

Discover the new guide "Bakota. A portal to Ukraine"

September 13, 2026 Regeneration of places



In occasione di



Internazionale
a Ferrara 2026
3, 4 e 5 ottobre

SABATO 3 OTTOBRE

ORE 14.30 📍 Apollo 3, Ferrara

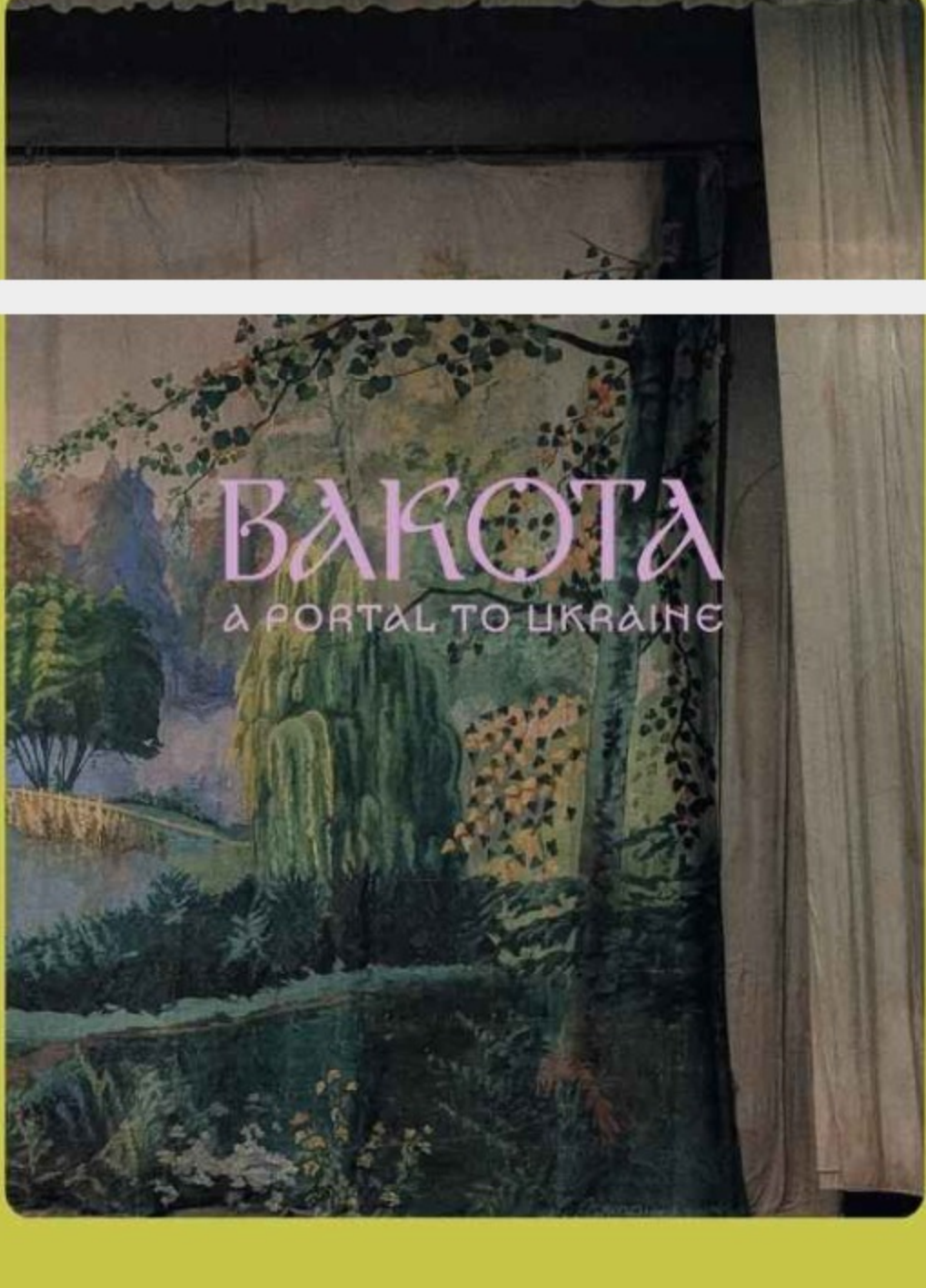
SILENCE BEHIND THE FRONTLINES

Ascolto collettivo e presentazione del podcast

ORE 18.00 📍 Aula magna di Economia e Management, Università di Ferrara

CARTOLINE DA BAKOTA

Presentazione della guida



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What is it about?

The [Discovery Guide](#) project , our project that brings the **narrative method of territories** pioneered with [Nonturismo beyond Italy's borders](#), continues. Following last year's [international call for six artists](#) to be selected for a residency in [Ukraine](#) , the result of that work is now available: *Bakota: A Portal to Ukraine* , a travel guide to the Bakota region of southwestern Ukraine, published in English and Ukrainian in a limited edition.

Six itineraries by three Ukrainian artists and three international artists, together with the podcast *Silence Behind the Frontlines* , accompany the reader on a journey to discover a territory marked by history and, today, by the consequences of war.

As Sineglossa, we were responsible for the coordination, design, and artistic direction, collaborating with [Territory](#) NGO , a Ukrainian cultural organization, which managed the residency program and community engagement, and [Fundacja Ziemiaki](#) i , a Warsaw-based cultural foundation working to improve access, visibility, and working conditions in the creative arts sector, which was responsible for the editorial design and publication. The guide was created as part of the *A Discovery Guide for Recovery* project , co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union.

What is Bakota?

Bakota is the name of a **medieval town in western Ukraine** and the surrounding villages, **submerged in the 1980s** following the construction of the **Novodnistrovska hydroelectric power plant** . Today, this territory extends along the **Dnister River basin** , between the new towns that arose on the banks of the artificial lake, such as **Horaivka** and **Stara Ushytisia** . Despite being far from the front line, it is a place profoundly affected by the consequences of war. Exploring a landscape with such complexity means applying the practice of excavation and listening that has guided our investigation of these territories for years, to map the absences, memories, and boundaries that continue to redefine them.

To translate this perspective into action on the ground, the research took shape around the **Bakota Hub** . Founded in 2021 inside an abandoned former school near the Moldovan border, and converted for over a year into a shelter for internally displaced persons at the outbreak of the conflict, the Hub is now a vibrant cultural hub. In a territory constantly renegotiating its identity, it represents the physical space where historic inhabitants, veterans, and new communities meet and recognize each other. Having become the operational base for the residency coordinated by the Territory NGO team, it is precisely **here that six artists from Ukraine, France, the Netherlands, and Poland, selected from over 250 applicants, lived and worked** . Through daily dialogue with the population, teachers, geologists, and institutions, and by exploring the archives, **the artists collected the testimonies and materials that today constitute the six itineraries of the guide** . A guide that, in the pure spirit of Nontourism and in the wake of the *Sarajevo Survival Guide* , subverts the tourist narrative to restore, from the inside, the living experience of contemporary Ukraine.

How the guide is made

Published in a bilingual edition (English and Ukrainian) and limited to 600 copies, *Bakota: A Portal to Ukraine* transcends the traditional guidebook format to become a true book-object. Inside, the reading experience becomes tangible and sensorial: artist Camille Bleu-Valentin has created an organic and **biodegradable bioplastic insert containing dried local medicinal herbs**, while the three **letters written** by Bohdana Korohod—addressed to **water, earth, and air**—establish an intimate dialogue with the landscape and the people who continue to inhabit it.

Alongside these explorations and the contributions of the rest of the artists, the volume nevertheless retains the **tools of travel narration** :

- **practical directions to reach Bakota** ,
- a map with points of interest,
- a *local phrasebook* built from the words and expressions collected during the days of residency.

Designers [Anna Rabczuk](#) and [Marta Basak](#) have reinterpreted the traditional structure of the travel guide—built around facts, dates, and must-see sights—through a visual language rooted in the Ukrainian landscape and culture. The project uses *Rutenia Akcidenna* , a decorative typeface by Ukrainian typographer and calligrapher Vasył Chebanyk, which visually recalls Cyrillic script even in the Latin alphabet. The color palette was born from research into Bakota's images and landscapes and from discussions with artists, while the cover texture recalls the limestone of the area's monastic caves. Each artistic contribution was designed through a specific dialogue with the artist, developing visual solutions capable of conveying the character of each research; a shared grid, typefaces, and color codes simultaneously maintain coherence throughout the publication. The guide can thus be explored without following a single predetermined path.



Request the guide

The artists and their contributions

Bakota: A Portal to Ukraine brings together six artistic research projects that intertwine reportages, stories, photographs, paintings, letters, maps and family archives, **developed by the six artists3 in residence at Bakota Hub** .

[Anna Romandash](#), a Ukrainian journalist and writer, entrusts three characters—the notary Luka, the raven Muninn, and the young Nestor—with **stories** set at different moments in Bakota's history. Through literary fiction, the chapter follows the territory through centuries of wars, political changes, submergences, and returns, up to contemporary life and the consequences of the Russian invasion.

[Robin Alysha Clemens](#), a visual artist and photographer, has created *How To Carry A Home* , a contribution that begins with a question: **what does “home” mean to those who no longer have a physical, cultural, or emotional home capable of offering security and stability?** The photographs taken by the artist in Bakota in 2025 are juxtaposed with images from the inhabitants' personal archives, photographs of pre-submerged villages, Soviet materials, and children's paper models.

[Olena Kayinska](#), a Ukrainian visual artist, explores trauma, post-traumatic healing, and the psychological dimension. "In Bakota, we talk about those who practice magic suspended between two beliefs: 'You shouldn't, it's a sin,' and 'It helped me.'" Through **paintings, encounters, and a story born during the residency** , the artist **traces local rituals, healers, and popular beliefs** , still alive among the inhabitants, observing the territory as a map made not of roads, but of people.

[ARSÈNE](#), a multidisciplinary artist, researcher, and humanitarian activist, has conducted research into **which places make us feel safe and which, instead, harbor sadness** . Through encounters with residents, personal maps, photographs, and field research, his pages reconstruct the geography of Bakota's relationships and memories, questioning the natural and political boundaries in a land scarred by war.

[Camille Bleu-Valentin](#) , a French interdisciplinary artist based in Nantes, starts with a different question: what happens when a pharmacy disappears, but healing knowledge lives on in the region? During her residency, she collected medicinal plants, met the custodian of the region's last botanical pharmacy, and created **a journey dedicated to the therapeutic knowledge rooted in Bakota** . The chapter is accompanied by an insert with dried herbs that readers can use to prepare an infusion, transforming reading into a touching and smelling experience.

[Bohdana Korohod](#) describes the land with **three letters**—"Dear Bakota"—**one addressed to the water, one to the earth, and a final one addressed to the air** . With intimate writing, interwoven with stories collected from the inhabitants, she explores the consequences of the submergence of villages, the loss of homes, and the meaning of material memory: a fragment of a ferry transformed into a gutter, a towel passed down through generations, the foundations of a house resurfacing when the water level recedes.

The podcast recorded in Bakota

The guide *Bakota: A Portal to Ukraine* is not just a book-object to browse, but an exploration that transcends the visual dimension to become a sound experience. Enriching the volume and the artist's journey is *Silence Behind the Frontlines* , a five-episode podcast that expands the physical boundaries of the printed page.

Written and narrated by Italian journalist and author [Beatrice Petrella](#) —with story editing, sound design, original music, and executive production by [Jonathan Zenti](#) —the podcast was recorded entirely in the field during the residency at the Bakota Hub. In keeping with the listening practice that characterizes our territorial investigations, **the microphone became a tool for mapping the landscape** : the episodes intertwine the voices of the six international artists at work, the firsthand accounts of local residents, and the sounds captured while traversing the landscape.

The podcast will be the centerpiece of the guide's first Italian presentation, scheduled for October 3, 2026, at the Internazionale Festival in Ferrara. For the occasion, the public event dedicated to the volume will be accompanied by a group listening session of *Silence Behind the Frontlines* .

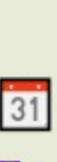
The program of events

Collective listening of the podcast

 **Saturday 3 October** 📍 Apollo 3, Via del Carbone 35 – [Ferrara International Festival](#) ⌚ 2.30 pm 🎫 Entrance with coupon

[Federico Bomba](#) and [Beatrice Petrella](#) present the podcast *Silence behind the frontlines*, with [Jonathan Zenti](#) .

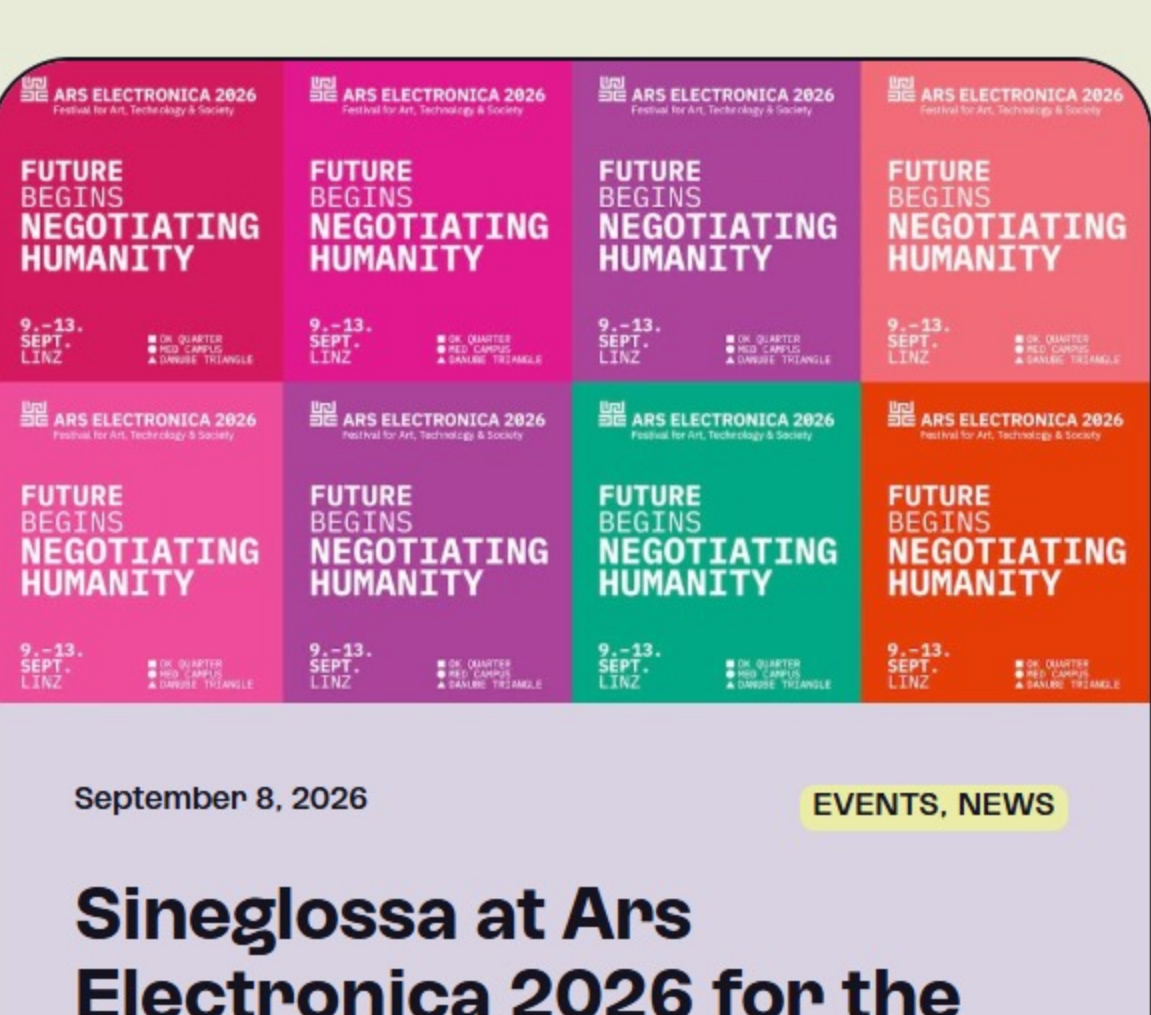
Postcards in Bakota: Introduction to the Guide

 **Saturday, October 3** 📍 Aula Magna of Economics and Management – University of Ferrara, Via Voltapalette 11, – [Ferrara International Festival](#) ⌚ 6:00 PM

-  Speakers will include:
- [Federico Bomba](#) (president of Sineglossa)
 - [Robin Alysha Clemens](#) (Dutch photographer)
 - [Anna Romandash](#) (Ukrainian writer and journalist)
 - [Wu Ming 2](#) (writer)
- Introduced and moderated by [Andrea Pipino](#) (journalist for Internazionale)

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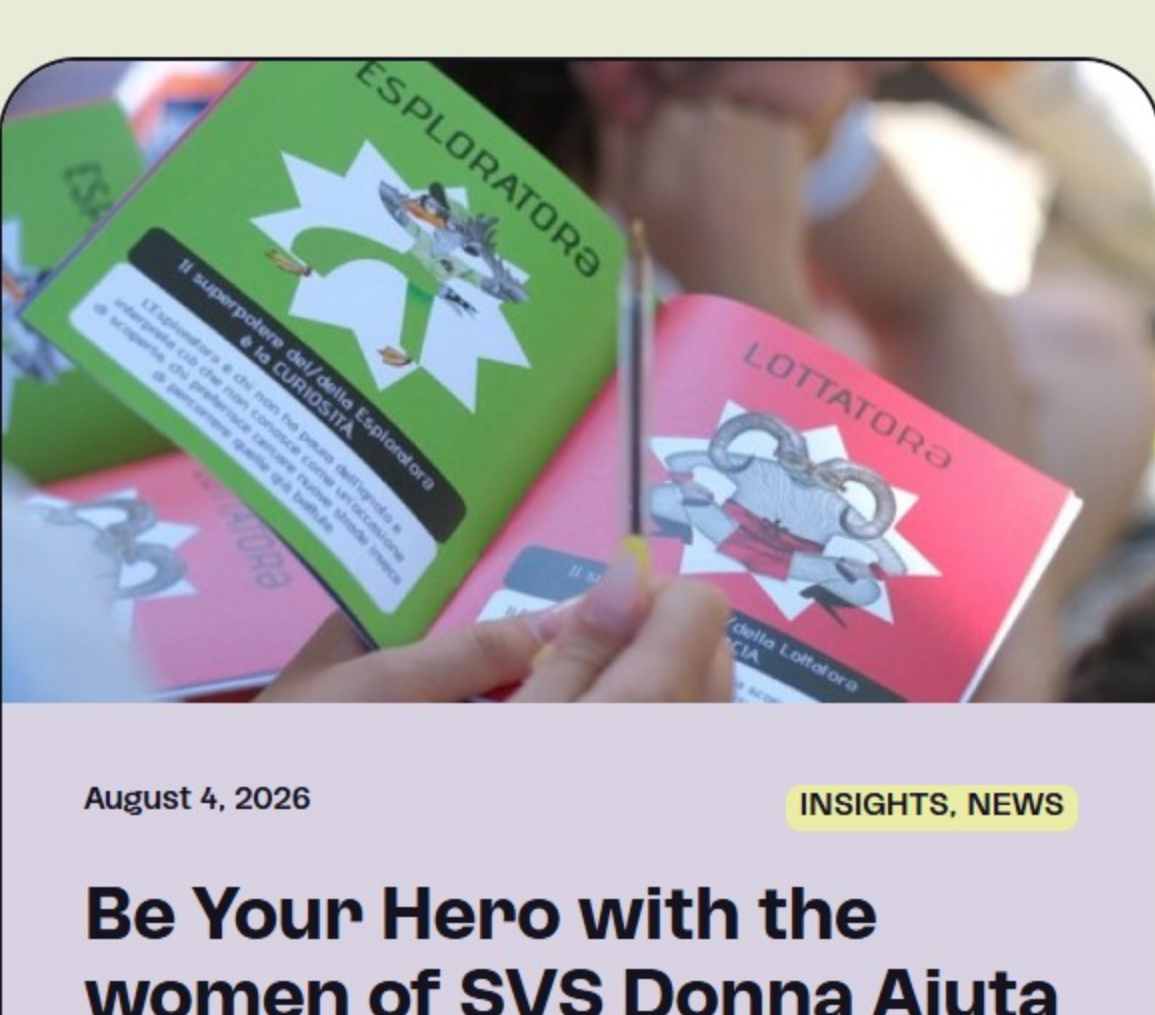
Sineglossa at Ars Electronica 2026 for the FAIR Media conference



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