

**DCCC (CONTEMPORARY
CULTURE CENTER IN DNIPRO):
HISTORY, EVOLUTION,
AND ACTIVITIES**

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The article traces the emergence and development of DCCC (Dnipro Center for Contemporary Culture) as a civic-driven institution that combines the presentation of contemporary artistic practices with sustained engagement with local contexts and urban communities. It outlines how an initiative shaped in the aftermath of the Revolution of Dignity—centered on the audiovisual and new media festival *Konstruktsiia* (since 2015)—evolved from a primarily “virtual” presence into multiple attempts to secure a permanent venue, culminating in a prototype: the temporary public space *Сцена:Stage* (2017). The project’s international recognition (Special Mention at the European Prize for Urban Public Space 2018 and nomination for the EU Prize for Contemporary Architecture—Mies van der Rohe Award) is discussed as a turning point that helped enable negotiations for a long-term home. The text describes the launch of DCCC in the former provincial *zemstvo* building on *Krutohirnyi Uzviz*, the ongoing restoration process, and the residency-based institutional model bringing together *Kultura Medialna* NGO, *Artsvit* Gallery, and *Alliance Française*. Particular attention is paid to institutional transformations during Russia’s full-scale invasion: from suspension of activities to the establishment of a social hub (2022), and later the gradual return to programming (2023–2024) through the initiative “DCCC: We Are Open,” expanded international partnerships, and new infrastructures such as a 51-seat cinema, an Experimental Studio, and a concept shop as a critical design project. The article also maps DCCC’s core program lines—exhibitions, education, residencies, and film programs—as tools for supporting cultural life under wartime conditions.

Keywords: DCCC, contemporary culture center, Dnipro, cultural institution, new media, urban public space, *Konstruktsiia* festival, *Сцена:Stage*, heritage restoration, artist residencies, film programs, social hub, full-scale war, international collaboration, local communities.

ABOUT THE DCCC

The idea of establishing a cultural center as a venue for representing contemporary culture and interactions between locals appeared in 2015. Following the Revolution of Dignity, Kultura Medialna NGO, a co-founder of the DCCC, launched the festival of contemporary audiovisual arts and new media, Construction, to initiate changes in Dnipro's cultural environment. The project drew on the physical and ideal image of Dnipro to offer a new perspective on its specific traits and direct attention to the shared space, responsibility, and future. The Construction festival has grown into an annual event, held in the city's various venues, including the DCCC.

The first festivals made it abundantly clear that Dnipro lacks a shared space that presents current trends in global culture and art, while also engaging with the local context. The search began for a physical location to accommodate the future Center for Contemporary Culture in Dnipro. Meanwhile, the institution existed solely in the virtual realm, as a Facebook page. Negotiations with the city/regional authorities and private owners of various spaces in Dnipro lasted about 2 years. Over those two years, five concepts and designs were drafted for cultural centers in a variety of locations, which, however, did not materialize for various reasons, the primary one being the project's being non-profit.

As an experiment, in 2017, Kultura Medialna decided to set up Сцена:Stage (referred to below as simply the Stage), a temporary public space for the fourth installment of its Construction festival, with the involvement of a team of architects and locals. It was located in the place of an old amphitheater in a neglected corner of the Taras Shevchenko Park. The Stage was a temporary wooden structure that accommodated screenings, lectures, workshops, exhibitions, concerts, and other events. It came about through locals' efforts: anybody could join in and help build it, and the money came through crowdfunding. The project was, in fact, a prototype of the cultural center, built to understand exactly what kind of space the city required. A mere year later, the structure's dismantling followed. The development of the DCCC's design began in earnest, with Kultura Medialna's team enlisting the help of the Artsvit Gallery, Alliance Française, and České centrum Kyiv.

The Stage project became renowned well beyond Dnipro. It won the Special Mention award as one of Europe's best public spaces at the European Prize for Urban Public Space in Barcelona in June 2018 and was nominated for the European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture—Mies van der Rohe Award.

In light of the Stage's success, an agreement was reached with the former governorate zemstvo building's owner, the Jewish Education Center, to establish a cultural center there. Located on Krutohirnyi Uzviz, it is actually a complex of three buildings: the Old, the New, and the Secretarial building. Initially a late-19th-century residence, it was bought out to accommodate a governorate zemstvo office. In 1917, the building became a headquarters for the troop staff. It stood abandoned since the late 1990s,

and in 2019, the owner invested in restoring and renovating the premises. To preserve the landmark, a team of architects, historians, and cultural professionals developed a comprehensive approach to highlight the building's historical periods and adapt it to current requirements. At the moment, the DCCC houses multiple resident organizations: Kultura Medialna NGO, Artsvit Gallery, and Alliance Française Dnipro.

Since 2019, renovations in the building have limited the DCCC's operations. Before Russia's full-scale invasion, it hosted exhibitions, festivals, educational programs, art residencies, and various art and urbanism projects.

When Russia invaded, the DCCC temporarily ceased its activities. Since March 2022, however, it has housed a social hub for locals and internally displaced persons. It held screenings organized in cooperation with the Dovzhenko Center, charity musical performances, sessions of a Ukrainian-language speaking club, discussions with Ukrainian experts, art activities for children and adults, and workshops on recording a culture-focused podcast under wartime conditions.

In 2023, the DCCC began gradually resuming its institutional operation. The following year, it launched DCCC: We Are Open, a program focused on studying local contexts and reviving cultural practices in the region. The name referenced the signs that appeared on the windows and façades of shops, pharmacies, coffee shops, and other establishments during the war. It combined multiple formats, such as screenings, lectures, residencies, podcasts, fellowship programs, art activities for children, and exhibitions. Through these events, the DCCC aimed to support local communities and cultural practitioners who continued to work during the war, while also broadening the discourse on local cultural heritage and phenomena that have shaped Ukrainian identity to a large extent, though remain unarticulated or forgotten.

The institution's international cooperation also gathered pace. Since 2022, it has held several projects and events abroad (e.g., in Germany, Czechia, and Austria), as well as presented the works of foreign artists in Dnipro, establishing new connections and building a space of understanding and solidarity amid the continuing Russian aggression.

During the full-scale war, the DCCC launched its own cinema with 51 seats—a space for independent cinema in Dnipro, focused on showcasing indie and experimental films. Also, it set up its Experimental Studio to hold events focused on experimental practices and working with young artists. Furthermore, it has opened a shop. Aptly named Shaky Tables, it doubles as an art project of Studio 12345678910, a group of creatives working in the field of critical design. The collective decided to base the shop's interior design on grassroots architecture, e.g., pop-up markets, which abound on the street curbs of Dnipro. The DCCC's shop offers a range of paraphernalia related to contemporary art, urbanism, design, culture, and the city itself. Despite all the challenges, the DCCC remains active in Dnipro as a center of gravity for local communities, helps nurture the city's cultural landscape, and offers opportunities for local creatives to interact with one another and present their practices.

DCCC PROJECTS

EXHIBITIONS

Everything for Everybody

October 23, 2025, to February 7, 2026

The exhibition raises questions about how archives come into being, who has access to them and who controls them, what role archives play during wartime, and how archives can serve as unique testimonies of places that disappeared or were destroyed. It grew out of reflections on two collections, brought together under a project of the British Council: the photographs of Franki Raffles at the University of St. Andrews and the photographic archive of Mykola Bilokon, currently in the care of the Pokrovsk Historical Museum.

It also intertwines archival photos of Mykola Bilokon and Franki Raffles with the works of contemporary artists who engage with themes of family history, migration, the fragility of archives, and the search for imagery to contain the trauma. Here, the artists work with a variety of mediums to create a space between the personal and collective commemoration.

A part of the research project *The Worker Portrait in the Twentieth Century: Archives and Artistic Reflection*, the exhibition was created in collaboration with the Pokrovsk National Museum, Pokrovsk Cultural Code + NGO, Center for Urban History of East Central Europe, Dnipro Center for Contemporary Culture, and University of St. Andrews and is supported by the British Council's program Support for Cultural Activity in Ukraine with UK Involvement. It was also included in the Kyiv Biennale 2025.

Participants: Katya Buchatska, Sophia Gera and Kamila Yanar, Lia Dostlieva, Ola Yeremieieva, Olesia Kashyvska, Yana Kononova, Tetiana Kostiuhenko, Elias Parvulesco, Adrian Pepe, Clemens Poole, Anhelina Rozhkov, Selma Selman, Tako Taal, and Valeriia Fedorenko

Curatorial Group: Victoria Donovan, Kateryna Rusetska, and Natasha Chychasova

Consultants: Jessica Gerschultz, Tetiana Kostiuhenko, Anhelina Rozhkova, Catherine Spencer, Alastair Scott

Captions for the works of Mykola Bilokon and Franki Raffles by Iryna Sklokina and Victoria Donovan

Exhibition Architecture: Oleksandr Burlaka

Supported by the Department of Culture, Tourism and Cultural Heritage Preservation of the Pokrovsk City Council in Donetsk Oblast; the Pokrovsk Historical Museum; Pokrovsk Cultural Code + NGO; Center for Urban History of East Central Europe; Dnipro Center for Contemporary Culture; University of St Andrews; The New Democracy Fund, Danish Cultural Institute, and Sigrid Rausing Trust.

Let the long. Road. Lead. To. Stairs in. The Heavens

February–April 2023 (PLATO, Ostrava), January–September 2023 (DCCC, Dnipro)

Let the long. Road. Lead. To. Stairs in. The Heavens presents the works of 11 Ukrainian artists and art collectives connected to contemporary ideas about Ukraine's fate. It is an attempt to bring together different experiences and consider which phenomena and processes define us today: not only the colonial trauma of the past and the full-scale war, but also broader temporalities—in particular, a decolonial future defined by the flexibility, resilience, creativity, and perseverance of people. In this exhibition, fate is a sign of the future without a specific date. However, it indicates a path that must necessarily unfold, as it began at some point in the past and continues still.

The exhibition is the result of institutional cooperation between the Center for Contemporary Culture in Dnipro and PLATO. It was displayed at the PLATO City Gallery of Contemporary Art in Ostrava, Czechia, in February–April 2023 and at the DCCC in June–September 2023.

Participants: Beauty Studio, Bohdan Bunchak, Taras Hembik + Vlad(a), Ksenia Hnylytska, Diana + Zamina Khalilova, Larion Lozovyi, Daria Lukianenko, Sashko Protiah, Anna Sapon, Zhenia Stepanenko, Viktoria Tymonova. Texts by Frosiko.

Curators: Milena Khomchenko, Yuliia Kryvykh, Clemens Poole.

RESIDENCIES

The residency for young artists in Dnipro

July 20–August 6, 2023; September 19–October 6, 2024

The DCCC's residencies for young artists brought together artists, photographers, performers, and other cultural figures in the early stages of their creative journeys. The primary objective was to support emerging artists and share experiences and advice crucial to launching their creative careers. Accomplished artists, curators, and cultural experts conducted sessions on such topics as applying for residencies, navigating institutional collaborations, organizing personal projects, establishing a professional artistic identity, and many others.

Over almost three weeks, participants attended lectures, workshops, and discussions with prominent cultural figures. Besides, they learned more about Dnipro and how to engage with local contexts. As a capstone project, the participants collaboratively produced exhibitions and zines featuring diverse artistic expressions.

Kultura Medialna organized the program in partnership with the Artsvit Gallery, with the support of the New Democracy Fund and the Danish Cultural Institute.

Imaginary City

November 2021, May 2024

Held in Dnipro in November 2021, this networking residence aimed to reinforce collaborations between local experts and professionals from other regions. The 10-day program offered participants the opportunity to work with the historical, cultural, and social contexts of Dnipro, inviting local communities to join the dialogue, developing ideas for their future projects together with local institutions, undertaking interventions in the city, and putting theoretical approaches into practice. The residents' cultural projects were to be presented publicly and implemented in Dnipro in 2022–2023, but the full-scale war intervened.

The year 2024 saw the residency's second installment, which invited local cultural figures to delve into Dnipro's contexts and reflect on the region's historical role, significant phenomena, and forgotten names. The participants engaged in lectures, conversations with historians and artists, discussions, tours, and workshops. At the program's conclusion, they presented their own projects about Dnipro at the final pop-up exhibition, which combined multiple formats: visual art (painting, photography, animation), audiovisual and text-based visual art, installations, and cultural and architectural studies. The residents' projects focused on themes such as memory, myth, grassroots initiatives, historical complexes, modern city symbols, ways of perceiving urban space, media synthesis, and the interplay of different art forms.

Sound Working Group

November 2024

It was a residency for musicians, sound artists, and researchers aimed at exploring changes in Ukrainians' attitudes toward sound during the war. The project brought together sound artists and researchers who worked throughout November 2024 under the guidance of curator and artist Clemens Poole. During the residency, participants discussed how the war reshaped their sensitivity to and perception of sounds, how to record ambient sounds, and how to integrate field recordings into their creative work.

It also included open events where anyone could engage with sound. The project culminated in a final event featuring sound installations, performances, an audio walk, and sound performances. In their projects, the residency participants explored the silence and sonic asceticism, the therapeutic role of music, dreams and urban spaces, lost sounds and the fluidity of memory, ambient noise, and personal auditory experiences.

SCREENINGS

Front-line Geographies

This series of events at the DCCC was an attempt at conceptualizing the themes of new community and emotional maturity in times of war. The program revolves around three

cross-cutting themes, each of which gained new significance after February 24, 2022. The first one was the new geographical thinking and visual images of the Ukrainian cities, the most affected by hostilities, evacuation, and destruction during Russia's full-scale invasion.

The second was post- and decolonial narratives that sharply form in Ukrainian society. Finally, the third was phenomenology of fear and its genre dimensions on the screen. The program's special events offered a fresh look at contemporary Ukrainian cinema.

The program was launched as part of the social hub that worked at the DCCC throughout 2022.

Curators: Oleksandr Teliuk and Aliona Penzii

Partners: Dovzhenko Center

Future Life

Future Life was a series of screenings at the Dnipro Center for Contemporary Culture dedicated to Ukraine's future. The program lasted throughout 2023.

With our audience and project guests, we reflected on what life after victory could be like. The program's structure led viewers to examine potential issues through the lens of films, consider the possible avenues for resolving them, and contemplate positive models of the future.

Curators: Oleksandr Teliuk and Aliona Penzii

Partners: Dovzhenko Center

I Don't Like Nature the Way It Is

I Don't Like Nature the Way It Is was a series of screenings arranged by the DCCC in cooperation with the Dovzhenko Center. This season was dedicated to the issues of energy, environment, and anthropogenic effects on Ukraine's natural environment in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Without a haughty anthropocentric attitude and didactic environmental generalizations, the program seeks to create a space for reflection on the lessons of the past and the role of memory in finding delicate ways of "decolonizing nature."

Curators: Oleksandr Teliuk and Aliona Penzii