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Critical Ontologies of War in Ukraine

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The war in Ukraine has witnessed a transformation in contemporary warfare with widespread ramifications for population impacts and experiences. Russia's full-scale invasion has brought the systematic targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure, widespread impact of social media, rise of small drone warfare, and multiple impacts of toxic munitions on ecology. At the same time, it has catalysed multiple creative acts of resistance that are reshaping how we understand war. These include the resurgence of arts and culture as direct responses to violence, repurposing of critical infrastructure as sites of resilience, new forms of transnational digital activism, life-centered ecological resistance, and the emergence of alternative visual ontologies through war-related photography. The complexity of this experience is, however, poorly captured in current ontologies of war, which also continue to underestimate the agency of war-affected populations to adapt to and resist war (Griffiths and Redwood, 2024). Turning to frequently ignored sites, spaces and processes, this panel looks to better understand contemporary experiences of war and reflect on the consequences of this for the emergence of new ontologies of war.

Track Classification: War Studies Working Group