionally associated with royalty and mourning, these works evoke the sensation of wounded flesh.

At the opposite pole are *Divers* and *My Mother in the Wave*, in which the body dissolves into a fluid environment. The figures become almost transparent, dreamlike, losing the boundary between the body and the movement of water. Here, the wave ceases to be a threat and becomes a mode of existence. Having grown up in Odesa, the artist inherits the experience of a coastal city where the wave is not a motif but a lived condition. To survive the storm, one does not necessarily resist it—one should enter its dynamics and align with its rhythm of rise and fall.

Is this applicable to refugees in society?

This thinking has led Kateryna to define three possible modes of emigration for artists: they may become trapped in the past and turn into ghosts of themselves; they may remake themselves from scratch and create a new identity; or—as the role she had prepared for herself—become a bridge between two different worlds: the one she was forced to leave and the one in which she has no stable rootedness; a bridge over the rupture.

At the same time, this position of the “bridge” is not only existential or biographical. It also unfolds within a specifically contemporary condition of art-making, in which the artist is already inscribing herself into the history of art. This inscription is not deferred to a future moment of recognition; it takes place now, within the ongoing field of contemporary art, where questions of visibility, survival, and historical legibility are inseparable. To think about her own artistic practice is therefore to consider its future readability—how it might be situated, preserved, or fragmented within an art history that is still in the process of being written.

Another Wave captures a moment of transition—physical, psychological, and historical. It emerges at the intersection of personal migratory experience and current historical catastrophe, in which artistic and cultural memory become unstable. And thus the question remains, without closure: how is artistic memory preserved after destruction, and what remains of the body once it becomes a wave?

Tatiana Kochubinska