Mariia Drobot Artist Statement

The themes that I explore through my practice are in conversation with the art sometimes referred to as ‘low art’, the folk arts, and more generally, art that predates the formation of the defined art market. The objects created with a purpose, such as religious iconography or decorative arts, which often reveal the irrational and superstitious parts of human existence. In studying these art objects, I’m most curious about their sentimental function, the reasons that they were made in circumstances when the makers often lacked resources and conditions for something so seemingly superfluous as art. The earnestness that permeates such pieces speaks to me, and I find that the faithfulness with which the emotional life is conveyed through folk and religious art objects allows me to recontextualise my own experiences. The historical mementoes that give a voice to the groups of people that are traditionally underrepresented and disenfranchised, in the Ukrainian context in particular, often include women and peasants, prisoners of war and authoritarian regimes, who can reach out in subtle ways and preserve and document their humanity through history in an act of quiet resistance. I work referentially with existing and recognisable visual culture, as this context carries a lot of history that I myself am affected by, and aim to contextualise personal experiences within broader culture.