

Occupied/Unoccupied

Photography Exhibition by Iryna Sozanska

20 January – 8 March 2026

Café Gallery, Russell-Cotes Art Gallery & Museum

East Cliff Promenade, Bournemouth, BH1 3AA.

Occupied / Unoccupied is a photography project by Ukrainian photographer **Iryna Sozanska**.

In the early days of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, Iryna photographed her family as they lived under occupation and survived the evacuation. Taken as family memories, these photographs were carried through Russian checkpoints, a journey that gave them a different weight and meaning, as for some they became real evidence of crimes. Soon after, she made the decision to leave Ukraine and found safety in England.

After three years of living in safety, Iryna had enough resources to begin sharing these memories. She created a collection of photographs from the occupation and placed them in dialogue with contrasting moments from her family's life in UK. A viewer might see children hiding from flying glass behind a mattress during an attack, and then shift their gaze to those same children playing freely on the hills of Badbury Rings.

Alongside the photographs, visitors will see a fragment of a Russian shell and a video filmed by author, with sound, offering a direct and immersive sense of what was happening during the first days of the full-scale war.

Occupied / Unoccupied is about survival, loss, awareness, and accepting change. It speaks of rebuilding life from the beginning and of healing made possible through the support of people who cared, those who opened their homes and families to Ukrainians.

The exhibition runs from **Tuesday 20 January to Sunday 8 March 2026**.

Admission: free.