

ACUA VITAE

ALBERTA'S UKRAINIAN ARTS AND CULTURE MAGAZINE

Spring 2017 | Volume 23, Issue 1



LOOKING BACK & LOOKING AHEAD.

STORIES OF THEIR LIVES:

I Am Ukrainian Canadian

**CELEBRATING LOCAL
TALENT:** A Spotlight on
Folk Artist Eva Tomiuk

MATTERS OF THE HEART:

The Nasha Skrynia Exhibit

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ACUAVITAE



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PHOTO BY LARYSA LUCIW

Dominika Koziak

SHOSTAK
SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

by Nancy Lyzaniwski

The Alberta Council for the Ukrainian Arts is pleased to announce Ms. Dominika Koziak as the recipient of the 2016 Peter and Geraldine Shostak Award for Emerging Visual Artists.

Dominika is a visual artist from Edmonton, Alberta with a Ukrainian-Polish cultural background. Dominika completed her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree at the University of Alberta. After moving to New York City, she attained her Master of Fine Arts degree at the School of Visual Arts. Dominika also received intensive training at the Rome Art Program in Italy where she focused on painting and drawing from classical architecture and art. In New York City, she attended the Prosopon School of Iconology where she studied classical techniques and style in Icon writing.

Through the generosity of Peter and Geraldine Shostak, the Shostak Award was established in 2015 to support emerging Alberta musicians and visual artists in establishing their careers. Eligibility criteria are available at www.acuarts.ca. The deadline for applications is June 30, 2017.


Her art focuses on a relationship between contemporary and ancestral culture. Her submission involved the Byzantine Iconographical style of painting, with Korean Pop Idols as the subject. Ancestral techniques from both cultures play a role in the work through the application of techniques of writing an icon with historical motifs. 



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WHY COOKBOOKS? AND UKRAINIAN ONES

by Joyce Sirski-Howell

2015 marked the 50th anniversary of the National Ukrainian Festival in Dauphin, Manitoba.

I have helped my sister-in-law Janet Sirski, in the culinary section, for many festivals. The culinary section includes a display of breads, and demonstrations on varenyky (pyrohy), beet leaf holobsti and breads.

For the 50th, I wanted to display something more. Why not cookbooks? For the 45th anniversary, Janet and I displayed about thirty Ukrainian-based cookbooks in an enclosed case. For the 50th, I would only display colored copies of cookbooks.

In January of 2015, I borrowed my first cookbooks, copied the covers and a few pertinent pages, and then inserted them into protective pages in a binder. I also recorded the titles of the books and from whom they had been borrowed. The project had begun! By talking to women wherever I went, I had more cookbooks to look at. By the end of January, I had seen twenty-seven; and by April 20, I had borrowed from twenty people and had looked at seventy-seven different cookbooks.

Then in May, after reading Elizabeth Driver's *Culinary Landmarks: A Bibliography of Canadian Cookbooks, 1825-1949*, I realized I should be more thorough in recording the books and should include size, number of pages and the publisher.

Elizabeth Driver's book created a totally different appreciation of the books I have

and the others I had seen. It became a different project. I read on-line articles about why we should collect cookbooks—and I learned our libraries have very few Ukrainian Canadian cookbooks.


In June of 2015, I connected with Iris Semeniuk, who has library experience. Iris searched BARD, World-Cat, AMICUS and other sites for Ukrainian cookbooks. By July, I had seen over 250 different cookbooks borrowed from fifty-two individuals. The oldest cookbooks were from 1939, publications from the Ukrainian Women's Association in Saskatoon.

For the festival display, I divided the cookbook pages into groups: Ukrainian, Orthodox, Ukrainian Catholic, dance groups, individuals and reunions, community, schools and sadochuk, and American. I filled twelve binders. With my daughter Katherine Hustal's help, we created a display board showing a historical background with some photos and statistics. These binders and display board were set up in the Culinary section at the Dauphin Festival on July 31st, and August 1st and 2nd.

This project is nowhere complete. More questions keep arising. For example, where could one see the first cookbook printed in Canada in 1917? How did St. Josaphat's Ukrainian ladies find energy to publish five cookbooks from 1942 to 1963? When did Ukrainian food recipes start being submitted to non-Ukrainian community cookbooks?

The cookbooks I have seen were produced as fundraisers for various organizations. In a January 2002 presentation Elizabeth Driver said of cookbooks, "These books are a testament to the ways women helped

to build our civil society, they are the best source for anyone wanting to know what people really cooked and ate, and they can be a valuable record of the food traditions of a special community." Elizabeth Driver also said about fundraising cookbooks, "One can say however, that they are sadly underrepresented in the collections of our public institutions." An example of such underrepresentation is at the University of Guelph, which houses the largest cookbook collection in Canada, some 13,000 volumes. However, only thirty-three Ukrainian based cookbooks are found on the site!

This project has no immediate end. In fact, with your help, I hope to continue to record even more cookbooks. 

Joyce enjoys working with children and has taught workshops for several years to children and adults. She is happy to demonstrate her craft and is willing to teach classes. Joyce's contact information can be found in the ACUA artist directory.



COOKBOOK DISPLAY, PHOTO BY: JOYCE SIRSKI-HOWELL

FEATURE

MATTERS OF THE HEART

THE NASHA SKRYNIA EXHIBIT



FROM TOP: EVOLUTION OF THE PYSANKA "HIGHER PURPOSE" MOSAIC BY THEODORA HARASYMIW; PHOTO PROVIDED | KOROVAI; PHOTO PROVIDED

by Lyrissa Sheptak

From November 3-6, 2016, an exhibit titled *Nasha Skrynia*, commemorating the 125th anniversary of Ukrainian settlement in Canada was held at St. John's Cultural Centre in Edmonton.

As a collaborative effort between the Ukrainian Museum of Canada Alberta Branch, the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League of Canada Edmonton Eparchy, and the Ukrainian Women's Association of Canada Edmonton Society, organizers presented an impressively curated history of Ukrainians in Canada reflecting five waves of immigration and settlement.

The idea to honor the 125th anniversary began with Elaine Harasymiw (President, Ukrainian Museum of Canada, Alberta Branch), who then approached the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League Museum (UWCLW) curator, Nadia Cyncar;

Evelyn Cook, President of the UWCLW Museum; and Tamara Vorotilenko, key member of UWA of Canada, to help. Coordinating their efforts, they established a joint committee drawing on volunteers from the sponsoring organizations. Together, they planned an emotional and powerful display of heritage by organizing an exhibit that followed themed sections.

Nadia Cyncar proposed the concept and theme of *Nasha Skrynina* (Our Treasure). Not only was a trunk (skrynina) a practical and necessary item to carefully transport and protect valuable and essential items that immigrants required for their new life in Canada, but it also held symbolic meaning as well. It was representative of immigrants' dreams, hopes, and courage. And although the physical trunk — and the items it carried — evolved with each wave, the Ukrainians' dreams remained constant. Canada was freedom, safety, and new opportunity.

The exhibit took visitors on a brief journey through time. The first section presented a history of the First and Second waves of immigrants. Representative art, historical artifacts, textiles, photographs, and primary documentation left visitors with a strong sense of the early immigrants' story. Not only did this part of the exhibit conjure feelings of pride, but guests were also able to come away with a clearer sense of the immigrant's toil, fight for survival, isolation and loneliness, and determination to not lose the essence of who they were.

As the exhibit continued, it demonstrated how, over time, immigrants adapted to their new world. It also showed the role community played in their survival and the perpetuation of their culture. In the beginning, this role of community came in the form of social and church gatherings, where people conglomerated to participate in plays, dances, instruction in folk art, or religious events.

With the immigrants who arrived in the second and third waves, there also came a clearer sense of Ukrainian national pride and identity. To foster the culture and this clearer sense of *Ukrainian* identity (rather than *regional* identities, which was how the first wave of settlers identified themselves — coming from individual regions within what was either Poland, Russia, or the Austro-Hungarian Empire), various Ukrainian clubs and organizations were created fostering the continuance of traditions and cultural practices.

Many members of the Ukrainian community came forth with their treasured items — material objects which made the trek to Canada along with them or their forefathers.

It was a pleasure to see the next section of the exhibit, which was dedicated to renowned Ukrainian-Canadians. These individuals are testament to the idea that ordinary people have the capability to do extraordinary things. Because of the courage demonstrated by the immigrants who first came to Canada, these successful — and public — Ukrainian Canadians were able to reap the benefits, thereby inspiring others to work diligently and 'dream big' as well.

The final section of the exhibition showed Ukrainian Canadian spirit at its finest. Ukrainian culture is rich in many things, one being community. While Immigrants to Canada in the early waves could not have survived if it weren't for relying upon one another and *creating* community, immigrants arriving in later waves were lucky to have had an established Ukrainian community to



FROM TOP: SKRYNIA COLLECTION OF AUDREY UWYSHYN; PHOTO PROVIDED | CERAMICS COLLECTION OF AUDREY UWYSHYN; PHOTO PROVIDED | TEXTILES TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY COLLECTION OF ELIZABETH HOLINATY; PHOTO PROVIDED

FEATURE

smooth their transition to Canada. This concept of community is no different than when members of a culture rally around each other for a worthy cause, especially when it is a celebration of that culture.

Ukrainian people are known for their generosity and willingness to help. This characteristic was exemplified perfectly when Edmonton's own Ukrainian community answered the call of *Nasha Skrynia's* organizers. Appealing to Edmonton and the surrounding Ukrainian Canadian communities, organizers asked for people to share personal collections, artifacts, and memories to supplement the exhibit's theme. Exploring individuality and personal voice within the greater cultural context is what gave this exhibition its human element.

Many members of the Ukrainian community came forth with their treasured items — material objects that made the trek to Canada with them or their forebears. Personal collections of clothing and textiles, art, jewellery, pottery, embroidery, antiques and more were displayed with pride. Each item was not only a lesson in history or anthropology, but also was reflective of individual spirit and introspective thoughts.

The *pièce de résistance* was the extraordinarily large *Korovai* — the only one of its kind — displayed at the entrance of the exhibition. Envisioned and designed by Nadia Cyncar, women representing different churches and organizations within Edmonton's Ukrainian community rallied together to bake a unique five-levelled *Korovai*. This decorative ritual bread was chosen because bread is "symbolic of the essentials of life and the deep attachment of the pioneers to the soil," and the *Korovai* is a "symbol of sanction and the continuation of kin." This particular bread was made up of five different kinds of ritual breads: Borona, Paska, Babka, Kolach, and Korovai.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: GROUP PHOTO OF ORGANIZING COMMITTEE; PHOTO PROVIDED | ZEMLIA VOCAL TRIO (NATALIA ONYSCHUK, KSENIA MARYNIAK, IRENA TARNAWSKY); PHOTO PROVIDED | EXPOSITION COORDINATOR—ELAINE VERCHOMIN HARASYMIW, AND CURATOR—NADIA CYNCAR; PHOTO PROVIDED

The extraordinary bread creation was topped with "125 stems of ears of wheat signifying 125 years in Canada."

The multi-day exhibit, along with an opening ceremony with a speech given by Radomir Bilash, was not only well attended by the Ukrainian community, but by school groups and the greater Edmonton public as well. From seeing Eleniak's very own skrynia — representative of one of the two men celebrated for being the catalyst for immigration to Canada — to the grand *Korovai* — symbolic of the continuation of kin, and in this regard, community — *Nasha Skrynia* was a well-organized, thoroughly researched event that appealed to the heart. It pulled together the community; and through its written and material history, it was able to communicate how the immigration

experience evolved and adapted with each wave of immigration. This exhibit also reflected on the imprint that Ukrainians — forebears and descendants alike — have left not only on their own community, but on Canada's larger society as well.

Lyrissa Sheptak is a writer, historian, and busy mother of four who is innately compelled to share her passion for Ukrainian culture with anyone who lends a willing ear.



THE UCAMA \$125 INITIATIVE

Commemorating the 125th anniversary of Ukrainian immigration to Canada
1891-2016

The Ukrainian Canadian Archives and Museums of Alberta (UCAMA) is building a new museum, archives and library facility on Edmonton's Jasper Avenue. The resulting structure will be a preeminent museum in Western Canada. UCAMA's current fund raising effort is tied to the 125th anniversary of Ukrainian immigration to Canada in 2016.

If each of the 300,000+ persons of Ukrainian origin in Alberta were to give just one dollar for each year of the 125 years since Ukrainians first immigrated to Canada, UCAMA could raise \$37,500,000, enough to complete both phases of the museum construction and establish an endowment to operate the facility.

UCAMA is not asking for your sweat and blood; only a little money. Surely our collective heritage and pride is worth \$125 per person. Each donor will be recognized in a special memorial volume housed in the new facility. And the first 1,000 donors will also have their names placed on a brick in the new museum.

We have already come such a long way. The end is in sight.

Support UCAMA for this important anniversary! Become a part of the legacy!

UCAMA is a registered charitable organization, go to www.ucama.com/donate to donate to this important cause!



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August 13	Ukrainian Day
August 27	Friends Ukrainian Music Fest
September 10	Harvest of the Past



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Albertan

CELEBRATING LOCAL TALENT

ACUA'S SIGNATURE ARTIST SERIES SHINES A SPOTLIGHT ON FOLK ARTIST EVA TOMIUK

by *Lindsay Shapka*

Showcasing the new, the traditional, and the traditional made with the new, ACUA's *Signature Artist Series* was launched in November of 2016 to celebrate Alberta's talented Ukrainian Canadian artists who create everything from old-world handicrafts to modern paintings.

The series was started under the leadership of Dominika Koziak, who, with three members from the ACUA Board of Directors select the artists to be featured each month. According to board member Olesia Luciw-Andryjowycz, "We collaborate very closely with the artists... It's an opportunity to showcase an individual or a pair of artists who have given to ACUA of their time and energies over the years. The *Signature Artist Series* is also a great opportunity to let the community know that we are here, and to encourage them to come and visit us."

"For example, Eva Tomiuk has been an artist in Alberta for many years," says Olesia. "She's been painting pysanka and

teaching the craft since she was a child. But her craft isn't just pysanka — she also works with embroidery and other handicrafts, and it's important to be able to showcase iconic artists like Eva while they are still here."

Eva Tomiuk, who recently celebrated her 90th birthday, was the featured artist at the gallery in March of 2017. Born in Lviv, Ukraine, Eva moved to Canada when she was eighteen; but, according to her, when it comes to her art, "everything I learned is from the old country. I learned from Baba and we learned from school because they would teach it in school."


Most well-known in the community as a pysanka artist, Eva has created more than 4,000 unique and intricately designed pieces, even presenting her pysanky as gifts to Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip, Edmonton Mayors Hawrelak and Mandel, and Pope John Paul II! When asked how she selected the gift for the Pope, Eva recalls her reaction, "It was tremendous. I figured 'Gee whiz, what can I give a pope?' So I just picked out a bunch of eye-catching items and let [the people presenting the gift] decide what was appropriate."

Her coveted pysanky are also treasured by her family who are lucky enough to have received the intricate, handmade pieces of art as gifts for major events in their lives. "I

love to give them as gifts to my family and friends, for Easter, birthdays, communion, graduation — every life event."

And it's not just the art of pysanka that Eva excels at, she also creates rushnyk cloths, wheat-sheath crafts, *korovai* (wedding breads), and — her favourite — beautiful embroidery. "I love the pysanka, but those are for Easter, or special gifts," explains Eva. "Intricate embroidered jackets made with felt are my favourite works. I love to wear my embroidery. I will wear it to go to church. I even helped to embroider the Shumka Dancers' costumes once."

She has received numerous opportunities, awards, and accolades because of her exceptional work, and was named Women of the Year in 1975 by the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League of Canada. She also appeared on the TV show *Martha Stewart Living* in 1999.

Her biggest passion however, seems to be teaching young Ukrainian Canadians about their culture, and passing on as much knowledge as she can. "We must continue art to keep it alive," says Eva. "I think that some of our traditions are dying, and it is important for the younger generation to find a modern Ukrainian way of making art in order for it to continue. It is very important to teach, and it is important for young artists to learn, listen, and share what they have learned." 

LEFT TO RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM: IN MARCH, ACUA HOSTED EVA TOMIUK RETROSPECTIVE EXHIBIT, WHICH INCLUDED HER A COLLECTION OF HER PYSANKY AND EMBROIDERY; PHOTO BY DOMINIKA KOZIAK | EMBROIDERY BY EVA TOMIUK; PHOTO BY DOMINIKA KOZIAK | ORIGINAL PYSANKY BY EVA TOMIUK; PHOTO BY DOMINIKA KOZIAK | EVA TOMIUK AT THE OPENING RECEPTION OF HER RETROSPECTIVE EXHIBIT; PHOTO BY DOMINIKA KOZIAK | IN APRIL, ACUA HOSTED MYSTERY AND MAGIC OF THE MOTANKA DOLL LECTURE AT THE GALLERY; PHOTO BY DOMINIKA KOZIAK | ORIGINAL PYSANKY BY EVA TOMIUK; PHOTO BY LINDSAY SHAPKA | OSTRICH AND GOOSE EGGS BY EVA TOMIUK; PHOTO BY DOMINIKA KOZIAK | IN APRIL, ACUA HOSTED THE REGENERATION GROUP SHOW, WHICH BROUGHT A COLLECTION OF ART TO ACUA FROM ALL OVER NORTH AMERICA AND, AS FAR AS, THE UNITED KINGDOM; PHOTO BY DOMINIKA KOZIAK



Eva Tomiuk passed away just after this interview on March 27, 2017. We are honoured to have had a chance to speak to her one last time, and our condolences go out to her family and friends.

The *Signature Artist Series* was developed in 2015-2016. Each month ACUA features a Ukrainian artist. This program was established to help ACUA facilitate and encourage a greater appreciation of Ukrainian arts and Ukrainian artists in Alberta.

Do you want to be a featured artist?

Annually, ACUA accepts proposals for the Signature Artist Series. We are accepting applications for the 2017/2018 Signature Artist Series! More information can be found at www.acuarts.ca or by contacting our office.

Lindsay Shapka is a writer, editor, and digital media expert. An avid traveller, she is the founder of the travel website TheAnthrotrorian.com and has had work featured in *National Geographic Traveler* magazine.





WOLODYMYR LUCIW; PHOTO BY LARYSA LUCIW

STORIES OF THEIR LIVES

By Robin McHugh

This year marks an important milestone for Ukrainian Canadians as 125 years of immigration is celebrated across Canada with commemoration of this anniversary in various ways. Just over a year ago, Larysa LuciW spent some time with her aunt discussing project ideas for the upcoming anniversary; she had no idea that she was about to embark on a journey that would inspire her each time she heard a new immigration story.

For the past seven years, Larysa has been photographing abandoned buildings but recently started photographing people. Larysa is using her photography skills for the *I Am Ukrainian Canadian* project to photograph individuals and to tell their stories of immigration. Larysa has always enjoyed hearing the accounts of immigrants, whether it was through narrative or through what she heard when she portrayed characters at the Ukrainian Culture Heritage

Village where she worked while she attended University. She has always been fascinated by such stories, as these accounts of immigration included many hardships; however, the common theme has always been one of people building a better life for themselves.

Larysa started the Facebook group *I Am Ukrainian Canadian*, and this forum allows her to share the inspiring stories of immigrants, from the five waves of immigration, over the past 125 years. She has received tremendous support from the Ukrainian community and has had stories and photographs submitted from across Canada. Without the support from the *Storytellers* as well as The Shevchenko Foundation and Ukrainian Canadian Congress – Alberta Provincial Council, Larysa would have never been able to complete this project.

"It's been inspiring to hear these stories," she says. "What people have gone through — famines, bombings, parents being killed, displaced persons camps, being forced from their homes... And then [these people] have come to Canada and lived a beautiful life where they were able to raise their children with every opportunity available, speak their own language without fear of persecution, go to church without fear of being thrown in jail, and [live] as Ukrainian Canadians."

Tell me about the I Am Ukrainian Canadian project.

I have asked people to share their own or their family's immigration stories. Some of the stories are first-hand accounts of an individual's immigration and some of the stories are told by descendants of family members who immigrated during one of the five waves of immigration with the stories being passed down to them. While the reasons for each wave's leaving their motherland has similarities, each story is unique. Some family members ended up in displaced persons' camps, some in Auschwitz; some families came for the promise of free land, some came because of economic reasons.... but they all came for a better life.

What inspired you to initiate this project?

I thought that this would be a fitting time for a project that told and shared people's stories because Ukrainian Canadians across the country would be celebrating 125 years of immigration. With this important anniversary, people have been eager and willing to share their stories.

I truly believe that where a person comes from is a huge part of where they are going. It gives a sense of belonging and that is so important. I was raised as Ukrainian. I always identified as Ukrainian, even more than Canadian, although I have never been to Ukraine. My grandparents, whose stories I have shared, loved their country; however, they were forced to leave. They came to Canada and started a life here where they were involved in the Ukrainian community. They were and are so proud to be Ukrainian.

What is your goal for this project?

I wanted to give people the chance to tell their family's story of immigration because such stories are so important to families. Having a Facebook group allows me to easily share stories and memories.

Do you have any plans to exhibit or publish the photographs and stories you have been collecting?

In May, I will be exhibiting a collection of the photographs and stories at the

ACUA Gallery & Artisan Boutique. For Ukrainian Day in August, I hope to take the exhibit to the Red Barn at the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village. As well, I am going to be in contact with other Ukrainian festivals across the province to see if they would be interested in having some pieces to share.

Where do you see this project going in the future?

I have no plans to stop collecting these important stories. I will continue to manage the *I Am Ukrainian Canadian* Facebook page and share the stories within this group.

If people are interested in participating in I Am Ukrainian Canadian, how do they get involved?

They can contact me on my Facebook page — *I Am Ukrainian Canadian*.

In addition to getting her *I Am Ukrainian Canadian* collection ready to exhibit in May, Larysa has started working on another exciting opportunity: photographing traditional Ukrainian costumes. "I always liked the idea that with a camera you can capture a moment. A tiny moment in time and freeze it forever."

For more information about this project or to get involved, contact Larysa on her Facebook group — *I Am Ukrainian Canadian*.



LEFT TO RIGHT: HELEN SORENSEN NEE: DAKUS; PHOTO BY LARYSA LUCIW | NATALIA TALANCHUK; PHOTO BY LARYSA LUCIW | NADIA PROCKIWI; PHOTO BY LARYSA LUCIW | LYUDMILA SHEFEL; PHOTO BY LARYSA LUCIW



A HOZHUKH, A SONG, MY COUNTRY; PHOTO BY GORDON GORDEY

by Myrna Kostash

Fresh from Toronto in the summer of 1975, I settled into the Frontenac motel in Two Hills, Alberta, to begin the research that would eventually find its way into my first book, *All of Baba's Children* (published in 1978, it has never gone out of print). During the day, I would interview townspeople with my trusty (but bulky) Sony tape recorder. In the evenings, I would write entries in a diary of my impressions of what I heard and saw that day. I had been ten years away from Alberta, and I didn't know what to expect.

Gardens are in full bloom. The Ukrainian garden: even in bad years it is a prodigy of plant, whether the bushy potato or the thickly-clustered pea and bean or fruit-heavy tomato. I take my broken sandal into the Shoe Hospital, a frame shack open for business when the shoemaker feels like it. He says "maybe" he can fix it. "When should I come for it?" "When do you want to come?"

The train whistle. Great yardfuls of farm machinery: what do these fantastical volumes of metal actually do? Machine repair shops. The astonishing ages-old clutter in the heating and plumbing shop. A sign says that hail and crop insurance is sold here. A Native man asks me if there's an auction today. I don't know. Farm auction signs on the street side bulletin board have mouldered in the rain.

I'm sitting outside my motel room looking straight across to the old people's home. There are a bunch of them, mostly women, sitting on chairs. Hands folded in their laps, kerchiefs covering their heads. To think they started off in some rustic village in Galicia, dressed in embroidered blouses, a thick, linen overskirt wrapped around their hips and tied close with a hand-woven belt (to judge from old photos of a family group in the Old Country). They ran barefoot after the geese to the village pond, after the sheep to the upland meadow, bent at right angles over the stooks of barley, scythe in hand. And they end their days in housecoats, dozing in the sun a couple of hundred yards away from the junction of highways 36 and 45 that traverse the Ukrainian bloc settlement from Edmonton east to the Saskatchewan border. I can make out an old man playing the accordion. I can see his wheezing and squeezing but only a few notes make it over to my side of the road. Some women sing, their voices feeble and quavering, "She'll be comin' 'round the mountain."

Gladys picked me up at 9 a.m. and we went to the arena to setup the concession booth for the agricultural fair. It was a cold, windy and cloudy day — where are the searingly hot August summers of my childhood? — and we didn't expect many people. Unwrapped the hamburger patties and chopped onions, plopped the wieners in the boiling water, spread out the potato chips and chocolate bars, pop


and coffee. This junk food — in the middle of an agricultural region full of wonderful cooks.

There was an interlude of Ukrainian dancing outside. Very young kids dancing in the parking lot, little arms and legs jerking and flailing in a prototype of a Cossack dance, proud parents and grandparents looking on in delight. It didn't actually seem all that incongruous to me but maybe it would be to an outsider: hot dogs and hopaks in the same space. This congruence of incongruities — boys in blow-dried hairdos and ballooning Cossack pants, girls in make-up and beribboned wreaths on their heads, electric synthesizers belting out the *oom pah pah* of a kolomeya, garlic sausage in a hot dog bun, the hodgepodge of English and Ukrainian chatter — “*Ya mushu*

fiksovaty fents zavtra.” — seems so normal. It is normal. This is Ukrainian-Canadian culture, sprung up from the soil of here. It may be vulgar, sentimental, even uncouth, but it's ours. A kind of visible record of how we got from Galicia to Two Hills and what happened to us along the way, traces of the whole adventure in what we say and how we act together.

The displays at the fair were pretty meagre. Samples from people's gardens, sheaves of wheat, baking, decorated cakes, embroidered cushions, pysanky, photographs of flowerbeds. Funny how at one point of our history, some seventy-five years ago, all these objects were still part of day-to-day survival, absolutely necessary accomplishments — without then you simply couldn't go on — and, where life was decorative,

it was still reverential, connected with the church calendar and old customs. But when life becomes materially easier, women had more time on their hands, and now you have fancy cakes instead of braided bread, elaborate cross-stitch embroidery up and down a polyester shirt instead of a few perfunctory stitches at the neck and cuffs of a homespun shirt, and red ribbons tied around a winning cabbage that used to represent something to eat, as sauerkraut in a barrel, to fend off hunger.

This heat wave isn't going to break. Flies buzz insolently around my head. The pavement outside the post office is spongy. I hear that a ninety-year-old man died in the old people's home yesterday. 

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2018 Theme: Climate Change

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FFAA aim is to encourage, foster and develop among the citizens of the community, excellence and appreciation of fibre as an art form.

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Embroidery & Handwork with Bettina Matzkun
October 2017
Registration & more information go to our website

LVIV ART PROJECT:

PRESSURE & RESISTANCE

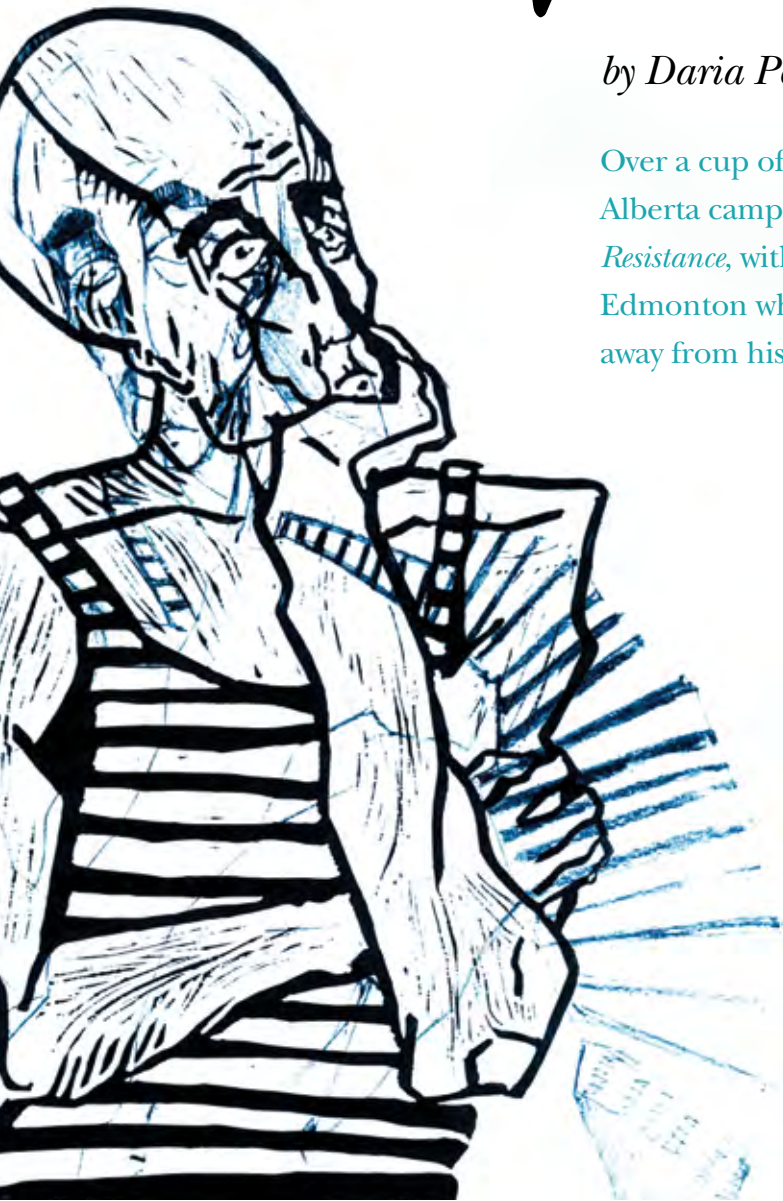
by Daria Polianska

Over a cup of coffee in a small Italian café at the University of Alberta campus, I discussed a unique art project, *Pressure and Resistance*, with James Boychuk-Hunter. James is a young artist from Edmonton who works in printmaking. Until recently, he has lived away from his birth-province exploring and studying abroad.

He has recently returned to Edmonton and is providing an opportunity to enjoy a collection of art that he acquired from the Lviv National Academy of Fine Arts. James has endeavored to show and sell this collection in a number of venues across North America. All proceeds from the show will be sent back to the students at the Lviv National Academy of Fine Arts. Currently, this work is on display at the ACUA Gallery & Artisan Boutique in Edmonton.

Surprisingly, James' work has nothing to do with Ukraine. However, his Ukrainian heritage and cultural interest in Ukrainian art prompted him to introduce this extraordinary collection of prints from Lviv to a North American audience. While attending graduate school in Knoxville, Tennessee, James had access to an exhibition space and decided to use it. Thus, in 2014, with the help of his colleagues, he contacted Professor Vasyl Kosiv from the Lviv National Academy of Fine Arts in Ukraine. Together, they discussed an exhibition of students' work.

At the same time James was working with the professor, the political situation in Ukraine was incandescing. The mass protests in Kyiv attracted international attention; and Professor Vasyl Kosiv, together with his students and faculty members, traveled to Kyiv to participate in the political demonstrations.





ALL PHOTOS
PROVIDED

That is why, as a response to injustice, corruption, and oppression, the name of the portfolio *Pressure and Resistance* was born. About twenty-five students were asked to reflect on the events of Maidan in Ukraine in an optimistic light through the graphical art of printmaking, specifically etchings. The interpretation of the theme remained open for their imagination.

DP: Hello, James. Thank you for sharing this collection with us. How did you connect with ACUA?

James: In August 2015, I moved back to Edmonton. In September, I exhibited the prints at a fundraiser sale in Edmonton. A representative from ACUA was at the exhibit, and spoke to me about selling the remaining prints from the exhibition at the ACUA Gallery & Artisan Boutique.

DP: What was your goal for this project?

James: I was interested in Ukrainian art and had an opportunity to present it. The students in Lviv were very excited,

as well. Unfortunately, it is hard to research Ukrainian art as it often feels cut-off. So, part of my motivation was to make it more accessible for North Americans. I also felt that Maidan was more global, cultural and Western, and definitely needed to be heeded.

DP: Where do the funds from this project go?

James: All proceeds from the project will be sent back to the Lviv National Academy of Fine Arts in Ukraine. They will decide how to use the funds.


DP: James, do you think there are any specific criteria for what Ukraine can produce in terms of graphical art?

James: Perhaps... It is hard to say. It has some features of East-European art and the technical skill is highly valuable. Overall, I feel like the characteristics of Ukrainian art are more traditional — of higher quality. The peculiarity of this particular exhibition is the difference in illustrative styles — some of the prints

are sweet in some way, less conceptual, more direct, more formal. Briefly, this project is a visual illustration of a specific idea.

DP: Do you have any other projects on your mind?

James: I do... Maybe I will exhibit some of my work in Ukraine in the future...

We also talked about other important aspects of Ukrainian cultural and artistic life influenced by political and historical circumstances. However, the art project *Pressure and Resistance* was made to be seen and to tell a story. I encourage everyone to visit the ACUA Gallery & Artisan Boutique in Edmonton, support the young talents from Lviv, and learn more about contemporary Ukraine. 

Daria Polianska is a PHD student at the University of Alberta. For more information about *Pressure and Resistance* Lviv Art Project contact ACUA at 780-488-8558.

Wendy Brook Music Festival

by Caroline Knowles

The Wendy Brook Music Festival held in Vegreville now includes a full day and a half of Ukrainian language vocals and speech arts entries. It is an adjudicated music and speech arts event begun in 1979 by the Wendy Brook Women's Institute; and, except for one year, it has taken place annually ever since. The first festival was just a single spring day of entries with a single adjudicator held in Queen Elizabeth elementary school.

From a one-day event in 1979, the festival has become one of the largest regional festivals in the province with approximately 400 entries and as many as seven adjudicators judging piano, vocals (including choirs), Ukrainian language, bands and instruments, strings and speech arts. Now, the festival is seven days, usually just before the school spring break.

Until about ten years ago, there were just a handful of Ukrainian language entries each year, but at present, three full sessions are needed for sixty to seventy entries in both vocals and speech arts.


The Ukrainian bilingual program provides individual children, small groups and full classes performing Ukrainian folk songs and poetry. Children dress for performance in white shirts and blouses with traditional embroidery. All the children in the Ukrainian bilingual program usually attend so that they can benefit from the remarks of the adjudicators — and provide an enthusiastic audience for their classmates.

For several years, the *day has opened with children singing O Canada* in Ukrainian. Performances involve basic costumes and props to enhance meaning — important for the audience because many parents do not understand Ukrainian. Choral speech brings Ukrainian folk tales to life, poetry selections have featured the works of Taras Shevchenko, and there are song selections from folk, traditional and contemporary genres.

The many benefits of second language acquisition become evident in the festival.

Although not a regular feature of the festival, there have been entries of traditional Ukrainian instruments such as the *tsymbaly*. Over the years such entries have been adjudicated by adjudicators who, often, are musicians in their own right.

Generous donations from the community support the festival and the awards for its Ukrainian component. The Vegreville Cultural Association was the founding donor of the awards for Outstanding Ukrainian Performance and continues its support to this day. Another important donor was Val Eleniak until his death in 2003, with his widow Olesia Eleniak (née Samoil) continuing to support the festival until her own passing. The Ukrainian Catholic Women's League of Canada, Vegreville Branch, now provides for those awards.

The Wendy Brook Music Festival has been a vital part of the multicultural life of the Vegreville community for more than thirty-five years. 

Caroline Knowles was Chairperson of the WBMF for fifteen years and continues volunteer in the Vegreville community. The festival website is www.wix.com/wendybrookfestival.

Five Waves of INSPIRATION



*Five waves of Ukrainian immigration to Canada:
Their inspiration and influence on Alberta's arts community.*

JULY 3 - 26, 2017

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CALGARY
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AUGUST 2017

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MUNDARE
Free Exhibit • Dates to be confirmed

FEATURED ARTISTS

Julian Bucmaniuk
Tammy Chmilar
Ann Cymbalisty
Wadym Dobrolige
Ihor Dmytruk
William Duma
Hryhorii Grekul

Theodora Harasymiw
Erin Haugen
Parasia Iwanec
Iryna Karpenko
Lawrence Kenakin
Halyna Koszarycz
Dominika Koziak
Chester Kuc

William Kurelek
Isabel Levesque
Peter Lipinski
Thelma Manarey
Stephan Melnychenko
Sophia Morrison
Oksana Movchan
Nick Ochotta

Larissa Pohoreski
Maria Prokopiw
Larisa Sembaliuk Cheladyn
Valeriy Semenko
Peter Shostak
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