

Powerful Symbol of Ukrainian Rebirth Unveiled at Burning Man Festival This Morning

"Phoenix" Art Installation Lit up the Skies of Nevada's Black Rock Desert This Morning – Presenting Ukraine's Indominable Spirit in the Face of Adversity

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POWERFUL SYMBOL OF UKRAINIAN REBIRTH UNVEILED AT BURNING MAN 2023



"Phoenix" at Burning Man - Photo credit Andrii Ivanchenko

"Phoenix" Art Installation Lit up the Skies of Nevada's Black Rock Desert This Morning – Presenting Profound Symbol of Ukraine's Indominable Spirit in the Face of Adversity

In the early hours of the morning on Thursday, Aug. 31, a powerful symbol of Ukrainian rebirth, titled "Phoenix," was unveiled at the annual Burning Man arts festival in Nevada's Black Rock Desert. The installation, initially appearing as a 26-foot-tall wooden box, was set ablaze at 3 a.m. As the wooden box turned to ash, a stunning sculpture of a Phoenix, resembling the Ukrainian "tryzub" trident on the nation's coat of arms, emerged from the flames, presenting a profound symbol of Ukraine's indominable spirit in the face of adversity.

Several days ago, this 26-foot-tall wooden box appeared on the festival grounds that is identical to those erected around landmarks and monuments in the nation of Ukraine as Russian bombardments continue to threaten some of Ukraine's most beloved cultural artifacts. Festival goers were invited to write their own messages on the box alongside the inscription "Born through the ashes stronger than ever before." As the flames were lit, a Ukrainian soundscape was played over loudspeakers that included Ukrainian music, the sounds of Ukrainian cities and the thunder of artillery. The burn embodied the transformation of the Ukrainian identity as it is

rebuilt and reborn from the ashes of the battlefield. The fiery display captivated the audience, evoking a powerful emotional response and sparking conversations about the resilience of nations through their peoples' enduring spirits.

The installation is the work of Phoenix Project, a coalition of Ukrainians from two continents, led by artists Oleksiy Sai and Bohdana Kosmina. The idea for the project came from Vitaliy Deynega, founder of the "Come Back Alive" fund for Ukrainian veterans and the "Ukrainian Witness" media project.

"Phoenix Project extends its deepest gratitude to the Burning Man organizers and the entire Black Rock City community for the opportunity to share this profound symbol with the world," said Producer and Project Manager Ellen Lopatkina. "Through the support and collaboration of individuals and organizations alike, 'Phoenix' will carry its transformative message far beyond the Playa."

The Burning Man art festival, renowned for its celebration of creativity, self-expression, and community, provided an ideal platform for "Phoenix" to touch the hearts of thousands of attendees from around the world. This art installation, in the middle of the harsh Nevada desert, served as a beacon of hope, not only for Ukrainians but for all those yearning to break free, reminding them that the path to freedom is forged through fire.

For more information on Burning Man, visit burningman.org.

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Ellen Lopatkina – Producer, Project Manager

Oleksiy Sai – Lead Artist

Vitaliy Deynega – Concept Creator, Founder of Come Back Alive

About the artists

Oleksiy Sai (b. 1975, Kyiv, Ukraine) is an artist who uses diverse media, but is mostly known for

his personal invention – the praxis of Exel-Art, working with Excel software as a visual language resource since 2004. He graduated from the Kyiv College of Arts and Industries with a degree in graphic design in 1993, and from the Department of Easel Graphic Art at the National Academy of Fine Arts and Architecture in 2001. Sai showed in the Pinchuk Art Centre Prize (2009), the nationwide contemporary art prize for young Ukrainian artists. His work is in the collections of the Ludwig Museum in Budapest, and the Odesa Museum of Modern Art, has been shown in numbers group and solo exhibitions.

Bogdana Kosmina – (b. 1990, Kyiv, Ukraine) is an architect and artist living and working in Berlin and Kyiv. In 2017, she started her own multidisciplinary practice to change the perspectives of Ukrainian public architecture. Significant projects include the renovation of the Dovzhenko Center, the largest Ukrainian State Film Archive, and the Shcherbenko Art Center. She is a co-founder and curator of a self-organized exhibition space in a formal postmodernist pavilion Dzherelo (The Source) in Kyiv, dedicated to urban transformations by video-art, performance and experimental music.

About Come Back Alive

Come Back Alive (Повернись живим) is a foundation that provides support to service members in the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The foundation purchases equipment to help equip Ukrainian service members and also provides additional training to soldiers in areas such as marksmanship, first aid, artillery, and drone operation. Between May 2014 and June 2022, the foundation raised over \$100 million. For more information, or to donate, visit savelife.in.ua.

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