



STATESCAPE<sup>∞</sup> takes Mezhyhirya as its starting point.

An actual physical site, but also as a place imagined, historical, represented, political, virtual, economic and personal.

As artists, our encounter with Mezhyhirya poses broader questions of inequality, aspiration and care.

We sit inside these questions.



Grainy footage shows Yanukovich's helicopter departing from the Mezhyhirya helipad in pre-dawn darkness on February 21st 2014.

Later that day, people arriving from Maidan took control of Mezhyhirya.

Inside the estate, the new occupiers found a zoo, real-size model galleon, golf course, spa complex, huge collection of vintage cars and more. All within a huge park surrounding a newly-built mansion.

Now a national park, the estate is popular at weekends. Visitors come to walk, relax, have wedding photos taken in front of the mansion, and see the illegally acquired wealth.

Mezhyhirya continues to be run by some of its initial 'liberators'. Their flag has flown above the mansion for the past five years.



STATESCAPE<sup>∞</sup> considers Mezhyhirya as part of a globally interconnected game. The rules to this game are unknown and continually changing.

The ransacking of a national economy for personal gain opens out onto new forms of power.

Our presence as British artists here in Ukraine is interconnected with its current political and economic relationships with other European countries. Institutions such as the British Council and Goethe Institute which have funded us being here are political actors. As Londoners, we also come from the same city where much wealth from Ukraine has been taken: into property or via shell companies and tax havens. Many of Yanukovich's artworks were purchased at London auction houses.

The Instagram-posing which now frequently occurs at Mezhyhirya seems at times to be a faint echo of the lifestyles of that extracted wealth.

Successfully moving up or down a level in this game all too often reveals what you've just done to in fact be going nowhere.

STATESCAPE<sup>∞</sup> simultaneously presents itself as a game, and an attempt to figure out what the game is.

The viewer is led through a series of levels, linked through a reflexive dialogue between us as artists as we attempt to understand the game, and what our role is.

The game keeps changing.

It is global capitalism, but also the simulatary experience of walking through Mezhyhirya. STATESCAPE<sup>∞</sup> shifts back and forth between the material and the abstract.



There are seven levels which proceed from periphery to centre:

1. *The Outside* with its visible and invisible structures of exclusion and invitation.
2. *The Threshold* requiring acceptance of the rules of the game to cross.
3. *The Territory* attempting to gain an overview of the whole site.
4. *The Image Space* of remotely re-crossing the boundary.
5. *The Aspiration* of apparent success.
6. *The Control* through systems of surveillance and direction.
7. *The Centre* where the locus of power and wealth sits.

Finally comes a coda, *The Escape*, which poses the question of whether the game can be left, and if so, by whom?



