

ART AND THE WAR ON UKRAINE

The paintings in the Maniichuk-Brady Collection represent just a sliver of Ukraine's centuries-old art history. Yet, in assembling the works, Jurii Maniichuk aimed to provide safe harbor for at least part of the heritage he valued so greatly. The collection's preservation took on added importance after February 24, 2022, when Russian President Vladimir V. Putin launched an all-out military invasion of Ukraine. Not only did Russia bomb apartments, hospitals, and other civilian targets, Moscow also mounted a brutal assault on Ukrainian culture. Russia's attacks have destroyed or severely damaged more than 1,100 museums and cultural sites since the start of the war, according to [Ukraine's Ministry of Culture](#). Among the hardest hit have been sites in Kharkiv, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, Sumy, and Kherson--all places where Maniichuk met with artists and acquired their works.

The tragedy at the Oleksii Shovkunenکو Art Museum in Kherson reflects the magnitude of Russia's cultural crimes. There, in the summer of 2022, [Russian forces hauled away nearly 14,000 works from one of Ukraine's richest art collections](#). The works ranged from historical 17th century icons to canvases by European and Ukrainian masters, including Shovkunenکو and Tetyana Yablonska, both leading painters represented in the Maniichuk-Brady Collection.

Destroying cultural heritage is a violation of the 1954 UNESCO Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, signed by both Russia and Ukraine. Sadly, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for Ukraine to recover and restore the art lost during this conflict, even in the presence of international conventions. We can only hope that once the war concludes, Ukraine will receive the international support it will need not only to rebuild its cities and institutions but its cultural heritage as well.

As of the spring of 2023, the war on Ukraine continued unabated.

--R.B.