



Po drodze
do domu

По дорозі
ДОДОМУ

On Our Way
Home

Travelling Exhibition
Galicia Jewish Museum

On February 24, a full-scale war broke out in Ukraine, Russian troops began an offensive on the entire territory of the country, in many cities, people woke up to rocket explosions. Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians moved west to the Polish border in search of salvation.

From the very first days, the Galicia Jewish Museum opened its doors to Ukrainian refugees – women and their families, provided them with jobs, organized the fundraising for medical aid, and set up a daycare center for Ukrainian children, which allowed them to feel safe again and their mothers to have time for recovery in a new country.



Among the women who brought their children to museum classes, there were those who were ready to talk about their dramatic refugee experience. Their stories resonated with what Galicia Jewish Museum talks about in its exhibitions and educational projects. Krakow of the 20th century experienced the worst times and witnessed the crimes against the Jewish people.

Modern Krakow witnesses the human dramas caused by the war against the Ukrainian people – during the first months of the war, almost 177,000 Ukrainians found refuge in Kraków and at least 50,000 stayed here thanks to the help of volunteers and ordinary residents. That's why Galicia Jewish Museum decided to show their experience in a visible and narrative way.

The stories are combined into a coherent project *On Our Way Home* that speaks to the audience in the first person. It proves the need of people in trouble to be heard and feel important, to show their dignity. Featuring 11 photographs and conversations, the exhibition tells about the difficult path that Ukrainians have had to walk.

The eleven women featured in this project were happy in their native cities and villages; they had their own businesses, raised children, and were successful in their professions. They built their lives around their dreams, but the Russian invasion forced them to leave their homes, their families, husbands, fathers, and older sons and seek refuge in Poland. Some of our heroines continued their way further to the west or took the risk to return to Ukraine. However, all of them have made every effort to lead a new life in Kraków: some are engaged in volunteering, and others have found a job or are continuing their studies. On their long way home, they have found an incredible amount of help and solidarity. Moreover, they regained faith in humanity.



Eleven heroines of *On Our Way Home* tell about how they left the attacked cities, how they ended up in Kraków, with what efforts they made their way out of fire and shelling, and how they saved children and animals. In each story, the heroines talk about the sources of their strength to move on, how they received support from strangers, what they miss most from their home, and what experiences they gained on this forced journey.

For example, among heroines, you may read the story told by Maryna from Severodonetsk, mother of 5 sons. She remembers their dramatic evacuation: **“Our train left on March 6, and the next day the Russian aggressors bombed the railway station. We had the last tickets for the last train car of the last train”**.

Another story is told by Viktoriia from Kyiv, she evacuated from Kyiv hospital with her daughter, 5, who is disabled: **“British volunteer intercepted the information on a walkie-talkie that a German ambulance was returning from Ukraine, and they took us from the border straight to the hospital in Kraków. That was the first time I saw how strangers cared about our needs, how selflessly they helped”**.

Iryna is from Kharkiv, one of the cities most affected by constant shelling. She had a very successful touristic business and friendly family. She had to flee together with her 84-year-old father and their way to Poland was very exhausting: **“Dad didn’t deal well with the trip and said, “If I die now, what are you going to do with me? You better leave me here”**. When they settled in Kraków, he flatly refused to buy anything like T-shirts, slippers. He said: **“I have everything! At home, in Kharkiv. Why should I buy something here? I will go home soon”**. Buying things for him means acknowledging that he will be here for a long time.



The museum's exhibition projects have always taught visitors empathy and responsibility toward the memory and culture. Currently, in this project of photos and stories about Ukrainian displaced people, in addition to attention to the fate of the affected people, one may find the stories of female strength, gratitude, and solidarity with other nations.

The exhibition shows the values and dreams of Ukrainian heroines, which helped them survive difficulties and adapt to a new environment.

The war is still going on, each story is very special and gives the feeling that important ties between people from different countries are getting stronger. Today, the whole world helps Ukraine, so this exhibition will be understandable and familiar to every foreign city that has welcomed people from Ukraine, whose residents also help and support Ukrainians.



All of the pictures in the exhibition were made by Ukrainian photographer Iryna Myronenko.

The digital version of the exhibition is available here:

<https://onourwayhome212604146.wordpress.com/po-drodze-do-domu-2/>

Exhibition specification:

11 boards 74 cm x 74 cm

1 board 74 cm x 100 cm

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Galicia Jewish Museum

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