

of the questionable Soviet past juxtaposed with modern design pieces, rough-luxe interiors, and cutting-edge fashion collections created from locally sourced, second-hand clothing. The many handcrafted products and accessories featured in these pages exhibit an extraordinary level of skill and artistry. And while these qualities may sound old-fashioned, rest assured that you will find nothing trivial or outdated in this book.

Having arrived at a crossroads where the future holds infinite possibilities, the independent generation of Ukraine has astutely selected the finest practices and trends from across the globe. By fusing these practices with the richness and diversity of their own culture, the country has charted a fresh, cohesive, and proudly distinctive path. This approach embraces the nation's encumbered past with a touch of irony and strives toward a free and independent future.

Naturally, this generation of artists and designers have not concerned themselves too much with the plans laid out by their parents' generation. Instead, they look to the aesthetic traditions, rituals, and crafts that have defined Ukrainian life and Slavic culture for centuries. Interestingly, the traditional national values of Ukraine align closely with those uniting the international creative community today. Sustainable production, the use of natural materials (such as domestic linen instead of imported cotton), and skilled craftsmanship have always been at the core of Ukrainian creativity—whether driven by a reverence for nature and mastery of craft, or again, a lack of resources.

In a world where trends tend to homogenize creative cultures, Ukrainian creatives stand out with their unique approach. They embrace traditional culture while rejecting any supposed canons or norms, setting themselves apart in the international creative landscape.

Over a short amount of time, Ukraine has become synonymous with freedom, resilience, humor, and a lust for life. This spirit is not only evident on the frontlines but also in the way Ukrainians express themselves creatively. Throughout this book, we invite you to explore Ukrainian creativity and be amazed by the vibrant, thoughtful, and mesmerizing creations that defy the stereotypical public image perpetuated by the news feeds.

*Ukraine Rising* does not sugarcoat the harsh reality of war that Ukraine and its people face daily. Instead, our goal is to draw even more attention to it, and to expand the understanding of what Ukraine truly is beyond the Russian bombings, atrocities, and occupation. We would like you to see the people behind the news, their creativity, beauty, and humanity. We aim to share with you the pulsating vitality, originality, and proactive spirit that have fascinated us throughout our research.

Working on *Ukraine Rising* has been both a tremendous pleasure and an intense process for our entire team at gestalten. As we delved into the creative world of Ukraine, we found ourselves repeatedly captivated by the images featured here, and engaged in discussions about the exceptional talent and originality displayed. The selection process was both a joy and a challenge since we had an abundance of incredible material, forcing us to make difficult choices. However, we made sure to provide visibility to everyone considered, even if some are showcased more extensively than others. Ukraine's creativity is simply too vast to fit into a single book.

None of this would have been possible without the spirited Ukrainian creatives who contributed to this book. They responded to our requests with unparalleled speed and dedication. We also owe a special acknowledgement to Lucia Bondar, the co-creator of *Ukraine Rising*. With incredible professionalism and enthusiasm, Lucia discovered these talents, facilitated communication, conducted writing, and ensured that this publication would serve as a comprehensive and authoritative guide to modern-day Ukrainian culture.

Now that you have this book in your hands, we leave you to discover and explore Ukraine for yourself. Immerse yourself in the captivating world of creativity, where freedom, resilience, and an unwavering spirit converge to create something truly extraordinary.

We at gestalten would like to dedicate this book to the people of Ukraine, whose bravery, sincerity, and ingenuity set a proud example for us all.

*If you'd like to support the creative community in Ukraine with your donation, please see page 320.*

