Leah Duncan

The Threshold

Mixed Media: Oil paint, Acrylic paint, Texture Paste, Gilding Wax, Ribbons, Paper Collage, Embroidery

Size: 120 x 77cm

My artwork “The Threshold” explores the destructive nature of Ukrainians' struggle to perverse cultural identity amidst the tragedy of war. The title itself refers to an invisible borderline in which one must sacrifice their human body for cultural preservation. Inspired by the works of Haejin Lee and Josh Keyes, I depict organic and skeletal deconstruction to communicate the inherently ephemeral nature of human mortality. Traditional ribbon and embroidery media is contemporised under modern techniques and messages, paying homage to Ukrainian Vinok and Vyshyvanka traditions, whilst depicting the evolution of culture in a modern era.

I engage the audience by prompting them with a pair of scissors next to the artwork, inviting them to freely cut as many or little strings as they wish. It is within this power that the true helplessness of war is revealed; how the lives and cultures of so many rely entirely on uncontrollable external forces.