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**MASTER'S DEGREE PHOTO ART PROJECT
"ON THE LINE OF FIRE"****Oxana Chorna^{1a}, Oleksandr Butko^{2b}**

¹PhD in Economic Sciences, Associate Professor,
Master of Audiovisual Art and Production;
e-mail: ksu.black@gmail.com; ORCID: 0000-0003-0358-4497

²Honored Journalist of Ukraine, Associate Professor
at the Department of Television Journalism;
e-mail: butko2016@ukr.net; ORCID: 0000-0002-5054-284X

^aKyiv University of Culture, Kyiv, Ukraine

^bKyiv National University of Culture and Arts, Kyiv, Ukraine

**МАГІСТЕРСЬКИЙ ФОТОМИСТЕЦЬКИЙ ПРОЄКТ
«НА ЛІНІЇ ВОГНЮ»****Оксана Чорна^{1a}, Олександр Бутко^{2b}**

¹кандидат економічних наук, доцент,
магістр аудіовізуального мистецтва та виробництва;
e-mail: ksu.black@gmail.com; ORCID: 0000-0003-0358-4497

²заслужений журналіст України, доцент кафедри тележурналістики;
e-mail: butko2016@ukr.net; ORCID: 0000-0002-5054-284X

^aКиївський університет культури, Київ, Україна

^bКиївський національний університет культури і мистецтв, Київ, Україна

The author's concept of the Master's degree photo art project is a visual narrative about people of war, created from within the events themselves, through the eyes of a military photographer Oxana Chorna who shares the reality with the heroes of her pictures. Its main aim is to show not only combat operations, but above all the human dimension of war: faces, emotions, relationships, everyday life and brief moments of calm and inner strength that shape a true image of the Ukrainian warrior. This project seeks to demonstrate that war photography can be not only a document, but also an independent artistic statement – honest, empathetic and at the same time deeply personal.

Articles about the full-scale Russian aggression against Ukraine have been published in scientific journals: "Transformation of News Content in Wartime on the Example of the "United News" Telethon" (Butko and Leskiv, 2024); "Gender dimensions of survival: cinematographic images of women in the context of war (XX–early XXI century)" (Bezruchko and Ruzhanskyi, 2025); "Ukrainian TV Journalism as Information Weapon in Wartime" (Danyliuk and Filonenko, 2025), etc. In Ukraine, many interesting photo projects have been published in recent years: "Master's Art Photo Project "Ukrainian Renaissance". Part 1: "Ukrainian Girl with a Pearl Earring. In the Footsteps of Jan Vermeer"" (Havran, Kotliar and Zaspas, 2021); "Master's Photo Art Project 'Ethnic Language of the Sacred'" (Bezruchko and Bardyn, 2021); "Photo Art Project 'Female Multi-Component Associative Image 'Fern Blossom'. Part 1 (Zaspas and Bezruchko, 2021); "Master's Photo Art Project 'Erotica in Photography: from Analog to Digital'. Part 1 (Kukorenchuk, Vdovychenko and Bondar, 2022); "Master's Photo Art Project 'Development of Ukrainian film distribution in Lviv region as a component of film production in Ukraine'" (Bezruchko and Kachmar, 2022); "Photo Art Project in Search of the Meaning of Being" (Bezruchko and Hrymalska, 2022); "Master's Photo Art Project "Manifestations of the Sacred Zaporizhzhia"" (Zaporozhchenko and Sydorenko, 2023); "Master's Photo Art Project "Ancient Sambir in Modern Photographs"" (Bezruchko and Anisimova, 2024); "Master's Photo art Project Hen Party" (Chernichkin and Balan, 2025), etc. Still, none of the photo projects were shot directly on the front of the Russian-Ukrainian war.

The project grounds on photographs created in various conditions – from combat positions and frontline areas to places of short rest, training, and preparation. These are not merely images of war, but visual stories that capture the inner state of people caught in the midst of events. Each photograph is a part of a coherent narrative as a story of resistance, humanity and resilience, revealed through light, space and vision of the subject.

The intention is to create a visual testimony of modern Ukrainian history, in which war appears not only as a destructive force, but also as a space where a new worldview, a new sense of community and dignity are born. The goal is to show the strength of a person who remains true to themselves even when chaos reigns around them. At the centre of the project are people who perform their duty while remaining alive and authentic, capable of compassion, humour, care and dreams: a soldier, a medical worker, a drone operator, a mechanic, a reconnaissance scout.

The project is distinguished by a combination of documentary accuracy and artistic expression. The photography was carried out using natural light, often in difficult con-

ditions—in dugouts, trenches, under shelling and among ruins. Each frame is marked by deliberate composition, emotional emphasis and metaphorical depth. Light and shadow here are not merely technical elements, but carriers of meaning: they convey the psychological state of war, the contrasts between life and death, fear and faith, darkness and hope.

A direct participant in combat events, Oxana Chorna, does not observe from the sidelines but lives among her subjects, breathing the same air as they do. This makes it possible to create a visually truthful and at the same time profoundly human story, seen from the inside. The aim of the project is to preserve the living memory of those who fight, create and survive, so that future generations will see not only the chronicle of war, but also the faces of those who made it part of our national dignity.

Keywords: war photography; documentary photography; Armed Forces of Ukraine; 23rd separate mechanised brigade; historical heritage of the war

Авторський задум магістерського фотомистецького проекту полягає у створенні візуальної оповіді про людей війни, сформованої зсередини подій очима військової фотографки Оксани Чорної, яка розділяє з героями знімків їхню реальність. Його головна мета – показати не лише бойові дії, а передусім людський вимір війни: обличчя, емоції, стосунки, побут, короткі моменти спокою і сили духу, які формують справжнє обличчя українського воїна. Проект прагне довести, що воєнна фотографія може бути не тільки документом, а й самостійним мистецьким висловленням – чесним, емпатійним і водночас глибоко особистим.

Про повномасштабну російську агресію проти України опубліковано низку наукових статей, зокрема: «Трансформація новинного контенту в умовах війни на прикладі телемарафону “Єдині новини”» (Бутко та Леськів, 2024); «Гендерні виміри виживання: кінематографічні образи жінок у контексті війни (XX – початок XXI ст.)» (Безручко та Ружанський, 2025); «Українська тележурналістика як інформаційна зброя в умовах війни» (Данилюк та Філоненко, 2025). В Україні останніми роками надруковано багато цікавих фотопроектів: «“Український Ренесанс”. Частина 1: “Українка з перлинною сережкою. Слідами Яна Вермера”» (Гавран, Котляр та Заспа, 2021); «Етнічна мова сакрального» (Bezruchko and Bardyn, 2021); «Жіночий багатокомпонентний асоціативний образ “Цвіт папороті”». Частина 1 (Zaspa and Bezruchko, 2021); «Еротика у фотографії: від аналога до цифри». Частина 1 (Kukorenchuk, Vdovychenko and Bondar, 2022); «Розвиток українського кінопрокату на Львівщині як складова кіновиробництва в Україні» (Bezruchko and Kachmar, 2022); «В пошуках сенсу буття» (Bezruchko and Hrymalska, 2022); «Прояви сакрального Запоріжжя» (Zarogozhchenko and Sydorenko, 2023); «Древній Самбір у сучасних світлинах» (Безручко та Анісімова, 2024); «Дівич-вечір» (Чернічкін та Балан, 2025) та ін. Проте жоден із зазначених фотопроектів не був знятий безпосередньо на фронті російсько-української війни.

Основу проекту становлять фотографії, створені у різних умовах – від бойових позицій і передових ліній до місць короткого перепочинку, тренувань і підготовки. Це не просто кадри війни, а візуальні історії, що фіксують внутрішній стан людей, які опинилися у вирі подій. Кожна світлина є частиною цілісного нарративу – історії спротиву, людяності й незламності, що розкривається через світло, простір і погляд героя.

Авторський задум також передбачає створення візуального свідчення сучасної історії України, у якому війна постає не лише як руйнівна сила, а і як простір формування нового світогляду, нової спільності та гідності. Метою є репрезентація сили людини, яка залишається собою, навіть коли навколо панує хаос. У центрі проекту – солдат, медик, оператор дрона, механік, розвідник – люди, які виконують свій обов'язок і водночас залишаються живими, справжніми, здатними на співчуття, гумор, турботу і мрії.

Проект вирізняється поєднанням документальності та художності. Зйомка здійснювалася в природному освітленні, часто в складних умовах – у бліндажах, окопах, під обстрілами, серед руїн. Проте кожен кадр має свідому композицію, емоційний акцент і метафоричну насиченість. Світло і тінь постають не лише

технічними елементами, а носіями сенсу, що передають психологічний стан війни, контрасти життя і смерті, страху і віри, темряви і надії.

Оксана Чорна – безпосередня учасниця бойових подій, яка не спостерігає збоку, а живе серед своїх героїв і розділяє з ними спільний досвід. Це дає змогу створити візуально правдиву і водночас глибоко людяну історію, побачену зсередини. Метою проєкту є збереження живої пам'яті про тих, хто воює, творить і виживає, щоб майбутні покоління бачили не лише хроніку війни, а й обличчя тих, хто зробив її частиною нашої національної гідності.

Ключові слова: воєнна фотографія; документальна фотографія; Збройні Сили України; 23 окрема механізована бригада; історичний спадок війни

Photograph No. 1



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Photograph No. 1, titled "BM-21 'Grad' Multiple Launch Rocket System during a salvo firing in the area of the settlement of Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk region. Novopavlivka direction. April 2025", from the Master's degree photo art project

Camera / Lens

Nikon Z9 / AF-S Nikkor 24–70 mm f/2.8

**Technical specifications
of Photograph No. 1:**

34 mm | F/3.2 | ISO 200 | 1/1250 s

**Technical specifications
of Photograph No. 1:**

- Basic retouching

**Image editing of Photograph No. 1
in Adobe Lightroom Classic**

Natural daylight was used for this shoot.

The authorial concept of Photograph No. 1

This photograph is a visual testimony to a moment of maximum concentration of power, rhythm, and danger, where the technology of war intersects with human determination. The frame captures the instant of a salvo fired from the BM-21 "Grad" system, when fire and smoke form a powerful dynamic composition that symbolizes both the destructive strength of the Ukrainian Armed Forces and the unbreakable energy of resistance. What is depicted is not merely a documentary record of combat activity, but a metaphor for organized force that defends life in spite of the chaos of war.

The intention is to present the aesthetics of military action not as a glorification of weapons, but as a manifestation of discipline, technical precision and collective coordination through which Ukrainian soldiers stop the enemy. The "Grad" launching rockets in the middle of a wheat field just beginning to sprout is perceived as part of a vast defensive mechanism in which human intellect and steel merge into a single will.

Compositionally, the image is built on the contrast between fire and darkness, movement and stillness. This creates an effect of explosive tension that is at once controlled and ordered. At the center of the frame is the moment when war speaks the language of light, glare, smoke, and force, yet behind this energy stands the cold focus and precise calculations of the artillery crew.

Photograph No. 2



Photograph No. 2, titled "Reconnaissance Soldiers of the 23rd Separate Mechanised Brigade in the area of Pokrovske settlement. September 2025", from the Master's degree photo art project.

Camera / Lens

Nikon Z9 / AF-S Nikkor 105 mm f/1.4

**Technical specifications
of Photograph No. 2:**

105 mm | F/1.4 | ISO 100 | 1/32,000 s

**Image editing of Photograph No. 2
in Adobe Lightroom Classic:**

- Basic retouching

**Image editing of Photograph No. 2
in Adobe Lightroom Classic**

Natural daylight was used for this shoot.

The authorial concept of Photograph No. 2

This photograph is a visual metaphor for resilience, brotherhood and inner strength of the Ukrainian warrior. This image shows five reconnaissance soldiers standing shoulder to shoulder in full combat gear, their black silhouettes carved against a sunset sky filled with soft orange light. Contrasts create a simultaneous sense of calm and tension: a moment before a new day of struggle, when darkness and light are still in balance.

The author's intention is to present the Ukrainian warrior not as an isolated figure, but as part of a unity forged by a shared purpose and common trials. Their silhouettes are stripped of individual features, and in this lies direct symbolism: each of them embodies the entire army, a nation standing in defense of its land. At the same time, even within the faceless shadow, their confidence, readiness and inner dignity are clearly felt.

Compositionally, the photograph is built on horizontal balance, reinforcing a sense of formation, discipline, and mutual support. The light of the sunset symbolises hope born in spite of war, while the soldiers' silhouettes represent the steadiness and calm of those who hold the front line.

This work is an attempt to convey heroism through silence, strength through stillness, and war through its human dimension. It serves as a reminder that even in the darkest times, there remains a light in the heart of the Ukrainian warrior that does not fade.

Photograph No. 3



Photograph No. 3, titled "Securing a TM-62 mine on a 'Vampir' drone before a combat sortie on the Kharkiv axis. Unmanned Systems Battalion of the 23rd Separate Mechanised Brigade. July 2024", from the Master's degree photo art project.

Camera / Lens

Nikon Z9 / Nikkor Z 50 mm f/1.2 S, tripod

**Technical specifications
of Photograph No. 3:**

50 mm | F/1.3 | ISO 1200 | 1/3 s

**Image editing of Photograph No. 3
in Adobe Lightroom Classic:**

- Basic retouching

**Image editing of Photograph No. 3
in Adobe Lightroom Classic**

Natural light and headlamp illumination
were used for this shoot.

The authorial concept of Photograph No. 3

This image is an attempt to capture the moment when technology and human responsibility intersect at their most fragile point (on the eve of a combat mission). The nighttime forest becomes a neutral yet critically important stage of action: noise recedes, leaving only the beam of the sight, the movement of hands and the air compressed by anticipation.

There are two soldiers at the centre of the frame: their silhouettes, focused hands, attentive gazes. The drone, as an object of technology, contrasts with the organic presence of branches and the lethargic stillness of the forest. I do not seek to depict the mechanics of the process; rather, I am interested in the human dimension of this moment (discipline, silent coordination, weight of choice borne by those preparing the aircraft for launch). The light of the headlamps, focused and red, renders the material world tangible, emphasising the sharp forms of the drone while blurring the moving silhouettes. At the same time, it creates an aura of uncertainty (what remains hidden in the darkness stays beyond the frame).

Compositionally, a high vantage point and a tight framing were used to bring the viewer closer to the action without losing the intimacy of the scene. The presence of the natural environment (branches, grass, and the dark sky) underscores the dual nature of the setting: it is both shelter and battlefield. A crucial role is played by the balance between stillness (the stationary drone, the trees) and impending movement (the forthcoming flight), creating a sense of tension and anticipation of a decision.

Photograph No. 4



Photograph No. 4, titled "Combat operation of a mobile fire group of the Anti-Aircraft Missile and Artillery Battalion of the 23rd Separate Mechanised Brigade in the area of the settlement of Iskra. May 2025", from the Master's photo art project.

Camera / Lens

Nikon Z9 / Nikkor Z 50 mm f/1.2 S, tripod

**Technical specifications
of Photograph No. 4:**

50 mm | F/1.2 | ISO 200 | 1/800 s

**Image editing of Photograph No. 4
in Adobe Lightroom Classic:**

- Basic retouching

**Image editing of Photograph No. 4
in Adobe Lightroom Classic**

Natural daylight was used for this shoot.

The authorial concept of Photograph No. 4

This work is an attempt to freeze a moment in which the mechanics of lethal technology and human determination transform into an act of protection. The scene unfolds at sunset, when low, warm light accentuates the outlines of the pickup truck, the machine gun and the figures of the soldiers, creating an aesthetic contrast between the beauty of the evening landscape and the harsh reality of combat action.

There is an interaction between people and a machine at the centre of the frame: hands supporting the machine gun, shoulders tightened with tension, faces beneath helmets directed toward the threat. I seek to depict not an explosion or the effect of fire, but the process itself as a defense of the rear area, professionalism of the mobile group, moments when decision and execution occur almost simultaneously.

Light and colour play a key role: the setting sun provides warm tonal transitions, long shadows and saturated silhouettes; these are elements that help convey the drama and depth of the scene. Backlighting or side lighting highlights textures (metal, fabric of the uniform, smoke) simultaneously creates a sense of volume and movement.

Composition and viewpoint: a low, mid-level angle is used, making the soldier and the machine gun dominant elements, while the pickup truck becomes a symbol of mobility and fragile safety. A tight semi-portrait combined with a wider frame that includes the sky and horizon creates a feeling of both scale and intimacy. An important detail is the inclusion of landscape elements to emphasise the location and contextual setting.

Emotional dimension: this image evokes a sense of tension and concentration rather than sensationalism. I want a viewer to feel the human factor – calm professionalism and responsibility for the safety of comrades – rather than the ecstatic glorification of war. Faces are shown only partially to preserve intimacy and avoid staged theatricality.

Photograph No. 5



Photograph No. 5, titled "Training live-fire exercises of a BMP-1 of the 2nd Mechanised Battalion of the 23rd Separate Mechanised Brigade at the Dimurino training range. February 2025", from the Master's degree photo art project.

Camera / Lens

Nikon Z9 / AF-S Nikkor 105 mm f/1.4

**Technical specifications
of Photograph No. 5:**

105 mm | F/1.4 | ISO 200 | 1/5000 s

**Image editing of Photograph No. 5
in Adobe Lightroom Classic:**

- Basic retouching

**Image editing of Photograph No. 5
in Adobe Lightroom Classic**
Natural daylight was used for this shoot.

The authorial concept of Photograph No. 5

This photograph is an attempt to capture a moment in which machine, human, and projectile merge into a single act of energy and responsibility. The most compelling instant is the moment the round exits the barrel. It is both technical and metaphorical: an impulse is born that reflects the preparation, training, and control required for the safe and effective execution of a task.

Compositionally, a side and slightly frontal angle was chosen to ensure clear readability of the 73 mm 2A28 "Grom" gun barrel while simultaneously including the metallic texture of the vehicle's hull and the context of the training range within the frame. The anti-drone net above the vehicle becomes a graphic element—it "frames" the sky and adds a layer of contrast between the rough engineering of protection and the dynamic force of the shot. The movement of the projectile, flame, smoke, and rising dust form lines of action that guide the viewer's eye from the barrel upward and forward.

Light and texture: the clear winter sky provides clean, cold illumination that highlights metal details, signs of use, and the texture of the projectile. The muzzle flash (an intense, momentary light source) creates dramatic shadows and emphasizes volume. The colour palette is intentionally restrained (steel, earth, and smoke tones) so as not to distract emotionally from the central action.

The emotional tone of the frame is one of concentration and professionalism. I do not seek to heroize or glorify weapons; my aim is to show technology as a tool in the hands of people learning to control its impact. The image is meant to evoke respect for the profession, an understanding of the weight of training, and the fine line between destructive power and the discipline that restrains it.

Photograph No. 6



Photograph No. 6, titled "UAV operator of the 'Zhnyets' Unmanned Systems Battalion, callsign 'Khmil,' launching a Mavic reconnaissance drone at combat positions. Novopavlivka direction. March 2025", from the Master's degree photo art project.

Camera / Lens

Nikon Z9 / AF-S Nikkor 50 mm f/1.2

**Technical specifications
of Photograph No. 6:**

50 mm | F/1.2 | ISO 400 | 1/800 s

**Image editing of Photograph No. 6
in Adobe Lightroom Classic:**

- Basic retouching

**Image editing of Photograph No. 6
in Adobe Lightroom Classic**

Natural daylight was used for this shoot.

The authorial concept of Photograph No. 6

This photograph is an attempt to convey a moment of silence before action as a moment in which war breathes with deep concentration. The frame shows a pilot launching a reconnaissance drone by hand. His movement is precise, confident, honed by hundreds of similar sorties, each of which may be the last. It is a gesture in which technology and human will converge, cold metal and the warm tension of a living hand.

The monochrome palette of the early spring landscape (gray sky, black earth, faceless field) creates a sense of a space where the boundaries between life and death, between human and machine, have blurred. The worn uniform, scuffed by trench dust, and the yellow armband on the sleeve are the only vivid accents, marking belonging to one's own side, to those who hold the sky above the front line.

This photograph is about the silence of reconnaissance, within which the tension of battle is embedded. It is about an invisible front that lies in the air, where rifles are replaced by drones, trenches by coordinates, and shouts by a focused breath before launch. This is the image of a modern warrior (modest, exhausted, yet precise in his craft) who day after day fights for dominance in the sky over a shattered land.

Photograph No. 7



Photograph No. 7, titled "Intubation of a severely wounded soldier at the stabilisation point of the 23rd Separate Mechanised Brigade. Outskirts of the village of Piddubne. March 2025", from the Master's photo art project.

Camera / Lens

Nikon Z9 / AF-S Nikkor 50 mm f/1.2

**Technical specifications
of Photograph No. 7:**

50 mm | F/1.2 | ISO 400 | 1/800 s

**Image editing of Photograph No. 7
in Adobe Lightroom Classic:**

- Basic retouching

**Image editing of Photograph No. 7
in Adobe Lightroom Classic**

Lighting for this shoot was provided
by operating room lamps.

The authorial concept of Photograph No. 7

This photograph is a documentary testimony of a critical moment between life and death, captured directly in the combat zone.

The author's intention is to show the invisible front of war as a medical front, where the struggle is fought not with weapons but against time, blood loss and pain. The underground shelter of the stabilisation point is deliberately presented as an enclosed, almost airless space, intensifying the sense of tension and the fragility of human life.

Intubation in the frame functions not only as a medical procedure but also as a symbol of the final threshold: the moment when the body can no longer fight on its own and that struggle is taken over by the person standing beside it. There is no heroic pathos in the image; instead, it conveys the quiet, focused professionalism of the medics, their total concentration, and their responsibility for every second.

The author seeks to show war not as an abstract concept, but as a concrete experience of physical vulnerability and human solidarity (where a soldier's life depends on the hands of those who remain in the shadow of combat reports).

This photograph addresses the viewer with a question about the cost of every saved breath and the role of those who, day after day, pull soldiers back from the edge of nonexistence (often without names, awards, public recognition).

Photograph No. 8



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Photograph No. 8, titled "Combat firing of an M109A6 Paladin of the 23rd Separate Mechanised Brigade. Ocheretyne direction. July 2024", from the Master's degree photo art project.

Camera / Lens

Nikon Z9 / AF-S Nikkor 14–24 mm f/2.8

**Technical specifications
of Photograph No. 8:**

24 mm | F/2.8 | ISO 400 | 1/200 s

**Image editing of Photograph No. 8
in Adobe Lightroom Classic:**

- Basic retouching

**Image editing of Photograph No. 8
in Adobe Lightroom Classic**

Natural daylight was used for this shoot.

The authorial concept of Photograph No. 8

This photograph is an attempt to capture not the external image of war, but its physical essence (the bodily, tangible force of a shot that cannot be seen from the outside).

The author's concept involves shifting the point of view inside the combat vehicle, into a space that neither the civilian eye nor the camera is usually allowed to enter. The camouflaged system conceals the artillery from enemy drones, depriving the photographer of the ability to depict the power of the shot in a traditional way via flash, smoke and barrel movement. For this reason, the emphasis is placed on the human inside the machinery of war. The key visual element becomes the deformation of one soldier's face under the influence of the shock wave. This instantaneous, uncontrollable bodily movement serves as direct evidence of the shot's power. Closed eyes, hands pressed to ears, and the rope wrapped around the arm (a mechanical element used to fire the gun) merge human and machine into a single combat organism. The shot is not triggered by pressing a button, but by physical effort, an almost bodily gesture.

This photograph presents artillery not as an abstract notion of "firepower," but as a space where the human body directly interacts with explosive energy. Inside the cramped metal compartment, there is no distance between person and weapon (only a moment in which sound, pressure, and fear converge into a single sensation).

Within the context of the Master's degree project, this image emphasises one of its central themes – the bodily experience of war. The author seeks to show that the power of an artillery shot is measured not only by caliber and range, but also by how it passes through the human body, leaving its mark in every movement, breath, and reflexive gesture. This is a photograph about the power of a weapon that becomes visible only through the reaction of the person at the very epicenter of the shot.

Photograph No. 9



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Photograph No. 9, titled "Tank Battalion Live-Fire Training of the 23rd Separate Mechanised Brigade at a Training Range. June 2024," from the Master's degree photo art project.

Camera / Lens

Nikon Z9 / AF-S Nikkor 105 mm f/1.4

**Technical specifications
of Photograph No. 9:**

105 mm | F/1.4 | ISO 100 | 1/160 s

**Image editing of Photograph No. 9
in Adobe Lightroom Classic:**

- Basic retouching

**Image editing of Photograph No. 9
in Adobe Lightroom Classic**

Natural daylight was used for this shoot.

The authorial concept of Photograph No. 9

This photograph captures the culmination of a combat action: a tank firing by direct fire. There are no people shown in close-up in the frame. However, the presence of the crew is fully felt through the result of their work: the flash of flame, the shock wave, clouds of smoke and sand torn from the ground by the force of the shot. It is a moment in which the machine speaks instead of the human.

The concept of this work is to show the concentrated power of war, when a single second accumulates the energy of metal, gunpowder, and human training. Fire and dust become a visual metaphor for a force that is difficult to comprehend rationally: it carries protection and destruction at the same time, order and chaos. The tank shot here is not only a tactical action, but also a manifestation of control over an elemental force that only a well-trained crew is capable of mastering.

Compositionally, the frame is built on the dynamics of the explosion: the scattering sand and smoke create a sense of movement that goes beyond the image itself, forcing the viewer to almost physically feel the shock wave. Firing by direct fire emphasises the proximity and immediacy of the threat, erasing the distance between the machine and the target.

Within the diploma project, this photograph serves as a visual accent on the power and tension of modern warfare. It captures not only a moment of training, but a state of constant readiness as every shot is the result of discipline, experience and responsibility for the next second of battle.

Photograph No. 10



Photograph No. 10 titled "Training to Engage FPV Drones by Medics of the 3rd Mechanised Battalion of the 23rd Separate Mechanised Brigade. Outskirts of the settlement of Pokrovske. June 2025" from the Master's degree photo art project.

Camera / Lens

Nikon Z9 / Nikkor Z 24–70 mm f/2.8 S

**Technical specifications
of Photograph No. 10:**

24 mm | F/2.8 | ISO 1000 | 1/6400 s

**Image editing of Photograph No. 10
in Adobe Lightroom Classic:**

- Basic retouching

**Image editing of Photograph No. 10
in Adobe Lightroom Classic**

Natural daylight was used for this shoot.

The authorial concept of Photograph No. 10

This photograph captures a new reality of modern warfare as a moment of countering an aerial threat at minimal distance. In the frame, a soldier, while in motion, fires a shotgun at an FPV drone simulating an attack on a medical vehicle. He is seated in the open bed of a moving pickup truck (a situation where there is no room to stop, repeat or make a mistake).

The concept of this work is to show how the role of the military medical worker and the soldier in general: saving lives today begins long before reaching a stabilisation point. Protecting a medical vehicle from drones becomes as integral to combat training as providing first aid. As it can be seen, medicine and combat action merge into a single system of survival.

This composition emphasises instability and tension: the movement of the vehicle, the open truck bed, and the exposed figure of the soldier without cover create a sense of vulnerability. The drone in the sky (almost invisible yet lethally dangerous) serves as a symbol of the modern threat that must be confronted with simple, sometimes almost primitive means, relying on reaction speed, accuracy and a clear, focused mind.

Within the framework of this Master's project, the showed picture documents the transformation of warfare, where the front line runs not only along the line of contact but also through the air above every vehicle. It is a visual testimony to how the lives of the wounded depend on a few seconds, a single shot and ability to protect those who save others.

Photograph No. 11



Photograph No. 11, titled "Launching a FlyEye reconnaissance drone at combat positions by an operator of the Unmanned Systems Battalion of the 23rd Separate Mechanised Brigade. Outskirts of the settlement of Voskresenka. April 2025", from the Master's degree photo art project.

Camera / Lens

Nikon Z9 / AF-S Nikkor 105 mm f/1.4.

**Technical specifications
of Photograph No. 11:**

105 mm | F/1.4 ISO 200 | 1/26,000 s

**Image editing of Photograph No. 11
in Adobe Lightroom Classic:**

- Basic retouching

**Image editing of Photograph No. 11
in Adobe Lightroom Classic**

Natural daylight was used for this shoot.

The authorial concept of Photograph No. 11

This photograph is dedicated to the moment of transition from ground to sky as a moment that encapsulates the contemporary logic of war. At dawn, when the night has not yet released the space and the day is only beginning to take shape, an operator releases an unmanned aerial vehicle into the sky with his own hands. This simple symbolic gesture connects human and technology into a single chain of combat work.

The dawn light in the frame emphasises the beginning of a new phase (not only of another combat sortie, but of the constant cycle of observation, analysis and decision-making). In this work, the FlyEye appears not as a soulless machine, but as the "eyes" of the unit, an extension of the operator's gaze that allows them to see more, farther and earlier than the enemy. The humans remain key figures: it is their hands, experience and responsibility that initiate the process on which the lives of others depend.

The author's intent is to depict war without a shot fired, yet filled with maximum tension of anticipation. In the quiet of early morning, informational superiority is born (an invisible but still a decisive factor). This frame captures a moment of trust: a soldier releases the drone into the sky, knowing that the data it gathers will shape the further course of combat operations. The photograph becomes a visual image of modern warfare, where control of space begins with a gaze directed upward.

Photograph No. 12



Photograph No. 12, titled "Training with the MATADOR Disposable Anti-Tank Launcher Conducted by an Instructor with the Call Sign 'Mina' at a Training Range near the settlement of Prosyana. January 2025", from the Master's degree photo art project.

Camera / Lens

Nikon Z9 / AF-S Nikkor 50 mm f/1.2.

**Technical specifications
of Photograph No. 12:**

50 mm | F/1.2 ISO 200 | 1/3200 s

**Image editing of Photograph No. 12
in Adobe Lightroom Classic:**

- Basic retouching

**Image editing of Photograph No. 12
in Adobe Lightroom Classic**

Natural daylight was used for this shoot.

The authorial concept of Photograph No. 12

This photograph captures a moment of maximum concentration – that brief second in which knowledge, responsibility, and trust converge. In the frame, the instructor observes the soldier's shot, remaining in the shadow of the action while simultaneously maintaining full control of the situation.

The author's intention is to emphasise a process of transferring combat experience. The visible smoke bursting from the rear of the launcher and the projectile leaving the barrel underscore the irreversibility of the action: once the trigger is pulled, there is no way back. This becomes a visual metaphor for war as a space of decisions, where every movement has consequences and every second of preparation can save lives.

The instructor with the call sign "Mina" embodies those who shape a unit's combat readiness not through direct participation in the shot itself, but through oversight, correction and responsibility for others. His gaze is the gaze of experience, positioned between training and real combat. The presence of the instructor in the frame creates a sense of tense balance between risk and professionalism.

Within the context of the diploma project, this photograph reveals war as a systematic process, where victory begins not on the battlefield but at the training range. It demonstrates the invisible front of preparation as a place where confidence, precision and mutual trust among soldiers are formed. The image speaks to the power of knowledge and the responsibility inherent in every shot fired, even before it becomes a combat one.

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