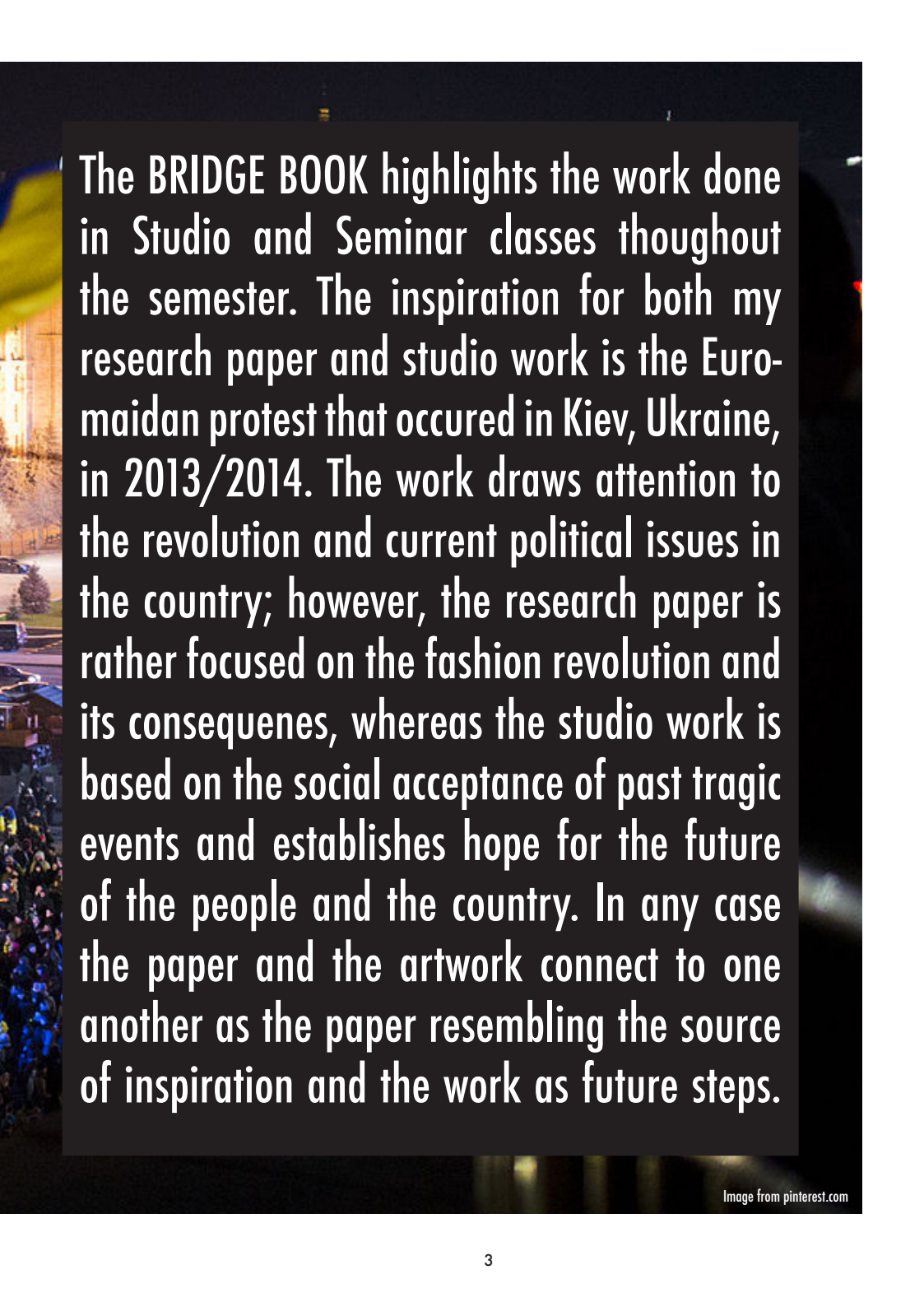




Remember
January 7
2014

Olga Kononenko
BRIDGE BOOK





The BRIDGE BOOK highlights the work done in Studio and Seminar classes throughout the semester. The inspiration for both my research paper and studio work is the Euro-maidan protest that occurred in Kiev, Ukraine, in 2013/2014. The work draws attention to the revolution and current political issues in the country; however, the research paper is rather focused on the fashion revolution and its consequences, whereas the studio work is based on the social acceptance of past tragic events and establishes hope for the future of the people and the country. In any case the paper and the artwork connect to one another as the paper resembling the source of inspiration and the work as future steps.

Remember

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“We are strong only when we stick together” is something Ukrainians have learned over the past few years, yet the horrors of the Euromaidan protest that occurred in 2014 keep on following people around. I remain one of those people.

It started as a peaceful protest. The goal was to unite people to stand up for the country’s freedom and join the European Union. However, the Ukrainian president’s actions have gotten hundreds brutally killed by the police and have destroyed the hope of many for a democratic future. Although the revolution has influenced multiple reforms in the country, Ukraine is still struggling to recover.

Project statement

Experiencing such a tragic yet honorable revolution as a teenager has influenced me physically, mentally, and creatively. The events of January 2014 still affect my thinking and creative work. It speaks to me on a very personal level. Inspired by my memories and hope for a better future, this series of garment patches represents symbols that I located while walking through the streets during the protest. Each one resembles a particular event that occurred during those tragic couple of Euromaidan weeks.



Reference images background, 4 garment original patches
8 x 10 cm (x4)

Project statement



After going back to Kiev for spring break this year I have realized that Ukrainians don't need the "truth" about the current political situation. Every image in my project is aimed to refer back to the Euromaidan protest, but not in a sense of tragedy or political disgust. I realized what people actually need is to remember why the protest started in the first place and that all the struggles that we have been through were not a waste.

This image represents the symbol of Ukraine, but reworked to spell out "Geroyam Slava" which means "praise the heroes" in Ukrainian. I feel like that saying elicits a variety of negative emotions from the protest, but at the same time, it reminds people that we have the strength to change our country with the "added wings", which signify freedom.



Denim jacket background, image made in illustrator, printed onto tshirt paper, printed onto cotton fabric,
20 x 12 cm



Denim jacket background, image made in illustrator, printed onto tshirt paper, printed onto cotton fabric, 8 x 10 cm

During the protest, a lot of women wore a piece of the Ukrainian national costume, called a Vinok (flower crown) which underlines the idea of national pride. Originally, this head wear wasn't something to be worn outside of the concert hall.



Denim jacket background, image made in illustrator, printed onto tshirt paper, printed onto cotton fabric,
8 x 10 cm

Another part of the Ukrainian national costume is called a Vyshyvanka. Both men and women wore this garment during the protest to represent their pride, commitment, and ability to fight for their beliefs. This garment has now become part of Ukrainian daily wear, despite previously being considered as embarrassing.



Denim jacket background, image made in illustrator, printed onto tshirt paper, printed onto cotton fabric, 8 x 10 cm

This image represents praying hands in a color scheme of the Ukrainian flag. The hand gesture symbolizes the idea of never losing hope and that the potential for change is in our hands, not just the governments'.



Denim jacket background, image made in illustrator, printed onto tshirt paper, printed onto cotton fabric,
8 x 10 cm

This patch represents the candles brought to the square in memory of the people who lost their lives. I feel like it's important to remember those who stood up for the freedom for the entire country and sacrificed their future for ours.

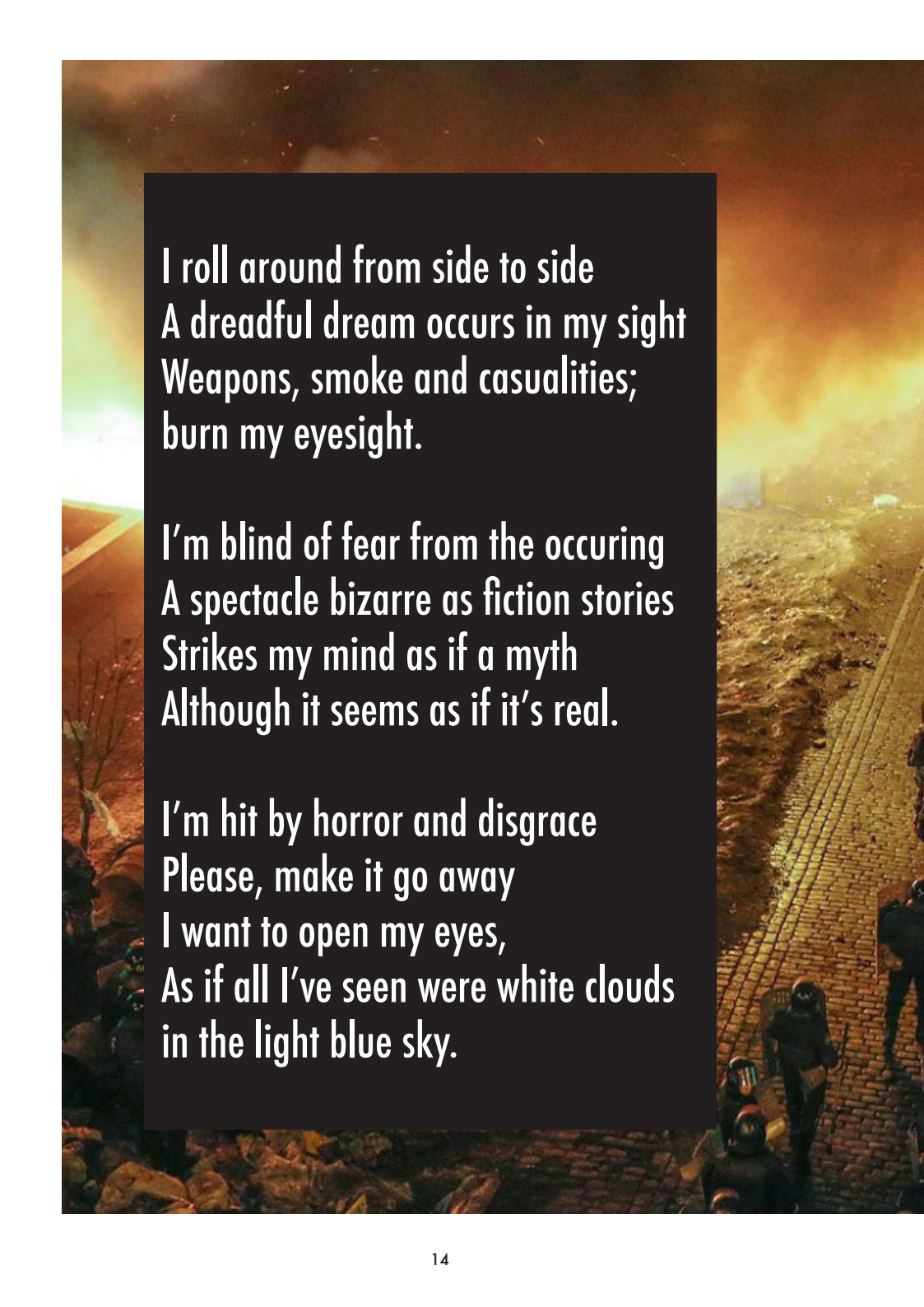
Ukraine's Fashion Revolution

This essay answers the question: "Can fashion be used to deliver an accurate message about the current political situation in Ukraine, especially regarding the 2013 Euromaidan protest and its aftermath?" It examines the Euromaidan protest that occurred in Ukraine in 2013/2014 and evaluates how the revolution has impacted the growing fashion industry in the country, how bias is used to spread propaganda in fashion, and how to avoid communicating false political information when using governmental events as the source of fashion inspiration.

The scope of this essay evaluates how a strong, political event can affect fashion designers, considering the 2013 Euromaidan protest in Ukraine. Looking back at Kiev Fashion week in 2014, leading into produced collections today,

the political revolution has led to a fashion revolution of sorts. This essay also discusses multiple Ukrainian designers like Vita Kin who have used the revolution to pursue their collections and used the Euromaidan protest as a source of inspiration and continue to produce such clothing up until today. The Euromaidan protest appears as a strong motivational push that inspires local, growing and professional, fashion designers to step up and stay strong, as if them and their collection were at the Maidan Square fighting. In opposition to designers who have used the revolution as inspiration to promote Ukrainian fashion, some have spread anti-Ukrainian clothing such as Voenpro, a Russian online retailer of military memorabilia and other gadgets.

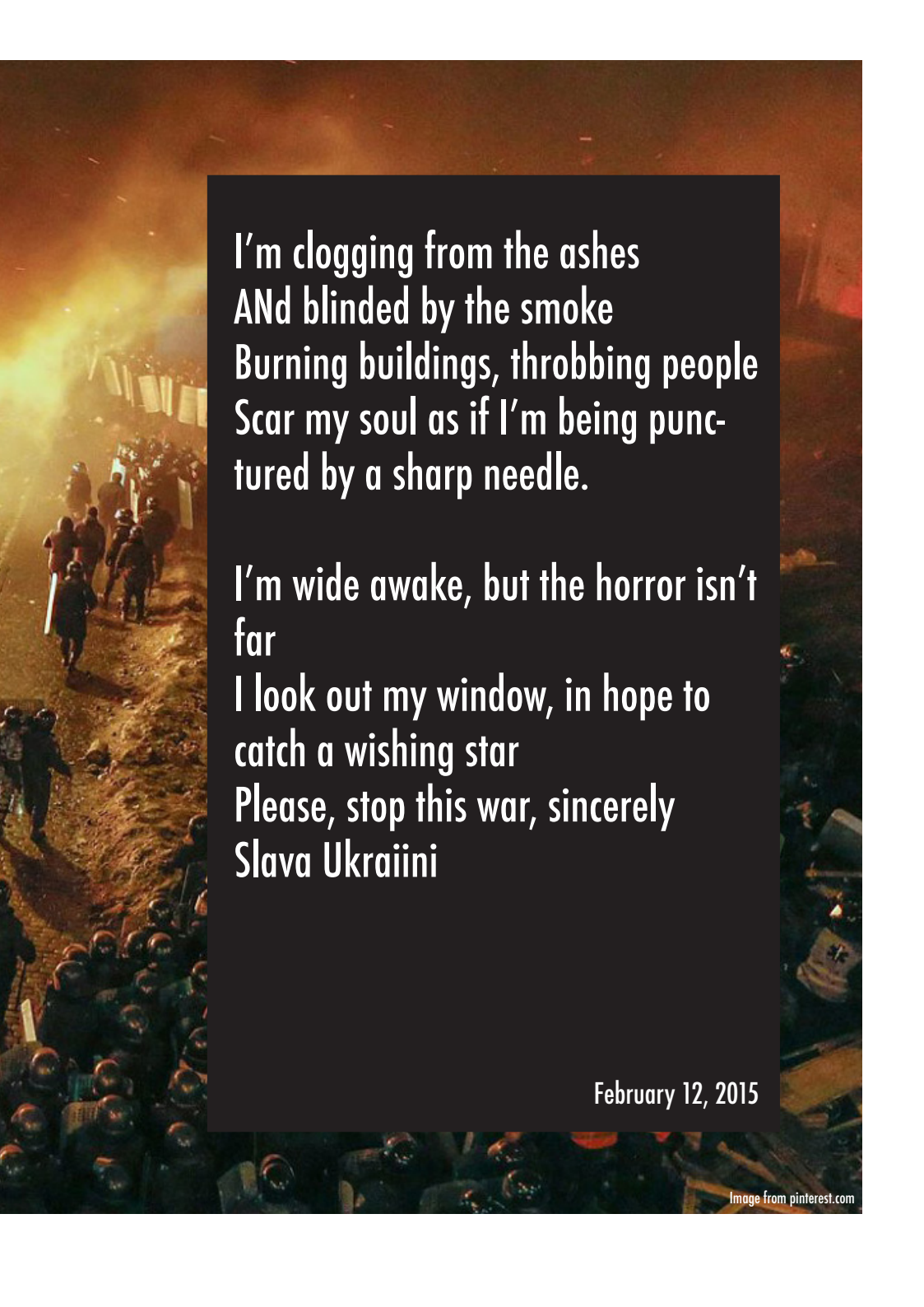
This essay reaches the conclusion that fashion can definitely be used to reflect and communicate any sort of political event in a country, although having enough knowledge about the sources of information used and using exclusively factual information is what makes created fashion valuable. Even so the debate whether the delivered message is biased or factual will always remain part of the discussion especially regarding the controversy of opinion about the Euromaidan protest and its aftermath. Even so, it is possible to communicate an effective political message by using fashion regarding Ukrainian politics, unless provoked by personal opinion rather than factual information.



I roll around from side to side
A dreadful dream occurs in my sight
Weapons, smoke and casualties;
burn my eyesight.

I'm blind of fear from the occurring
A spectacle bizarre as fiction stories
Strikes my mind as if a myth
Although it seems as if it's real.

I'm hit by horror and disgrace
Please, make it go away
I want to open my eyes,
As if all I've seen were white clouds
in the light blue sky.



I'm clogging from the ashes
AND blinded by the smoke
Burning buildings, throbbing people
Scar my soul as if I'm being punctured by a sharp needle.

I'm wide awake, but the horror isn't far
I look out my window, in hope to catch a wishing star
Please, stop this war, sincerely
Slava Ukraini

February 12, 2015



Olga Kononenko

Image from zozule4hka.com