Beyond the border | Jakub Joch
Praktická bakalářská práce
Abstract

The photographic series Beyond the Border captures three stories of young people from Ukraine whose lives have been deeply affected by the war. Each story presents different experiences and ways in which these young individuals cope with the conflict. Yet in all of them, the war has left a profound imprint on their personal identities, their lives, and their perception of the world.

Bohdan had just turned eighteen. He remained alone in Ukraine after his family left the country. Due to being of conscription age, he was not allowed to leave. While his family tried to settle in Brno, he stayed behind—alone in the war.

Kateryna had spent her entire life studying in Western Europe. When the war began, she decided to return home. At a time when many young and capable people were leaving Ukraine, she chose the opposite path. She went back—to serve, to be with her homeland. Her return is a quiet act of courage and a deep connection to her roots.

Kostyantin witnessed the events in the Donetsk region. He decided to leave the country, but his journey to freedom was complex. He traveled across the front line, Crimea, Russia, and Georgia. He was arrested and interrogated, and hid in a mountain cabin in the Caucasus. All of this in order to find refuge in the Czech Republic. The journey took him a year. In the end, he did make it to the Czech Republic safely. His friends who stayed in Ukraine, however, are no longer alive. In his story, I see immense determination and a longing for freedom.

The photo series is a visual testimony to authentic human stories, to the desire for freedom, to the effort to preserve one's identity despite external terror. It transcends geographical, physical, and inner borders. It is an invitation to glimpse into another world.

Keywords: war in Ukraine, Ukraine, identity, freedom, medium format