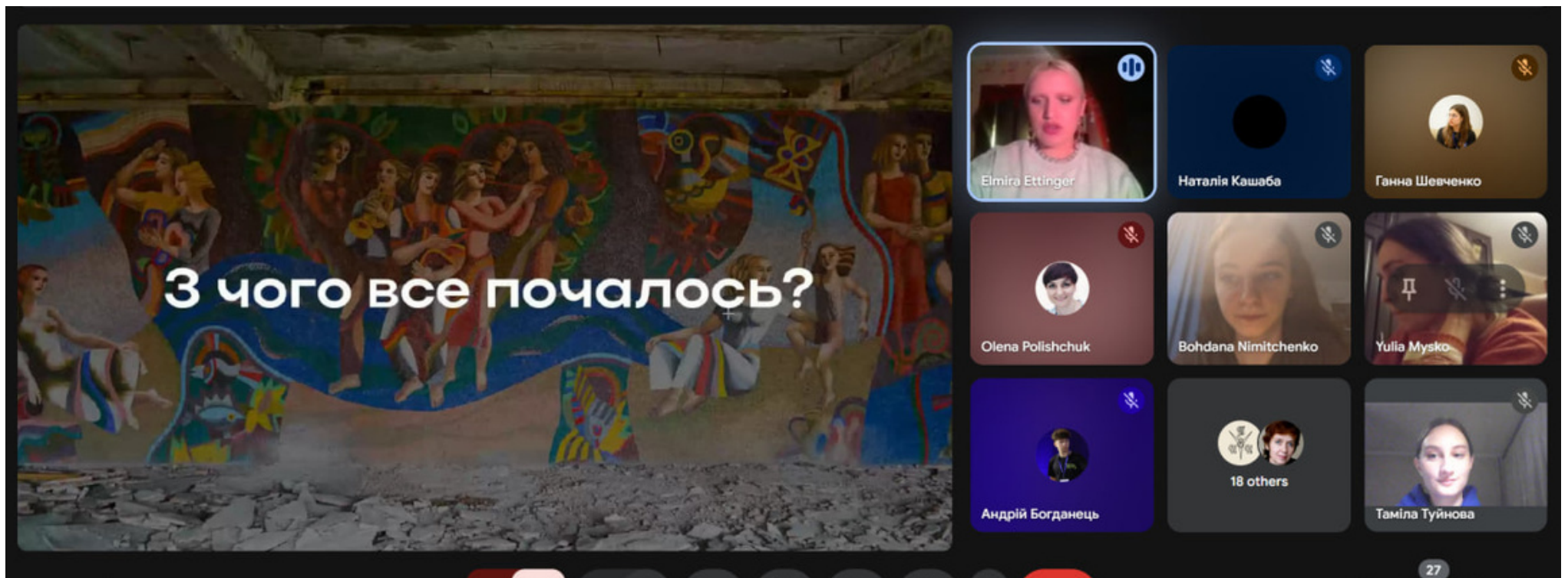




CE*Arabesques: Remembering What War Threatens to Erase

Ukraine's monumental art is not quiet. It covers the walls of public buildings, speaks in geometric ornament and mosaic, and carries within it a distinctly Ukrainian visual language that developed across decades – regional, bold, and largely unknown to the young people who pass it every day. In Nova Kakhovka, a city now devastated by war, artists once embedded embroidery-like patterns directly into stone facades – a tradition known as "stone vyshyvanky." For many participants in CE*Arabesques, this was the first time they had heard of it.

The initiative, implemented in partnership with NGO "Innovative University" and culminating in a public exhibition at the Zaporizhzhia City Gallery, brought together young people aged 14–30 – students of creative disciplines, art enthusiasts, and those drawn to questions of urbanism and cultural memory. It combined three formats deliberately: five online lectures on Ukrainian monumental art and urban art traditions; a two-day hands-on workshop where participants created decorative cement panels using authentic techniques; and a public exhibition where those works went on display.

That final step mattered. For many participants, it was their first time showing work in a public gallery – a threshold crossed, not just a project completed.

The timing gave everything an additional weight. With part of Ukraine's cultural heritage under direct threat of destruction, learning to see it – and then to make something in its tradition – became its own form of preservation. CE*Arabesques did not ask young people to mourn what is being lost. It asked them to carry it forward.

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