



Music Performing Arts Ukraine Ukraine Crisis Featured Stories

## Some people: Urban culture, war and the revival of Kharkiv

# Some People is a formation that has been uniting people, projects of modern culture and creative economies in Kharkiv and throughout Ukraine for 8 years.

By Daria Levchenko

[She has Sneaker Mate](#), [rap.ua](#), [Buro22](#), [Tysk](#) and [ssweep](#) projects on their account. And now the team has opened the Center of New Culture in Kharkiv. In the plans, it should become a magnet for the citizens, which will gather people and encourage them to create a new Ukrainian culture.

## Concert venue, exhibition hall and audiovisual theatre

The centre is located on the premises of the former factory, on Ivanovska Street, 1. The concrete, restrained building is easy to spot due to the bright, neon light from the windows — a multi-genre space is arranged inside [ various autonomous projects united in one location — ed. ].

Guests of the centre are greeted by electronic music, a bar and a relaxation area. Further, behind the big door, is the main event area — showcases are held here twice a month [a cultural and entertainment event where representatives of formations united by musical formats perform — ed. ] of independent Ukrainian music of friendly formations from all over the country and theatrical performances. The team spends the funds collected from the events on the construction of new locations and the development of the centre.

"Also, we recently had the premiere of a play at the Nafta theatre, two of which were sold out. Even additional places had to be allocated. For us, this is a sign that we need to develop and provide people with what they missed so much during the war," says Anton Nazarko, one of the co-founders of the project.

An exhibition hall will be built near the main stage - a large room with white walls and a ceiling that reflects the red colour of the soffits. Here, says Anton, artists from Kharkiv and all over Ukraine will present their works.

Another interesting location is the audiovisual Cascade Cinema. According to the team's plan, film screenings, art lectures, audiovisual performances and a philosophy club will be held here.

— In the hall itself, we will place a large screen for audiovisual performances and film screenings, and in front of it, we will build a cascade that will be a place for spectators.

The idea to create such a location came through our production "TYSK.Experience". This performance was built on the interaction of the sound producer and the visual artist with the audience only through sound and image. In an hour, they took the audience through a spectrum of emotions — from anxiety before the start of a full-scale invasion to dreams about the future of Ukraine after the war. We toured 8 Ukrainian and 4 European cities with this performance. However, it was very difficult for us to find a space equipped for such performances. Therefore, they decided to create it independently within the Center of New Culture.

We also plan to organize philosophy clubs at this location, to which we will invite modern philosophers, and teachers of university departments. The main idea is that we use completely different Kharkiv art to talk about the same important things.

## A bookstore, a hall for photo exhibitions and a co-working space

The next location is a bookstore, where Some people plan to hold book presentations, literary evenings, and meetings. On the second floor, an exhibition hall for photographers and an artistic co-working space are being built - a workspace where people of creative professions will be able not only to work comfortably but also to share ideas, experience and create new projects.

— I want the co-working space to be a place that unites all the people who make up Kharkiv's civil society. There are many creative personalities left in the city, but it seems to them that there are not enough of them, because there are no magnet places where they can discuss together, develop, go to concerts, and meetings and just communicate. We want to create such a space.

Now the team is building the Center with its funds, but hopes that soon there will be an opportunity to support the project with a grant.

Team Some people / Photo: Hnat Holyk for Gwara Media

— We are always in favour of a dialogue with any government — local, regional or state. They say they want to help us. This place is not about politics, but about culture, and the main thing is that we can complete it. In my opinion, any government should promote the development of such places, because we help them to make Kharkiv better.

## Kharkiv of the future - what is it like?

Before the war, Some people actively developed the festival culture of Kharkiv, tried to revive its fame as a rap city and formed a musical code within the framework of the TYSK project.

— This electronic formation was formed three years ago. Music that is very characteristic of Kharkiv. There was always hip-hop, jungle parties, and broken music here. And the city itself is so concrete, urban. The name of our project fully reflects the place where it was formed. Before the war, we managed to bring to Kharkiv many Ukrainian and foreign artists, in particular, British ones. Because we want Kharkiv to revive the glory of the rap city.

Anton Nazarko, co-founder of Some People / Photo: Hnat Holyk for Gwara Media

- Our volunteering began after the start of a full-scale war. Before that, Some People were exclusively engaged in culture. However, thanks to this activity, people trusted and gladly helped us. For example, we wrote that we were looking for a car - the next day it was already there. We were also given premises for storing humanitarian aid free of charge. They were not friends or acquaintances, but simply people from Kharkiv who knew us and wanted to support us. We quickly created our volunteer organization and delivered humanitarian aid, and when the situation in the city became more stable, we realized that we had to continue what we were doing before the invasion.

The creators of Some people see the future of Kharkiv in the combination of a Ukrainian-language, diverse, European unique sound.

— In my opinion, Kharkiv is at an extremely interesting point in its history. A city is not only walls but also social and cultural interaction. A full-scale invasion destroyed permanent connections. The usual forms of communication and relationships were broken, instead of the pre-war influence of Russian culture and music there was a void. This means that the city begins to form anew, and there is no time to wait for the end of the war. Here and now is a chance to make Kharkiv the way we would like to see it. We are building this place to fill the void with new social connections and Ukrainian creativity.

## Culture. Volunteering. Culture.

Previously, the headquarters of Some People was located on Kvitky-Osnovyanenko Street. The Sneaker Mate dry cleaner, the editorial office of the rap.ua portal, and a coffee shop were also located in the same building. On March 2, 2022, the headquarters was damaged by Russian shelling.

- For us, this place meant more than home. And when it was destroyed, we were devastated. But they quickly got together, started volunteering and decided to move on.

Despite the full-scale invasion, part of the Some People team remained in the city and continued to provide humanitarian aid to the people of Kharkiv. The others moved to Lviv and opened a new Sneaker Mate there within three months — the first in the

west of the country and already the fifth on the team's account.

Some people volunteer hub / Photo: from personal archive

## Kharkiv's cultural famine, plans and challenges

The Some People team returned to Kharkiv a year after the destruction of the headquarters. And immediately began to create a new cultural space for the citizens. According to Anton, people were thirsty for cultural events despite all the horror that was happening around them.

- A very cool story happened in December 2022. Kharkiv had not had a single major event since the beginning of the full-scale invasion. We announced the first event, and on this day the CHP was hit. In the city, both light and mobile communication disappeared. They wanted to cancel the event, but they couldn't even send an SMS about it, so they decided to hold the event. We didn't think that people would come, but to our surprise, the hall was packed. The event became the starting point. We realized how important culture is to people, even during war. Especially during the war. The atmosphere of unity inspires people and works in the darkest times.

Now about 300 people come to the Some people showcases. Before the war, Anton assures, this was very rare.

Centre for New Culture in Kharkiv / Photo: Hnat Holyk for Gwara Media

Today, the team is working to prepare for winter and purchase a generator capable of providing the space with electricity throughout the day.

— If there will be repeated blackouts in the winter, I want to give the city a lot of new things to unite and unite people. We plan so that in case of outages, people can come to us to warm up, work, communicate and develop.

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