

STAMP OUT WAR: SUPPORT UKRAINE!

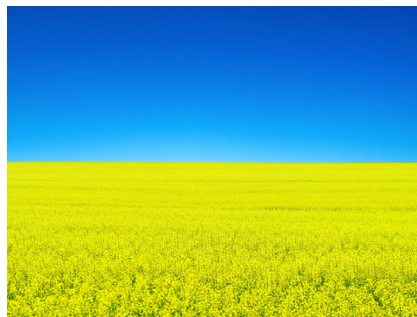
Stamp Out War is a creative charity art project that unites people from all over the world to show solidarity with Ukraine and raise funds for its relief efforts – using postage stamps.



Article written by Linda
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WHAT I DID ...

What are the backstories behind the creation of a unique collection of maxicards that demonstrates global support for Ukraine? Read on to find out!



War and Peace by Linda: Taken in 2009 in Prince Edward Island, Canada; post-processed and published in 2022.

On 24 February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. A few days later, I dug through my visual archives looking for a relevant image to use in the call for peace. I came across a photograph which, by accident or by design, echoed the colour scheme of the Ukrainian flag. This combination of colours suddenly caused an unexpected effect for me as a viewer, and recent circumstances gave this work a new meaning that I had not anticipated as a photographer.

It was taken in 2009 during my bike tour across Canada. Then freshly arrived in Prince Edward Island after having travelled through the Maritimes, I was in a state of exhaustion when this vast field of yellow flowers spread out in front of me. No cloud or artificial object came to disturb the landscape. This was a moment of relaxation. I composed this very orderly photo with equal parts shared between the sky and the field to show the harmony between the natural elements. When it was taken in 2009, everything seemed to stand still, motionless, which invites meditation, peace, calm, whereas in 2022, this moment of tranquillity contrasts in times of trouble with the madness of war. Two days after the war had started, I named this

piece, jarringly, *War and Peace* and published it on the web.

In early March, *War and Peace* was quickly becoming my most viewed photograph on Flickr. I decided to print out some copies of 5x7" postcards to hand out to whoever wanted to show his/her solidarity with Ukraine. Originally, these postcards were the vehicles carrying all sorts of messages and political slogans that the senders wished to convey to the recipients, who might be an acquaintance of the sender or a politician the sender wished to address, like Putin.

Up until then, all these efforts sound like a grassroots Mail Art initiative created out of growing political concerns. However, with my philatelic friends on The Stamp Forum, I started pondering over the possibility of maxicard creation seriously.

WHAT IS A MAXICARD? WHY DOES A POSTMARK MATTER?

A maximum card (or maxicard for short) is a postcard which features a stamp and a postmark placed on the image side of the card that are related to the same theme, creating a visually stunning and highly collect-



War and Peace postcard sent by Linda to the Kremlin using peace-themed stamps

Timeline of the project development

24 Feb

Russia invaded Ukraine



26 Feb

Linda's War and Peace was published



10 Mar

First Ukraine support stamp issued in Latvia



24 Aug

Ukraine's national day



2023

Online auction of the Ukraine support maxicards



A Japanese maxicard about peace.

ible item that's beloved by stamp collectors and history buffs alike. For instance, one can place a stamp of the Atomic Bomb Dome in Hiroshima, Japan, on a postcard showing this building, then get a postmark of Hiroshima on the 6th of August – the day of the first deployment of an atomic bomb in human history. This way, the concordance between three philatelic elements – the postcard, the stamp, and the postmark – is maximised, hence the name *maximum card*.

A postmark is a marking made by the postal agency on a piece of mail to indicate the date and

location where the piece has been processed, therefore it carries historical significance. By offering a glimpse into the past, it can be used to track the movement of mail and provide insight into postal operations in a particular place and time. It's a tangible piece of history that, sometimes aesthetically designed, people can appreciate and study.

UKRAINE SUPPORT STAMPS AND THE BIRTH OF UKRAINE SUPPORT MAXICARDS

At the beginning, I was thinking of using peace-themed stamps to create a collection of maxicards using my blue/yellow postcards, yet feared that the visual wouldn't match perfectly. Later, I learned that, in response to Europe's largest refugee crisis since World War II, the official postal agencies of 11 countries had issued special stamps to manifest their support and/or to raise funds for Ukraine. These countries are, in order of stamp release: Latvia (10 March), Estonia (24 March), Poland (25 March), Austria (31 March), Croatia (12 April), Moldova (19 April), Lithuania (6 May), Luxembourg (11 May), Spain (29 May), France (23 June) and Canada (7 July). Each of these stamps incorporates into its design the blue and yellow colours of Ukraine's flag more or less prominently.

I immediately thought about creating philatelically worthy and historically significant maxicards that can be auctioned to raise funds for Ukraine using these new issues. Hence, I started launching a global call. First, I entrusted the Toronto-based print lab Pikto – the same lab who

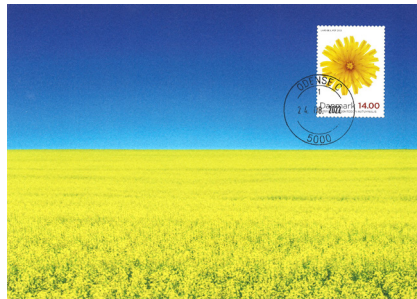
'Together, we can make a real difference in the lives of the people of Ukraine – one stamp at the time.'

Project organiser, Linda

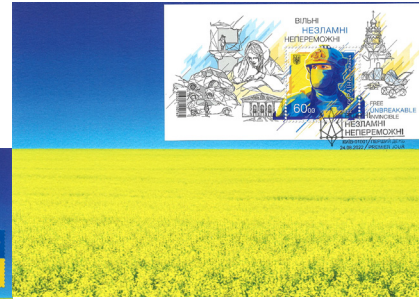


Ukraine support stamps issued by the 11 countries before mid-August 2022.

produced all my postcards – to produce my blue/yellow postcards. Second, I acquired these Ukraine support stamps to be paired with my cards. Third, I mailed these cards to the rest of the world and asked participants to show their solidarity with Ukraine by going to a local post office in their countries on the 24th of August – Ukraine's national day – to ask for a postmark on these cards. This way, the visual of the card, the stamp, and the postmark are all related to the same theme – Ukraine.



Spanish variety of Ukraine support maxicard with a Ukraine support stamp.



Ukraine support maxicard realised in Kyiv, Ukraine.

Danish variety of Ukraine support maxicard showing Ukraine tribute stamp and the postmark of Odense, a sister-city of Kyiv.

As this project was gaining momentum on social media, some of my friends around the world expressed their desire to help, even though their countries didn't issue a special Ukraine support stamp in the blue/yellow colour scheme. That's why I decided to enlarge the scope of this project by acquiring various sunflower / yellow flower stamps that can be fixed on the blue part of the image to pay tribute to Ukraine. Moreover, I set up a personal fundraiser on Indiegogo for people to contribute financially.

HAND-PAINTED MAXICARD

Meanwhile, I was also working on an original hand-drawn/painted maxicard that will be donated for the same cause. This piece, named *Peace to Us*, was completed on 19 August and was postmarked on 24 August in Myrnam (AB), Canada, whose name means 'peace to us'. An additional first-day-of-issue cancellation that accompanies the release of the semi-postal stamp Help for Ukraine in Canada was later added onto the card.

Peace to Us (2022) is an anti-war artwork that uses the sunflower as a symbol of hope, peace, and growth. The flower replaces the bullet in the gun, offering a reminder that something beautiful and fragile can be just as powerful as physical force. The blue and yellow paint splatters, inspired by Ukraine's national flag, represent the blood that has been shed in the ongoing conflict in the country. The composition of the piece is intentionally jarring, with the mechanical gun and dark figure creating a sense of threat and horror. But the natural beauty of the sunflower offers a counterpoint to the

Peace to Us (2022) by Linda: graphite, charcoal, colour pencil and watercolour on Arches Watercolour Hot Press Paper (300 gsm).

Peace to Us (2022) is about ...



... fighting the brutality of war with something fragile and inspiring.

At the top right corner: Special first-day-of-issue cancellation that accompanied the release of Help for Ukraine semi-postal stamp in Canada, and a regular postmark of Myrnam Post Office that bears the mention of 24 August 2022.

violence, reminding us of the potential for new life and growth even in the midst of destruction. By fighting the brutality of war with something fragile and inspiring, *Peace to Us* (2022) encourages us to imagine a world where conflict can be resolved through peaceful means. It is a timely reminder of the urgent need for peace and unity in Ukraine and beyond.

THE BEGINNING OF A COMMON CAUSE

It is heartening to see the power of philately to bring people together in support of a common cause.

As this project was mobilising public opinion in support of peace, I was overwhelmed by the outpouring of interest from people around the world. From Australia to Austria, from Canada to Croatia, from Japan to Spain, and beyond – people from 25 countries have participated in this project, each adding their country’s stamp and postmark to this collection of maxi-cards that is not only a testament to the power of philately to unite different individuals across borders and cultures, but also a practical demonstration of the impact that can be achieved through collaboration. In times of conflict and division, it is heartening to see the power of philately to bring people together in support of a common cause.

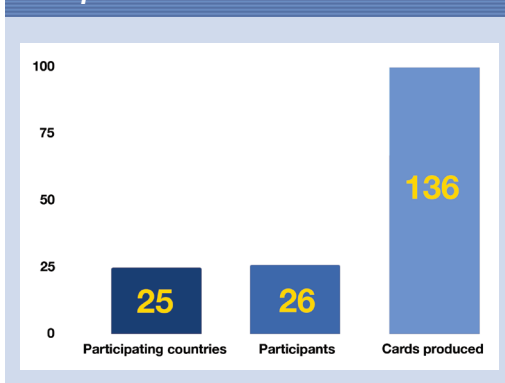
Although the challenges remain to convince non-connoisseurs of philately / maximaphily / deltiology / marcophily the worth of this visually stunning collection of maxicards that embody the theme of global solidarity, we remain optimistic about the positive impact our collection will have on the world in times of troubles. In the coming months, these unique cards will be auctioned off to raise funds for Ukraine relief effort, and we plan on collaborating closely with local charity organisations and auction platforms to ensure that the project’s proceeds are channelled to

those in need. Together with all our effort at community building through this kind of initiative that aims at promoting social cohesion, inclusivity, and collective well-being, we can make a real difference in the lives of the people of Ukraine – one stamp at the time.

May our gratitude to all of those who have contributed to this project be felt.

Stamp Out War project is now entering the auction phase. For more information, please visit <https://www.stampoutwar.com/>.

Stamp Out War in numbers



Participants in 2022

1. Liya (Australia),
2. Zeljko Vasilik (Croatia),
3. Simone D. C. Bernadi (Estonia),
4. Maarit Madetoja (Finland),
5. Xavier Bonnin (France),
6. Angélique Lyaud (France),
7. Jens (Germany),
8. Luisa (Germany),
9. Luna (Japan),
10. Ai Suzuki (Japan),
11. Natsuko Matsunaga (Japan),
12. Mina (Japan),
13. Vera Keidane (Latvia),
14. Neringa Kucinskaite (Lithuania),
15. Sovan (Luxembourg),
16. Ala Nicoreanu (Moldova),
17. René Hillesum (Netherlands),
18. Rune Berg (Norway),
19. Anna Szczepanska (Poland),
20. Mihnea Raducu (Romania),
21. Juan Antonio Casas Pajares (Spain),
22. Henrik Lundgren (Sweden),
23. Anonym (Ukraine)
24. Roman Skabara (Ukraine),
25. Alex Walker (UK),
26. Dorin Cojocariu (USA).

Participating countries

1. Australia
2. Austria
3. Canada
4. Croatia
5. Denmark
6. Estonia
7. Finland
8. France
9. Germany
10. Japan
11. Latvia
12. Lithuania
13. Luxembourg
14. Moldova
15. Netherlands
16. New Zealand
17. Norway
18. Poland
19. Romania
20. Spain
21. Sweden
22. Taiwan
23. Ukraine
24. United Kingdom
25. United States of America