UNESCO AND BLUE SHIELD DENMARK LAUNCH *BACKUP UKRAINE* INITIATIVE TO DIGITALLY PRESERVE CULTURAL HERITAGE

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH POLYCAM, APP ENABLES EVERYDAY CITIZENS TO CAPTURE 3D COPIES OF VULNERABLE BUILDINGS AND MONUMENTS

APRIL 7, 2022: As Ukrainian citizens bravely fight for their lives and country, groups and individuals among them are working to physically save Ukraine's architecture and cultural heritage. Untold numbers of antiquities and monuments are being actively removed from harm's way, where possible. But many others have already been, or will be, lost.
The loss of art, and its cultural value, occurs in almost every armed conflict. The challenges in saving artifacts during an active war are many, and rarely a priority as infrastructure and resources are rightfully dedicated to more pressing priorities.

But in the digital era, mobile 3D scanning technology available through Polycam offers a way to save full renderings of any physical object.

Backup Ukraine is an initiative inviting civilians to digitally preserve their nation. The Danish UNESCO National Commission, Blue Shield Denmark and Polycam, a powerful prosumer app that allows anyone with a newer iPhone or iPad to completely capture objects or even rooms in 3D, are partnering to repurpose the core Polycam product and distributing it to create a means for any person in Ukraine to quickly and easily scan and upload digital renderings of important architecture, statues and monuments.

The initiative is creatively initiated and co-ordinated by the research and innovation arm within Virtue, the agency powered by VICE.

Ukraine has been under nearly constant bombardment for over a month, during which time brave citizens subjected themselves to great risk to try and physically remove Ukrainian artifacts from harm's way. In many cases, those items are very large or altogether immovable, leaving them vulnerable to destruction.

Elsebeth Gerner Nielsen, Chair of The Danish UNESCO National Commission: "War claims more than lives. It can cost a country irreversible damage to its national spirit. By destroying the symbols of its values, pride, and history — the very things its identity is built upon. This is why the protection of cultural heritage is crucial for any conflict. And during an

ongoing war, traditional methods of cultural preservation are under pressure. So innovative technologies are a very welcome assistance. This is why The Danish UNESCO National Commission strongly supports Backup Ukraine. It is our hope that it will help preserve Ukraine's cultural heritage for posterity during this time of unbearable loss."

Søren la Cour Jensen, Chair of Blue Shield Denmark: ""Destroying a country's cultural heritage is the fastest way to undermine its national identity. Our mission in Blue Shield is to work before, during and after a catastrophe or armed conflict to help protect and rescue our shared heritage. As we have learned after World War II and many later conflicts, saving a country's cultural heritage is the best path to reconstruction and revival of society. Total loss is our greatest fear, and Backup Ukraine provides a new and important tool that can prevent that."

Ukraine is home to seven World Heritage Sites, designated by UNESCO for holding cultural importance and legally protected. Visual data captured and saved via the Polycam app will be translated into digital replicas that can be shared with the whole world, shining a light on Ukraine's beautiful and unique culture and saved into the cloud. In the event works are partially or completely destroyed, those saved on the Polycam platform will be available to aid in reconstruction.

Elliot Spelman, Co-Founder at Polycam: "We have watched, along with the rest of the world, as Ukraine has suffered such needless destruction. As Ukraine's cities and neighborhoods are attacked, so is its culture. We, as individuals and a company, wish to lend our technology to the citizens of Ukraine to digitally preserve any artifact, monument, structure or building and aid this important initiative in every way that we can."

Morten Grubak, Global ECD, Innovation at Virtue: "Right now we are witnessing an incredible human response to the war in Ukraine, with people across the globe contributing in whatever ways they can, from going to fight for Ukraine to making donations to NGOs and much more. As creatives, we asked ourselves how we could help, and saw the news about people working to save Ukraine's art. We are artists at heart and fundamentally believe in the importance it plays in our lives. This idea came to mind almost instantly and within days we were able to connect with Polycam and put this product in place. We sincerely hope it helps."

IMPORTANT NOTICE:
Backup Ukraine does not recommend civilians to capture works in public without first enlisting in a volunteer corps coordinated by representatives from The Ukrainian Heritage Emergency Rescue Initiative. Enlist at poly.cam/ukraine. The app is only intended for use in areas that are not in immediate conflict.

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ABOUT THE DANISH UNESCO NATIONAL COMMISSION
UNESCO is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. It seeks to build peace through international cooperation in education, sciences and culture. UNESCO's programmes contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals defined in the 2030 Agenda, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015.

ABOUT BLUE SHIELD DENMARK
Blue Shield is a non-governmental, non-profit, international organisation committed to the protection of the world's cultural property, and is concerned with the protection of cultural and natural heritage, tangible and intangible, in the event of armed conflict, natural- or human-made disaster.

ABOUT POLYCAM
Polycam is the world's leading LiDAR and 3D scanning app available on iOS, Android and the web. Run by a small, dedicated team, their mission is to bring 3D scanning to everyone. LiDAR Mode uses the LiDAR sensor on the Pro versions of iPhones and iPads to enable you to quickly create color 3D scans of spaces and buildings, conserving detail of existing real-world conditions or structures. Photo Mode allows you to capture objects in high detail through photogrammetry on the app, or by uploading images from any device to the web. Polycam aims to put this technology into the hands of everyone to capture the world around them in 3D.

ABOUT VIRTUE WORLDWIDE
Virtue, the agency powered by VICE, builds brands from inside culture. A full service strategic and creative agency with industry-leading expertise in Millennial and Gen Z audiences, Virtue helps brands find an authentic voice at the epicenter of culture.

Virtue Futures is Vice Media Group's research and innovation unit. The experimental team focuses on creating conversation-driving experiences and artifacts in the intersection of culture and technology with a firm perspective on progress, building on successful projects rethinking the split between physical and digital spaces for fashion, retail, and education.

ABOUT VICE MEDIA GROUP
VICE Media Group is a global multi-platform media company. Launched in 1994, VICE has offices across 25 countries across the globe with a focus on five key businesses: VICE.com, an award-winning international network of digital content; VICE STUDIOS, a feature film and television production studio; VICE TV, an Emmy-winning international television network; a Peabody award-winning NEWS division with the most Emmy-awarded nightly news broadcast; and VIRTUE, a global, full-service creative agency. VICE Media Group's portfolio includes Refinery29, the leading global media and entertainment company focused on women; PULSE Films, a London-based next-generation production studio with outposts in Los Angeles, New York, Paris and Berlin; and i-D, a global digital and bimonthly magazine defining fashion and contemporary culture and design.

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