



## VITALII SHYMKO

*Doctor of Psychology Sciences,  
Professor of Professional Psychology Department of the  
National Academy of the Security Service of Ukraine  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4937-6976>*

### ART AS A MEANS OF FORMING COLLECTIVE MEMORY AND IDENTITY: METHODOLOGICAL TOOLS OF UKRAINE'S SECURITY AND DEFENSE SECTOR

*The article explores the role of art in shaping collective memory amid security challenges and the defense of Ukraine. It analyzes how visual arts, music, and performative genres contribute to societal consolidation, the strengthening of national identity, and countering informational threats. Art is examined as a means of symbolic resistance, a tool for reviving historical memory, and a mechanism for mobilizing citizens in times of crisis. Special attention is given to its role in combating disinformation and fostering cultural resilience.*

**Keywords:** *security and defense sector; collective memory; identity; psychology of artistic creativity; methodology of art research; understanding of the artwork; psychology of artistic creativity; psychology of the impact of art.*

**Statement of the problem.** Collective memory and identity are key factors in ensuring the stability and cohesion of society, especially in times of war and crisis. Art, as a means of communication, plays an important role in shaping shared perceptions of historical events, preserving cultural heritage, and strengthening national identity. In the current context of military conflict in Ukraine, there is an urgent need to study the mechanisms through which art influences collective consciousness and its use in the field of security and defense.

Art is not only a means of aesthetic expression, but also a powerful tool for influencing public consciousness. It can contribute to the development of patriotic sentiment, support the morale of both the military and civilian population, and counteract informational threats. In this context, studying the role of art in shaping collective memory and identity becomes particularly significant in the conditions of hybrid warfare and information operations.

In the legal framework, an important role is played by the Law of Ukraine "On National Security of

Ukraine" [1], which defines the fundamental principles of national security, including the informational and cultural components. According to this law, ensuring the information resilience of society and preserving national identity are key elements of the state's security policy. In this context, art can be viewed as one of the tools for implementing the strategic objectives of national security, particularly in the areas of communication, psychological influence, and the formation of a positive image of the country in the world.

Thus, the relevance of our research is driven by the need to explore the methods of using art in the field of security and defense, its impact on national identity, and the resilience of society under conditions of military conflict.

**Analysis of recent scientific research and publications.** Collective memory and identity are central themes for contemporary researchers [2]. In her study, Oksana Zabuzhko [3] emphasizes the importance of art in shaping cultural memory, especially in the context of conflict-affected societies. H. Farooq (2023)

[4] highlights the role of artistic narratives in supporting societal resilience in the face of war and crisis.

The study by S. Johnson (2012) [5] on visual imagery in the context of cultural memory allows for viewing works of art as carriers of historical identity. Yaroslav Hrytsak [6] analyzes the formation of the modern Ukrainian nation through cultural and social factors that are directly related to the issue of collective memory. Researcher M. Pazyniuk [7] explores the experience of war in visual arts and its impact on the psychological state of society. At the same time, the study by E. Perzycka-Borowska et al. (2023) [8] demonstrates the socio-educational impact of murals created during the war in Ukraine as an important factor of cultural identity.

**The purpose of this article** is to define the role of art in shaping collective memory and identity in the context of military conflict, as well as to develop a methodological toolkit for harnessing this potential within Ukraine's security and defense sector. To achieve this goal, the following tasks need to be solved:

1. To analyze theoretical approaches to studying art as a mechanism for constructing collective memory and identity.
2. To explore artistic practices and how they contribute to social cohesion and the restoration of psychological resilience during wartime.
3. To identify the specific features of using art in the communication strategies of Ukraine's security and defense sector.
4. To outline practical recommendations for integrating artistic initiatives into national security and defense programs.

**Presentation of the Main Material.** Let us consider the theoretical foundations and conceptual approaches to the issues of collective memory and art. Collective memory is a key mechanism in constructing social identity, anchoring shared perceptions of the past through symbolic practices. J. Assmann (1995) [2] defines collective memory as a social phenomenon formed through cultural carriers, particularly art. Artistic images, literary works, architectural monuments, and performative practices serve as channels for transmitting historical narratives. H. Farooq (2023) [4] notes that art functions not only as a means of preserving historical events but also as a mechanism for society's adaptation to social change.

In the context of war, art performs the function of mobilizing society and consolidating it around shared

values. E. Perzycka-Borowska et al. (2023) [8], using the example of street art, demonstrate that artistic imagery can become a powerful tool of social communication, activating mechanisms of collective memory through visual metaphors.

*Identity in Times of Crisis: The Role of Artistic Symbols.* Societal identity undergoes transformations during crises, which triggers the activation of cultural symbols as a means of consolidation. Y. Hrytsak [6] emphasizes that historical myths and cultural narratives play a decisive role in the processes of national self-identification. In the context of war, these mechanisms acquire special significance, as they contribute to preserving unity and shaping new survival strategies.

K. Johnson (C. Johnson, 2012) [[5] analyzes the significance of artistic symbols in constructing cultural worldviews. His research indicates that the use of visual imagery in art helps society cope with traumatic experiences through symbolic representation of events. In this aspect, Zabuzhko's study [3] is important for understanding how literary images and artistic narratives become tools for identity formation amid social transformations.

*Art in the Security and Defense Sector.* Art plays an important role in improving the moral and psychological well-being of military personnel. In particular, art therapy helps soldiers cope with the psychological consequences of combat, contributing to the restoration of mental health and adaptation to civilian life. As noted by ArmyInform [9], art therapy is an effective rehabilitation tool that combines the promotion of art with the recovery of soldiers' mental health.

Moreover, music and other forms of art are used to support morale and foster patriotic education. For example, the Military Music Center of the Land Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine promotes the cultural and aesthetic education of personnel by advocating national art and military-patriotic themes.

*Cultural Diplomacy and Information Security.* Cultural diplomacy is an important tool of state policy that contributes to forming a positive image of the country on the international stage and supporting information security. Organizing cultural and artistic events helps disseminate information about the country, promote its cultural heritage, and facilitate intercultural dialogue [10].

In the context of information warfare, cultural diplomacy becomes a means of countering

disinformation and propaganda, thereby strengthening national security. As noted in the research, cultural diplomacy plays a crucial role in developing intercultural dialogue and contributes to resolving and preventing conflicts [11].

*Military Art in Communication Strategies and Psychological Support.* Military art, particularly music, is used as a means of communication and psychological support. Military musical support is an element of both external and internal communication, contributing to the enhancement of the moral and combat spirit of servicemen and the formation of a positive perception of military service [12].

Overall, the integration of art into the security and defense sector contributes not only to increasing the effectiveness of military units but also to strengthening national identity and cultural values..

*Methodological Toolkit.* Art as a means of shaping collective memory and identity requires a comprehensive methodological approach to analyze its impact. Let us consider the key research methods applied to evaluate artistic manifestations in the context of Ukraine’s security and defense sector:

*Methods of Visual Narrative Analysis.* The analysis of visual images used in art is an important tool in studying processes of collective memory. The application of visual semiotics and cognitive analysis methods allows uncovering hidden meanings and their impact on community identity [2].

- *Social-Psychological Approaches to Assessing the Impact of Art.* The study of the psychological impact of art is based on the theories of emotional resonance and social identity. Research shows that artworks can act as triggers of emotional memory and contribute to the formation of shared values [3, 4].

- *A Comprehensive Approach to the Study of Art in the Context of Security.* To assess artistic strategies in the security sector, mixed research methods combining qualitative and quantitative analysis are applied. This approach allows for determining the effectiveness of artistic projects in strengthening the psychological resilience of both military personnel and civilians [8].

*Empirical Cases of Art Application in Martial Law Conditions.* The use of art in the process of shaping national identity and supporting the morale of military personnel is a common practice in armed conflicts. The experience of Ukraine and other countries facing military challenges demonstrates the effectiveness of artistic initiatives in this context.

One of the most vivid examples is the murals created in Ukraine after 2014. Street art has gained special significance, as it became not only a means of artistic self-expression but also an important tool for communication with society. Images of military personnel, historical figures, symbols of the national struggle, and motivating slogans on the walls of buildings in Kyiv, Kharkiv, Lviv, and other cities shape collective memory and represent the resilience of the Ukrainian people [8].

Another important case is the “Songs of War” project, in which Ukrainian military personnel collaborate with professional musicians to record compositions reflecting their combat experiences. This approach not only helps preserve the personal stories of defenders but also creates a powerful emotional connection between the military and the civilian population.

Similar practices can be found in the history of other countries. For example, during World War II, Britain actively used propaganda posters to boost the morale of both military personnel and civilians. Later, in the United States after the events of September 11, 2001, artistic projects such as memorial installations and murals helped society process the tragedy and restore national unity [5].

Based on the analysis of these cases, it can be argued that art performs not only a decorative or aesthetic function but also serves as an important means of shaping collective memory, supporting psychological resilience, and consolidating society during crisis periods. Further research could focus on expanding the use of artistic initiatives in the security and defense sector, particularly through the integration of digital art technologies in military training and the rehabilitation of servicemen.

As we can see, art plays a key role in the formation and strengthening of national identity, especially during periods of armed conflict. Let us consider several specific examples from Ukraine and other countries that demonstrate how artistic initiatives contribute to societal consolidation and the preservation of cultural heritage during war.

*Ukraine:*

- *Cinematography.* Ukrainian cinema has become an important tool for reflecting national struggle and cultural identity. Producer Artem Kolyubaiev [13] emphasizes the significance of cinema during martial law, creating films that highlight the

- history, culture, and resilience of the Ukrainian people. For example, the film *Shchedryk* takes viewers back to the times of World War II, showing how Ukrainians survived under the occupation of totalitarian regimes, while emphasizing the importance of preserving culture and national identity as a form of resistance..

- *Exhibition projects.* In Kyiv, the exhibition project *War for Identity* [14]. *The Power of Cultural Resilience* was launched, telling the story of Ukraine’s ongoing struggle — from the Revolution of Dignity to the full-scale war with Russia. This project demonstrates how culture and art become means of resistance and preservation of national identity.

- *Visual Arts.* Ukrainian artists, such as Serhii Burbelo, reflect the realities of war and the aspiration for victory through their paintings. His works, particularly the series *QIRIM. 10 Years of Hope*, have become symbols of resilience and hope, with proceeds from their sale directed to support the Armed Forces of Ukraine. [15].

- *Folk Traditions.* In the Chernihiv region, folk traditions and arts are actively promoted during the war through workshops, exhibitions, and other cultural events. This helps preserve national identity and supports the morale of the population [16].

#### *International Experience:*

- *Bosnia and Herzegovina.* During the war of the 1990s, art became a means of preserving national identity and cultural resistance. The Sarajevo Film Festival, founded in 1995 during the siege of Sarajevo, became a symbol of resilience and a platform for expressing national culture.

- *Palestine.* Art is used as a form of nonviolent resistance and the preservation of national identity. Palestinian artists highlight cultural heritage and the contemporary challenges facing their society through murals, exhibitions, and performances.

These examples demonstrate that art in times of war not only reflects reality but also actively shapes national identity, promotes social cohesion, and helps preserve cultural heritage.

*Practical recommendations for the security and defense sector.* In the modern conditions of war, art can play a key role in shaping the moral and psychological resilience of servicemembers, strengthening national identity, and enhancing the effectiveness of strategic communications. Here is a set of practical recommendations for using artistic initiatives in the security and defense sector.

1. *Integration of artistic initiatives into military training.* Art can play an important role in the training and support of servicemembers. The development of art therapy programs is a key element of rehabilitation for those who have experienced psychological trauma, as it helps them express their emotions and reduce stress levels. Military training can integrate historical and cultural symbols to strengthen national consciousness and the morale of soldiers. Organizing art workshops and exhibitions within military units fosters a space for self-expression, which is crucial for the psychological well-being of servicemembers. Involving artists in the design of military symbols, including patches, flags, and emblems, contributes to the formation of a strong identity and fighting spirit.

2. *Use of visual art in strategic communications.* Art can become an effective means of communication in the military sphere. Developing artistic campaigns will help disseminate key narratives among both military personnel and the civilian population, while the use of graphic art can counter hostile propaganda and disinformation. Modern technologies such as augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) open new opportunities for creating interactive historical reconstructions and training simulations that can be used in military education. Additionally, artistic interventions in urban spaces—such as graffiti, posters, and murals—can promote patriotic spirit and support national identity.

3. *Application of artistic methods for psychological support of military personnel.* Art also serves as a powerful means of psychological support. Psycho-emotional stabilization programs based on drawing, sculpting, and other art forms promote relaxation and help servicemembers overcome the effects of combat. Theater techniques can be used to simulate complex situations, develop communication skills, and reduce stress levels. Military hospitals and rehabilitation centers can establish specialized art therapy centers that become hubs of support for those affected. Special attention should be given to supporting military musical and artistic ensembles, which not only preserve cultural heritage but also boost morale and motivation among servicemembers.

The proposed measures will contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of military training and strategic communications, as well as to building a strong moral and psychological foundation for Ukrainian servicemembers in the context of modern challenges.

### Conclusions and prospects for further research.

The study confirmed the key thesis on the importance of art as a means of shaping collective memory and identity amid contemporary challenges, particularly war. The analysis of scientific literature, legal and regulatory documents, and empirical data demonstrated that artistic initiatives not only contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage but also play an active role in social cohesion, psychological support for servicemembers, and strengthening information security.

The work identifies areas in which art is used within the security and defense sector. First, it demonstrates the effectiveness of art therapy as a component of psychological rehabilitation for servicemembers, contributing to the reduction of post-traumatic disorders and the enhancement of stress resilience. Second, it reveals the significance of visual art in military communications: artistic narratives, graphic symbols, and murals emerge as powerful tools for identity formation and combating disinformation. Additionally, the role of cultural diplomacy as a means of Ukraine's international positioning in the context of hybrid warfare is highlighted.

The research objective was achieved through an analysis of the key mechanisms by which art influences collective memory and identity. The set tasks were also completed: conceptual approaches to the role of art in crisis conditions were characterized, the experience of using art in the defense sector was examined, and concrete recommendations were proposed for integrating artistic initiatives into military training, communication strategies, and psychological support programs for servicemembers.

Prospects for further research may focus on empirical methods for assessing the effectiveness of artistic initiatives in the security and defense sector. In particular, a more in-depth study is needed on the impact of various artistic methods on the emotional state of servicemembers, as well as an analysis of the long-term effects of using art as a tool in information warfare. Additionally, it is important to consider issues of regulatory framework and institutional support for artistic initiatives within the military sphere, which would enable the creation of effective mechanisms for integrating cultural policy into the national security system.

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