

Dance Flashmob and exhibition of Ukrainian refugees tells emotional story of war and resilience

RESISdANCE

Oxford Festival of the Arts

OVADA

Thursday 6 - Sunday 9 July 2023

On 24th February 2023, commuters watched a group of people break into apparent spontaneous dance at the railway station in Oxford. They were Ukrainian refugees who, with physical theatre company Justice in Motion, had come together to mark a year since the invasion of their country. This summer, RESISdANCE will be recreated and explored further at OVADA as part of the Oxford Festival of the Arts.

An exhibition of the women refugees' photographs along with their audio stories opens on Thursday 6 July with a repeat of the Flashmob experience at the gallery by the refugees and local dancers.

Justice in Motion Artistic Director talks about the birth of the project:

“In January this year I spoke at a ‘Startup Huddle’, a monthly event for founders and entrepreneurs here in Oxford, about Justice in Motion.

Maryna, one of the attendees, was deeply touched and reached out to me afterwards, to ask whether we could work together to do something on 24 February, the 1 year anniversary of the invasion of Ukraine, to raise awareness, highlight this tragic day, and give a voice to many of the Ukrainian refugee women living here in Oxfordshire.

We explored some ideas, and decided to create a Flashmob that would take place on that day at Oxford’s train station.”

Over a few weeks, they together with composer Quentin Lachapele, worked with a group of Ukrainian refugee women based in Oxfordshire, to explore their emotional stories, using dance and movement set to music inspired by traditional Ukrainian songs. The group members were previously unknown to each other but in taking part have built connections and become close friends.

“I felt incredible boost of positive energy and huge inspiration from Anja as a speaker 1 month before the start, after that - it was unbelievable random-but-not collecting of likeminded people, and at the end - deeply unity with other Ukrainian women, whom I didn't know before we started. They are now my British family members. I'm happy to be a part of this project.” (Maryna Soloviova)

“I would describe the project as uniting with Ukraine for a better future. The dance is about the hardship Ukrainians have gone through and about coming together to overcome adversity.” (RESISdANCE Participant)

The exhibition opening on 6 July will feature a Q&A session following the Flashmob performance. Ukrainian photographer Vadym Gurevych, composer Quentin Lachapele, choreographer/Justice in Motion Artistic Director Anja Meinhardt, Maryna Soloviova, and several of the Ukrainian participants will be on the panel to answer questions. There will be a drinks bar and the public will have more time to explore the exhibition.

The closing event will take place from 3-5pm on 9th July and is a celebration of Ukrainian culture and an opportunity to talk to the women refugees informally with music, and refreshments.

Editor's Notes

RESISdANCE

OVADA Gallery, 14a Osney Lane, Oxford OX1 1NJ

Thursday 6 July 6pm - Exhibition opening & Flashmob performance + Q&A

Friday 7 - Sunday 9 July 11am - 5pm

Free Entry

<https://artsfestivaloxford.org/events/resisdance-justice-in-motion/>

RESISdANCE is a collaboration between Justice in Motion, Oxford Festival of the Arts and OVADA with support from Multaka Oxford at Pitt Rivers, and Oxford City Council.

Creative Team

Anja Meinhardt

artistic direction

Krystal Dawn Campbell

creative collaborator

Maryna Soloviova

Ukrainian collaborator

Quentin Lachapele

soundtrack

Ignite Creative / Michael Lynch

film

Vadym Gurevych

portrait photography

John Cairns

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