

Interview Maryna Makarenko, *Sun Eaters*, 2024

My name is Maryna Makarenko and I present my work *Sun Eaters*. It is an installation with a film and a cloud made of small pieces of textile. The cloud is a symbol of displacement and instability as well as reminding a tent as a symbol of home and belonging. While working on the video I was inspired by the scientific theories of Ukrainian geo-chemist Wladimir Wernadski. Wernadski's theories, especially his concept of the Noosphere, became the basis for understanding modern ecology, cosmism and predicting the future of humanity as a planetary force that controls its own development. As a textile cloud consisting of many pieces my storytelling consists of many layers. A very personal autobiographical narrative was my childhood memories of family trips to Ukrainian Crimea is mixed with a speculative fiction about Sun Eaters, who are futuristic creatures, human-plant-hybrids, that can live from the sunlight. They are liberated from the struggles that we humans suffer from. The very first impulse to create this work was my need to respond to the occupation of the Crimean Peninsula that Russia insidiously did in 2014.

My work is linked to the state of war that we experience right now. The big war and the war that has been going on for decades. It is the impossibility of accessing occupied territories and now they become some form of a fiction.

I am a Berlin based multimedia artist, performer and community facilitator. I was born and raised in Ukraine, which shaped a lot the topics that I am working with as an artist. Mostly I work with video, performance, sound and voice, and I find a lot of joy in facilitating workshops and artistic laboratories on embodiment and feminist and queer strategies in contemporary art. I explore speculative narratives and shifting states of identity and presence.

It is hard for me to choose one place in Neukölln that I like, because there are many. But if I would have to, I would speak about the *St. Jacobi Friedhof*, St. Jacobi cemetery, at *Hermannstraße*. It is a former cemetery, a community garden, a café and a plant shop, and as far as I know officially it has been closed in 2016 as a cemetery but there are still 500 graves remaining there. I find it very nice to go there in summer for lunch or also check the workshops that are being facilitated by *Prinzessinnen* garden collective or just have a walk, escaping from busy *Hermannstraße*.