

AQUAVITAE

ALBERTA'S UKRAINIAN ARTS AND CULTURE MAGAZINE

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THREADS THAT CONNECT

THREADS THAT CONNECT
HITS THE RUNWAY

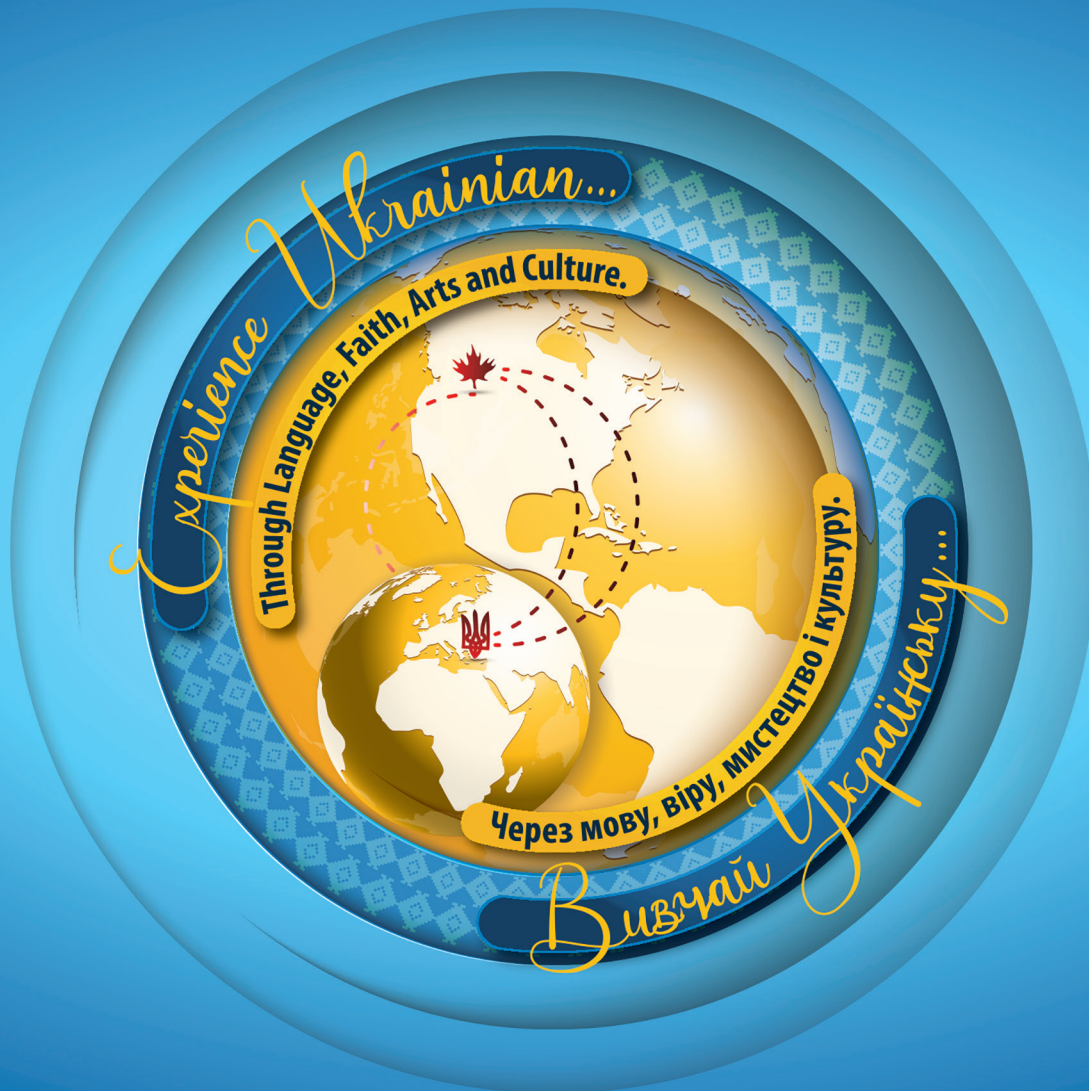
THREADS THAT CONNECT
EXHIBIT



A PUBLICATION OF THE ALBERTA COUNCIL FOR THE UKRAINIAN ARTS

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ACUAVITAE



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PHOTO PROVIDED BY OLENA ROMANOVA

THE TALE OF A TEXTILES CONFERENCE

By Deborah Stasiuk

The Threads that Connect textiles project was born from an idea that was brought forth by one of ACUA's board members, Slavka Shulakevych. Slavka loves Ukrainian textiles, embroidery, and weaving, and recognizes the importance of textiles to Ukrainian culture.

Naturally, we formed a committee to explore this idea of how we could facilitate and promote Ukrainian textiles within the community. As we delved deeper, we were inspired by our history, the evolution of Ukrainian textiles, and how our rich textile heritage continues to inspire artists in new and innovative ways today.

Ukrainian textiles come in a variety of forms and are created in a variety of ways. Textiles have been used in all cultures through time to signify status for worship, and to celebrate rites of passage, in addition to having important uses in everyday life. Textiles also have the innate ability to retain and communicate memory, and through each recollection they reveal the historical, cultural, and personal moments that bring our community together. Through the fabrics of our culture we are connected. Shared

decorative motifs, customary kerchiefs and head pieces, collective sewing guilds, and sewing and stitching bees are just a few of the ways that fibers have been woven into our lives.

In 2019, ACUA officially formed a Threads that Connect committee in partnership with the Ukrainian Resource and Development Centre at MacEwan University. Originally, our committee had planned a 5-day conference that would take place in May 2020. However, due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, public health restrictions prevented us from hosting this event. Our committee came together, and we shifted our thinking. We were able to re-develop our existing programming, plan, and implement it throughout 2021.

In February, we kicked off the project by hosting a Threads that Connect exhibit which was curated by Larisa

Sembaliuk-Cheladyn and hosted at the ACUA Gallery & Artisan Boutique. From March to September, we hosted various monthly virtual workshops, lectures, and round table discussions with presenters from across Canada and Ukraine who presented information about Ukrainian embroidery, weaving, stamping on fabric, and textile preservation. In September, we will conclude the project with a fashion show that will be produced by Darka Tarnawsky from Bottom Line Productions and feature three distinct collections; historic, retro, and contemporary (the last designed by Olena Romanova). Finally, we will be hosting a panel discussion with local influencers and fashion designers at MacEwan University, and market at ACUA Gallery & Artisan Boutique. This issue of ACUA Vitae is the cherry on top a two-year project, the happy ending to the tale of a textile conference. 

Threads That Connect Exhibit

By Lyrissa Sheptak



Ukrainians have always had a love affair with beauty. It strikes the core of our souls, demanding honest and raw emotion. Whether we are singing beloved folk tunes, appreciating a painting, clapping along with a Ukrainian dance production, or admiring brightly adorned traditional clothing, we are all in.

Thanks to a history of shared knowledge and people who have worked painstakingly to perpetuate their crafts, Ukrainians have rich traditions that are maintained and celebrated not only amongst themselves, but transferred to their broader communities as well.

In the exhibition “Threads that Connect”, curator Larisa Sembaliuk Cheladyn invites visitors on a journey through time that reveals the evolution of Ukrainian textiles and embroidery and how, “Ukrainian heritage textiles, clothing, and dance costumes are interwoven into our lives and identity.” A large part of the exhibition focuses on celebrating textile traditions, understanding how this knowledge has been transferred, and honouring the artistic skill of the creators..

Cheladyn begins by saying, “Without weaving, we would not be able to embroider, decorate, or sew things together.” Folk weaving is the foundation of textile production worldwide – all cultures share it! It requires willing, enthusiastic participants



PHOTOS BY LARYSA LUCIW | FROM TOP TO BOTTOM:
MANNEQUINS EXHIBITED AT THREADS THAT CONNECT

FEATURE



PHOTO BY LARYSA LUCIW | LOOM & WEAVING DISPLAY



PHOTO BY LARYSA LUCIW | THREADS THAT CONNECT EXHIBIT

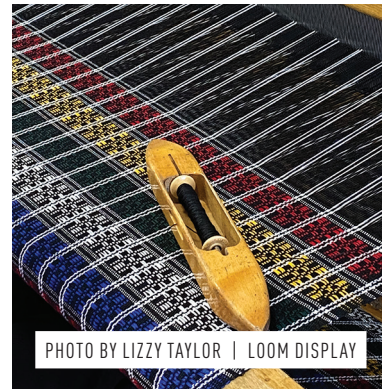


PHOTO BY LIZZY TAYLOR | LOOM DISPLAY

to ensure its preservation. Cheladyn's exhibition is full of examples of women and men who dedicated their lives to learning about their cultural traditions, celebrating their identity, and sharing their expertise.

Beginning with heritage textiles, Cheladyn examines the history of weaving in Ukraine, allowing our senses to feast upon vibrant colours and patterns; worn, wooden looms; wool and linens; and tools that our ancestors, babas, and mothers used. As a person looks upon Master Weaver Elizabeth Holinaty's large loom on display in this exhibit, one can almost hear its wooden beams creaking and knocking. It isn't difficult to imagine her meditatively slide the shuttle over and over as she silently weaves her project.

From earliest times, such traditional knowledge was transferred from woman

to woman, generation after generation. Whether weaving functional clothing or a fancy ceremonial item, each woman eventually became an expert in her own right; passing down her knowledge so her children could inherit it, build upon it, and eventually one day share it with others.

Using detailed maps and examples of regional Ukrainian clothing and samples, Cheladyn demonstrates how in the past, fashion was directly connected to — and influenced by — geopolitical and sociopolitical factors. In Ukraine, each region, village, and family had their own identifying style. This style was largely influenced by their environment. Colours and dyes came from local herbs or minerals. "Clothing was made and adorned with what they had locally and what they could afford financially." Nobility and higher classes enjoyed more exotic fabrics thanks to travelling merchants. Much fashion was influenced by trends from Western Europe and spread by these travelling merchants, and later through higher education, and published books and magazines.

As visitors walk through the exhibition and peruse the many examples of Ukrainian textiles and embroidered clothes, they quickly understand that we would not be

celebrating the annual Vyshyvanka Day, admiring the beautiful dance costumes, or wearing our favourite silkscreened t-shirts if it wasn't for our rich history of creativity, cooperation, and collaboration.

Clothing was made and adorned with what they had locally and what they could afford financially.

Long ago, the passing of knowledge was a necessity for survival. Eventually, women ended up in a position to freely put their own personal "stamp" on their textiles. As they passed on their expertise to their daughters, they watched as the next generation built upon their craft.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY
BOHDAN MEDWIDSKY UKRAINIAN FOLKLORE ARCHIVES
| SEWING CIRCLE KURYLIV COLLECTION





PHOTO PROVIDED BY BOHDAN MEDWIDSKY UKRAINIAN FOLKLORE ARCHIVES | MAINZ-KASTEL DP CAMP CHOIR



PHOTO PROVIDED BY ELIZABETH HOLINATY | WEAVING



As women became experts in their field, they became sought after for not only help, but to share their cultural knowledge among Ukrainian communities that were great distances from each other. This acted as a unifying factor when it came to a shared cultural identity.

Cheladyn explains, “over the years, constant political upheaval in Ukraine magnified the preservation instinct to collect and protect traditional ways. In response, arts collectives, such as the Prosvita societies and local sewing circles were established to emphasize teaching traditional folk-art techniques and the history behind symbolic motifs and patterns.”

After the Second World War, many Ukrainians had to relocate to European Displaced Persons Camps which quickly became places of shared knowledge. When these people then moved across the world, settling in North and South America, they established their own sewing circles or organizations that

quickly became conduits of cultural transmission. Not only were traditions continued in their new homelands, but the items they created were often sold at markets, craft fairs, or fashion shows and used to financially support dance troupes and choirs who were not only appreciated from within their cultural community, but shared with people from outside it as well.

Cheladyn features several remarkable artists who made history not only instructing Ukrainian Canadians in the art of traditional textiles, but also fought to introduce the craft to mainstream artists. One such person, hailing from Winnipeg, was Tatiana Koshetz. In the early 1940s she travelled across the Canadian prairies lecturing and offering textile workshops, as well as teaching mothers to sew and modify Ukrainian dance costumes for their children. Her greatest legacy, “was having taught the fundamentals of Ukrainian folklore and costuming to an infamous cohort of young students who all went on to form Ukrainian dance ensembles.” One of these students was Chester Kuc (renowned artist, and founder of both Cheremosh and Shumka dance troupes) who, later with his wife Luba, embarked to Ukraine in the 1970s on a mission to find



PHOTO PROVIDED BY OSEREDOK UKRAINIAN CULTURAL & EDUCATION CENTRE | HRUSHEVSKY SCHOOL, 1927



PHOTO BY LARYSA LUCIW | THREADS THAT CONNECT EXHIBIT



PHOTO PROVIDED BY UWAC MUSEUM - WINDSOR ON WEAVING WORKSHOP WITH TOROSHENKO AND YANDA





SHUMKA'S MOSQUITO'S WEDDING COSTUME



PHOTO BY LIZZY TAYLOR | EMBROIDERED CLOTHING DISPLAY



BETTY MACYK DRESS FROM 1976; THIS DRESS WAS MODELLED FOR THE BOOK UKRAINE CANADIA

PHOTOS BY LARYSA LUCIW

authentic Bukovynian dance costumes to incorporate into their dance repertoire in Canada. Travelling to Ukraine and creating contacts with museum curators and other dance groups paved the way for future generations to maintain relationships with international dance groups and Ukrainian designers -- relationships that exist even today.

Seeing the artifacts is a real way for people to connect with their past, their identity, and one another


In "Threads that Connect", Cheladyn plays particular attention to performance costuming and how it is ever evolving, but has always remained a pivotal player in the celebration and the perpetuation of cultural pride and identity. She presents how technology is constantly improving and evolving, interweaving past with the present.

During the interwar years, in the 1920s and 1930s, cotton and synthetic materials were introduced. Commercially made

DMC as well as anchor threads offered continuity in colour and dye batches. Polyester, rayon, and spandex were lightweight compared to woolen garments and were easily mass produced. These new materials were not only economical, but functional, "great for active lifestyles and the stage." Cheladyn believes that even these threads, albeit different looking and feeling, continue to, "connect us to our ethnic identities." Change is part of the process. Tradition is necessary, but creativity is vital.

Other modern inventions are the embroidery machine and silk-screening. Thanks to the invention of embroidery machines, dance costumes can be mass produced thus expanding repertoires. Silk-screened t-shirts are not only inexpensive, but popular -- especially at festivals. "Language and imagery can be expressed through text and graphics." They are a source of pride -- an outward expression and celebration of our cultural identity.

"Threads that Connect" is a timely exhibition that not only makes people appreciate their past and the efforts of

their ancestors, but it demonstrates how a people's love of culture and beauty has always been a unifying force. Seeing the artifacts is a real way for people to connect with their past, their identity, and one another. By telling the many personal stories that are attached to the featured clothing and textiles, Cheladyn helps viewers realize our connections and commonalities with one another, opening up a grander dialogue among those who have passion for, "needlework, weaving, and couture." 

ALL QUOTES ARE TAKEN FROM THE "THREADS THAT CONNECT" EXHIBITION CATALOGUE OR PERSONAL COMMENTS FROM LARISA SEMBALIUK CHELADYN.

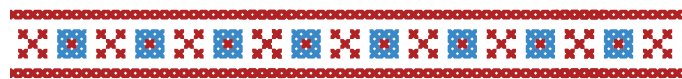


PHOTO BY
LARISA SEMBALIUK-CHELADYN
I WEAVING LOOM



PHOTO BY ROBIN MCHUGH
ELIZABETH HOLINATY

UKRAINIAN EMBROIDERY STITCHES: A SHORT GUIDE

PHOTO PROVIDED

By Isabella Sheptak | Research by Joyce Howell

Cross-Stitch

Cross-stitch is the most commonly used embroidery stitch — in large part due to its relative ease in comparison to other stitches — yet it only became a part of Ukrainian textile tradition in the 1800s. Ukrainian cross-stitch is recognizable by its predominant use of red and black thread, and geometric patterns that form designs such as roses.

Nyz

Nyz, also known as *nyzynka*, is unique to Ukrainian embroidery. It is a running stitch that is first worked on the vertical from the back in black, and afterwards filled in the front with orange, green, and red stitches. While working the pattern from the back may seem confusing, it makes it easier for the embroiderer to keep track of their design. Today, many designs that were traditionally suited for *nyzynka* have been adapted for cross-stitch, as the latter is faster and easier.

Zavoleekannia

Zavoleekannia is worked on the horizontal, forming geometric patterns as each row builds upon the next. Rows are stitched in pairs, and this distinguishes *zavoleekannia* from *zanyzuannia* - a style that uses single rows to build the pattern. The pattern develops much like weaving, emerging with the addition of every row.

Other Ukrainian Embroidery Stitches:

- *Hlad* - satin stitch
- *Merezhka* - drawn thread
- *Vyreezuwania* - cutwork
- *Zatiahanka* - pulled thread



THREADS THAT CONNECT HITS THE RUNWAY

by Lizzy Taylor

The Threads That Connect Fashion Show is an exploration of Ukrainian embroidered fashion over time, showcasing how clothing has evolved and adapted to changing trends while staying true to its roots.



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY OLENA ROMANOVA - CONTEMPORARY COLLECTION FOR THE FASHION SHOW



Taking place September 10th at MacEwan University's Allard Hall, the show offers a unique look at how the Ukrainian community celebrates its heritage through clothing, featuring historical, retro, and contemporary sections to showcase fashions throughout the decades. "The Threads that Connect Fashion Show is a showcase focusing on the Ukrainian Threads that bind and yet release us. Not only do we embrace our cultural history, but we are inspired by it in our fashion today. Our Ukrainian fashion has flourished in contemporary Canada. It is a treasured art," says fashion show committee co-chair Olesia Luciwo-Andryjowycz.

The historical collection features traditional clothing from across Ukraine, complete with the embroidery patterns and motifs specific to the region in which they originated. From the private collection of Lyudmyla Shefel, each piece is an authentic Ukrainian traditional costume. Many are ceremonial, worn for festivals, weddings, and other holidays. A woman's clothing was often an indication of her social role, such as the "matchmaker" costume of the Ratniv area worn when managing a wedding, or the vinok wreath worn by unmarried young women. Each extravagant layer of the costumes showcases the skill required to create it, with handwoven linen fabric and fine stitching to create detailed patterns ranging from the geometric designs of Western Ukraine to the more floral ornamentation of the South and East. Distinct embroidery techniques, headpiece styles, and accessories make each outfit a unique look back into the stylings of an historical Ukrainian woman.

The retro section showcases clothing lent by local Ukrainian Canadians, making it completely unique to Edmonton. Featuring outfits from the 1950 – 90's, it shows how the diaspora celebrated their Ukrainian heritage and displayed it proudly by embroidering traditional motifs onto dresses, jackets, shirts, and more.



PROVIDED BY
PANI SKRYPNYK



PROVIDED BY
KSENIA FEDYNA



PROVIDED BY
LEONA BRIDGES



PROVIDED BY
IRENE TARNAWSKY



PROVIDED BY
DARKA BRODA-MASIUK



PROVIDED BY
IRENE PYSYK

RETRO COLLECTION FOR THE FASHION SHOW: PHOTOS BY LARYSA LUCIW

Graduation dresses, formalwear, and everyday items were modified by talented women, embroidering sleeves and skirt hems with the traditional patterns taught by their mothers and grandmothers. The embroidery techniques and styles featured reflect the regions in which each family originated, with geometric designs on skirt suits and red and black roses typical of Kyivska oblast embroidered on dress hems both reflect the roots of the textile artist, and will be observable on the runway.

Ukrainian fashion designer Olena Romanova will present her 2021 Fall Collection during the contemporary section, taking inspiration from traditional Ukrainian embroidery to re-imagine it in the world of high fashion. A Lviv-based designer and member of the Ukrainian Designers Association, Olena works out of her own studio to create clothing with all types of textile materials. Her collection features common motifs and patterns, creating clothing for the modern woman that blends contemporary styles with traditional needlework.

The fashion show is the final event of the Threads That Connect 2021 Project, a partnership between the Alberta Council for the Ukrainian Arts (ACUA) and the Ukrainian Resource and Development Centre (URDC) at MacEwan University to create a year-long celebration of Ukrainian embroidery and textiles. "The final event of Threads That Connect culminates the two and a half years of close collaboration between URDC and ACUA. It celebrates connections

between different waves of immigration in this country and between Canada and Ukraine. It honours our heritage. It gives hope to future generations. URDC's mandate is to bring community to the campus and campus to the community. The Fashion Show highlights the community-university engagement at its finest," says fashion show committee co-chair Larisa Hayduk.

The original vision of Threads That Connect was an international symposium spread over six days in May of 2020, a conference meant to bring together academics and fashion

enthusiasts from Canada and Ukraine to explore embroidery styles, weaving and textile design. However, the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada months prior, led to the shut-down of in-person events and large gatherings. The symposium was postponed and plans for the Threads That Connect Fashion Show were put on hold.

Pivoting to a largely virtual format, Threads That Connect exhibits and workshops were re-imagined and adapted to engage participants throughout 2021. The Fashion Show remained as the project's final in-person event and was rescheduled to September, 2021. "The project has many moving parts on an international scale. The world situation made things more challenging, to say the least. But we approached it with optimism," says Darka Tarnawsky, producer of the show.

The roller coaster of changing restrictions in Alberta led to several different visions of the fashion show, adapting seating plans as guidelines continued to change throughout spring and early summer. As restrictions tightened, estimated ticket numbers dropped to ensure compliance with Alberta Health guidelines. Committee members took to Zoom to discuss changes to the show, adapting budgets



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY LYIDMILA SHEFEL |
HISTORICAL COLLECTION FOR THE FASHION SHOW

FEATURE: ON THE COVER



PROVIDED BY
LESIA PERRITT



PROVIDED BY
HELEN RYS



PROVIDED BY
KSENIA FEDYNA



PROVIDED BY
VIRA BOKALO



PROVIDED BY
VIRA BOKALO



PROVIDED BY
CHRISTINE ZWOZDESKY

and adjusting the show's layout based on strict distancing measures.

Show plans changed for the final time alongside the announcement of Alberta's 'Open for Summer' plan, with all restrictions set to lift July 1st, creating a renewed opportunity for the event. The final seating plan was drafted, allowing more guests closer access to the runway as nearly double the number of seats became available. With re-opening confirmed, tickets for the Fashion Show went on sale June 23rd.

The weekend of the Fashion Show will feature two elements of the original conference: a Thursday night panel and Saturday marketplace. "The Circle of Life of Fashion" panel will feature business owners and fashion designers, including featured Ukrainian designer Olena Romanova, discussing the evolution of Ukrainian clothing as a reflection of the environment, utility, and cultural heritage to fashion, design, and art. The panel will reflect on the idea of connection through time and space, as embroidery has developed over centuries and has been used to represent Ukrainian heritage in Canada. The marketplace will feature works from textile artists and fashion designers from Canada and Ukraine, promoting up-and-coming and prominent members of the fashion and textile communities.

Also featured during the weekend will be a collage of community-submitted photos of cherished Ukrainian embroidered clothing, the product of the social media campaign #Favourite_Threads. Launched in early 2021, #Favourite_Threads asked Ukrainians to submit their favourite embroidered clothing to be displayed during the Fashion Show. Submissions continued throughout the year, creating an easy way for those interested to express their connection to their heritage through their clothing and become a part of Threads That Connect.

As one of ACUA's largest events to date, the Fashion Show requires a large team of volunteers. Recruitment began in the early summer, as the committee

approached potential models and persons to help run the event. Dancers from Cheremosh, Shumka, Viter, and Volya dance companies agreed to volunteer their time as models alongside other active members of the local Ukrainian community. ACUA members, the community and post-secondary students became a part of the behind-the-scenes volunteer team, helping to make the show a reality.

The Threads That Connect Fashion Show will be a unique experience to witness exquisitely embroidered clothing modelled in a celebration of the history and talent of artists who have created them, while looking to the future of fashion. 

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THREADS THAT CONNECT ПЕРЕПЛЕТЕНІ ДОЛІ

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

ENGLISH AND UKRAINIAN VERSIONS ARE NOW AVAILABLE ON-LINE!

Based on the Threads that Connect exhibit held in February 2021, ACUA has developed an Exhibit e-Catalogue that showcases the role of clothing and costumes in the Ukrainian Canadian community. Pictures, readings, and audio are featured in the book which is ideal for teachers, students, and public interaction.

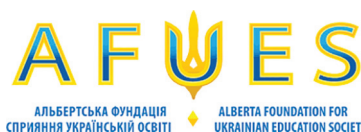
The website linked below contains educational materials and classroom activities for school-aged children and educators to use in conjunction with the book. These resources provide supplementary activities for teachers to use in the classroom. Topics include Ukrainian culture and textiles, weaving, embroidery, cross-stitch, dance clothing, and the art of natural thread dyeing.

ACCESS THE LINKS BELOW:

<https://acuarts.ca/tsi-ka-vo/threads-that-connect>

<https://acuarts.ca/tsi-ka-vo/Переплетені-долі>

Thank you to our resource sponsor:





CUT FROM THE SAME CLOTH

PROFILING THREADS THAT CONNECT PRESENTERS

Each month presenters from local universities and special guests from across Canada and Ukraine were invited to give presentations about Ukrainian embroidery, weaving and textiles.

These presentations were originally scheduled to take place at our conference in May 2020. However, due to public health restrictions, ACUA hosted these academics and artists via Zoom. Throughout 2021 participants attended these workshops from across Canada and the USA.





DESCRIBE YOUR WORK. HOW DID YOU BECOME INVOLVED WITH UKRAINIAN TEXTILES?



Oleksandra Telizhenko

CHERKASY, UKRAINE

I am an artist and fashion designer. I also research folk culture, in particular embroidery and national costumes. I create embroidered towels; stage costumes for groups and soloists; and create attire in an ethno-modern style. I create designs for embroidery and write articles and books about Ukrainian culture and art. My interest in embroidery goes back to my childhood and comes from my mother. I studied at the Vyzhnytsia School of Applied Arts and then I graduated from the Lviv State Institute of Applied and Decorative Arts.



Nataliia Iashnikova

ST. ALBERT, ALBERTA

I do wool felting. The techniques I use go back to ancient times in Ukraine. In my products I combine wool with fabric. I really like to use the fragments from old Ukrainian kerchiefs in my felting.



MaryAnn Baziuk

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

I am a retired school teacher. My involvement with textiles originates from volunteering as a "Costume Mom" for Shumka.



Marija Chumarna

LVIV, UKRAINE

I study the phenomenon of Ukrainian folk culture (symbols of fairy tales, myths, the custom calendar of folk festivals and embroidery) and the impact of the energy of textiles on the health and spiritual purification of Ukrainians.



Larisa Sembaliuk Cheladyn

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

My involvement with Ukrainian textiles began when I was young, my baba loved to weave and embroider. I have often incorporated textiles into my paintings, with many images having been inspired by ethnic fabric and embroidery, most often from my Ukrainian Heritage. I chose to pursue an MA in Ukrainian Folklore and decided to focus on Ukrainian Canadian embroidered pillows. I was fascinated by how they were a commonly-found article in Ukrainian homes and yet nothing much had been written about them. I was also intrigued by the many artisans who created the pillows and how textiles and fibres were a part of their lives.

Lada Tsymbala

LVIV, UKRAINE



I work as an associate professor at the Department of History and Theory of Art at the Lviv National Academy of Arts. In my creative work I turn to the technique of batik and the interpretation of traditional Ukrainian textile arts. My research is aimed at exploring folk art in modern design culture, and understanding the values of the national style of Ukrainian art.

Katya J. Chomitzky

BLOOMINGTON, IN



As a researcher and community member, I have always been interested in the connections between Ukrainian and Ukrainian -Canadian culture. Throughout my time in university, I watched as the world began to recognize Ukrainian culture in a different light following the events of the Euromaidan, and knew that I wanted to explore the connection of material culture between Ukraine and Ukrainian-Canadian communities.

Josée Chartrand

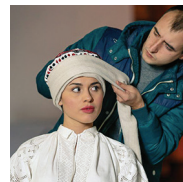
EDMONTON, ALBERTA



I am an Assistant Professor in the department of theatre at MacEwan University where I teach costuming and scenic painting. I have made my career as a costume designer, maker, educator, and researcher, and was invited to engage in a Ukrainian textiles related research project for the Threads that Connect symposium by Larisa Hayduk, director of the Ukrainian Resource and Development Center at MacEwan University. I have greatly enjoyed my time working with Shumka over the past year exploring the materiality of their *vinoks*, and hope to expand this study in the future.

Ihor Perevertniuk

KYIV, UKRAINE



Since the early 2000s, I have collected and studied Ukrainian traditional clothes, while studying the traditions of costume making. I have been on expeditions to almost every region of Ukraine. I am also partly engaged in sewing replicas of folk clothing.



WHY ARE TEXTILES IMPORTANT TO YOUR INDIVIDUAL AND/OR UKRAINIAN IDENTITY?



PHOTO PROVIDED

Oleksandra Telizhenko

For me the *rushnyk* embroidered towel preserves the hidden knowledge of our ancestors about the principles of world order. The embroidered designs are our ancient writing. Now the time has come to decipher and read the stitches that encode our Ukrainian identity.

Nataliia Iashnikova

Fabric is important cultural heritage for me because it reflects the fashion of the time when it was made.

MaryAnn Baziuk

Ukrainian textiles are important

to my identity because my involvement in creating them — embroidering blouses and shirts — has been a personal passion of mine for many years.

Marija Chumarna

In the mind of Ukrainians, the human soul is clothed in four bodies at birth: the physical body, clothing, the house and the mind. The appreciation many Ukrainians have for traditional Ukrainian textile traditions reflects the strong impact these traditions have on how our people view themselves and their culture.

Larisa Sembaliuk Cheladyn

Over time, I've come to realize that almost every important phase of our lives is connected to textiles. When born we are swaddled in a blanket, teenage years are all about fashion, as is a wedding. Our homes are decorated with *rushnyky* and pillows and tapestries. Even in death we are again dressed in a significant piece of clothing. So, textiles are an intricate part of my life in these many ways. And obviously there has often been a connection to my Ukrainian identity. I also see the connection is similar in other cultures, which is where I got the inspiration for my painting "Fabric of a Nation".

Lada Tsymbala

Folk fabric, embroidery, and tapestry have always been and remain one of the leading symbols of Ukrainian national identity. Their modern interpretation has melded with aesthetic values in professional and popular culture.

Katya J. Chomitzky

I was introduced to embroidery as a child, where I associated it with a sense of home and comfort. In my early 20's I turned to textile art as a way to reconnect with something in my life that I felt was missing. This led me to research the ways in which embroidery can be used to repair trauma that exists in many Ukrainian communities that may feel a similar disconnect to their homes or cultures.

Josée Chartrand

From a very young age, I have been enthralled by performance costumes and fashion. I was first introduced to theatre and costuming in high school, and that solidified my love of all things costume. I worked through a BFA in theatre design, and was quickly drawn into an MA in material culture, both degrees from the UofA, which is where my research into the embedded social information of performance costumes first emerged.

Ihor Perevertniuk

In my opinion, Ukrainians had and still have a special attitude to folk textiles. Very often in certain periods of history, traditional textiles were an integral part of Ukrainian identity.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY IHOR PEREVERTNIUK |

IHOR PRESENTED ON HEAD PIECES AND HEAD WRAPS FROM PODILLYA

WHAT ARE YOUR SOURCES OF INSPIRATION?

Oleksandra Telizhenko

My inspirations are nature and space.

Nataliia Iashnikova

The source of my inspiration is nature. I always take colour combinations from different flowers or plants.

MaryAnn Baziuk

My late mother is my only source of inspiration. She embroidered her entire life. It all started by her making my dancing blouses. She then moved on to pillows, and later advanced to complicated counted cross-stitch sceneries, angels, birds and other thematic pictures. I have always admired the work she did and now I continue in her footsteps.

Marija Chumarna

The source of my inspiration is my genealogy. On my father's side, from Poltava region, there is a well-known lineage of potters, artists, and embroiderers. My mother's line consists of singers from *Lemkivshchyna*. I feel an inner obligation to speak and create for my lineage, and for the whole of Ukraine.

Larisa Sembaliuk Cheladyn

Sources of inspiration are all around me. I am partial to flowers - especially poppies - but other things like fabric and songs/music, dance, the biblical scriptures, candles, and even the poetry of Leonard Cohen have all served as starting points for themes for my various collections.

Lada Tsymbala

My inspirations are traditional Ukrainian embroidery motifs and ornamentations as well as Ukrainian carpets, *Krolevets* towels, Ukrainian *pysanky*, and luxurious historical ornaments of the Ukrainian Baroque era. Other sources of inspiration are compositional methods of arranging ornaments in traditional fabrics, as well as harmonious colorations.

Katya J. Chomitzky

My recent research, studying the use of traditional patterns for embroidery on non-traditional COVID-19 facemasks, was inspired by the resiliency of people. Seeing so many designers and local artisans within our global community create beautifully decorated masks as a way to encourage others to follow public health recommendations, I wanted to discuss how this shared ephemera related to the traditional meanings of specific patterns.

Josée Chartrand

Live performance is central to my career, but much of my research comes from studies on archived costumes in museum collections. Working with the costumes at Shumka is exciting because they are still worn, and I can actually see them in performance instead of having to imagine them as they would have been (for example) a hundred years ago. Sewing practice is another source of inspiration. You can learn so much about an object by studying its construction, or even reproducing it.

Ihor Perevertniuk

Ukrainian traditional rural culture is the source of my inspiration. It is the best to learn and be inspired by seeing wonderful ancient examples of our art.



PHOTO PROVIDED



PHOTO PROVIDED BY MYROSLAVA BOYKIV

DO YOU BELIEVE MODERN GLOBALIZED CULTURE HAS HAD A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE RETENTION OF TEXTILE TRADITIONS? WHAT CAN BE DONE TO PRESERVE TEXTILE TRADITIONS?

Oleksandra Telizhenko

The time in which we live is a time of globalization. At an insane pace it is sweeping away the past - along with its values and the bearers of these values. It will take a lot of effort, money, and “good political will” to change this process. Enlightenment and nature - their content and beauty - must become fashionable. We must scientifically prove the superiority of the truth of tradition over “pseudo”.

Nataliia Iashnikova

Globalization has a negative impact because it makes things the same, allowing for neither authenticity nor character. Creating a handmade product can preserve the individuality of things.

MaryAnn Baziuk

I do not believe we will lose the textile traditions or love of producing embroidered pieces. I believe it is a sense of identity of where our roots are and we want to stay connected in some manner with them.

Marija Chumarna

Undoubtedly, globalization has had negative impacts on the retention of certain traditions. However, these problems will not be

solved by feeding young people cliché slogans about tradition, but by showing them the beauty of it.

Larisa Sembaliuk Cheladyn

Globalization has been here since the beginning of time. As humans have expanded their territory it stands to reason that they will cross paths with others and collaborations and modifications to artistic expression will occur. I don't think globalization is negative here. I think it's that many are not willing to take the time to mentor and teach others what we know. In many cases only a few know how to do something, what can be done to preserve textile traditions? Keep teaching and instilling an appreciation for textile traditions. Make examples available via museums and art galleries. Ensure that people understand that it's not about being perfect, it's about doing something you love, if only for your own mental health.

Lada Tsymbala

Today, in the process of globalized mass production, it is nonsensical to deny the modernization of textile production. It is necessary to adapt folk traditions to the realities of modern replicated production. Only in the artistic centres of traditional textiles should traditional materials be preserved.

Katya J. Chomitzky

With the connections being strengthened between Ukraine and various diaspora communities of Ukrainians, I believe that transnational Ukrainian culture continues to strengthen our connection to traditional techniques and patterns of textile art. With culture as a living and growing entity, all community influences are valuable to the contribution of keeping culture and tradition alive. The best way to keep traditions alive is to continue to encourage active participation of the entire community through inclusivity and accessibility.

Josée Chartrand

It is tragic when textile traditions are lost, but we can preserve them by passing traditions down through family and community. I love seeing and participating in events, like the Threads that Connect series, that offer opportunities to engage new audiences in the art of textiles. They provide unique opportunities to see how traditions are being kept alive, and to experience how they have evolved.

Ihor Perevertniuk

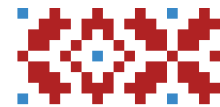
Yes, very few modern people are willing to give so many resources to create textiles. I think that one of the ways to improve the current situation would be to have the state support folk arts.



PHOTO BY MYROSLAVA OKSENIUK | MOTANKA DOLLS



TELL US ABOUT AN INTERESTING EXPERIENCE YOU HAD OR A CHALLENGE YOU FACED WHILE EXPLORING, STUDYING, OR CREATING UKRAINIAN TEXTILES.



Oleksandra Telizhenko

In the early 80's, our small ethnographic expedition was working in the remote villages of the Cherkasy region studying "white" embroidery. In the hinterland of Smilyansko-Kamyanska we came across traces of activity from the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries - two workrooms of artistic embroidery of Princess Yashvil in the village of Sunka, and Natalia Davydova in Verbiivtsi village. These were fantastic studios! In them professional artist-innovators collaborated with folk masters and created a symbiosis between new art and classic sophistication. This was the impetus for European modernism, but the fate of these artists was tragic. The revolutionary coup of 1917 physically destroyed and dispersed the artists and founders in exile, and killed the folk-masters with a famine. Their tradition should not be interrupted. Our mission is to continue their mission through Cherkasy Private Scientific and Creative Production Enterprise "ARTA", which I founded in 1993. ARTA is now the core brand of "TELIZHENKO fashion house" in which I still work.

MaryAnn Baziuk

I assisted a friend who was on the hunt for *plakhta* material for our dancers. Her journey took her to Turkey to find a master weaver who was interested in producing the materials for us. I spent portions of my Christmas morning sending pictures back and forth from Turkey and by the end of it had found the perfect *plakhta* material for our female dancers. My friend is a hero in the work she did!

Marija Chumarna

For the past three years I have been actively holding meetings in the border zone area of Eastern Ukraine where people value everything that gives them life. The most grateful audiences are the embroiderers. They believe so much in the protective power of embroidered towels and shirts that they embroider for our defenders who are on the front line. In *Zaporizhzhia*, women brought embroidered towels with a "tree of life" for the soldiers and asked me to write poems for them. The embroiderers from 'Berehynia' club in Kramatorsk, which was under occupation, impressed me a lot. For them embroidery is a prayer, a return to the roots of the family, and to the native language.

Larisa Sembaliuk Cheladyn

When I was working on my MA I interviewed 54 people across Canada who made or inherited embroidered Ukrainian pillows. One woman I interviewed - Alice Prociuk - grew up on a farm and came from a large family. Times were tough, and she was told that if she wanted anything pretty she would have to make it herself. As such, she taught herself embroidery. When I asked her where she got her patterns from she looked up at the sky and said, "I don't know, maybe from God." She worked not from a pattern but from the world



around her, drawing inspiration from nature and the work of others and then transforming it into something of her own. We always think of the artist when we reflect on paintings, but we don't do the same with textiles. Rather, we tend to get fixated on identifying what the embroidered symbols mean and where they come from, and forget that the piece is connected to the person who created it.

Lada Tsymbala

While researching sources of the interpretation of folk traditions in modern professional costume modelling, I discovered and traced how woven ornamental motifs characteristic in *Krolevets* towels can appear modern and fashionable in other techniques, including embroidery. It was also interesting to trace the impact of digitalization on the transformation of patterns of modern embroidery.

Katya J. Chomitzky

After having received several travel grants for the sake of studying preserved and modern Ukrainian embroidery in the first year of my Masters Degree, COVID-19 happened. With travel bans and museum closures, I was forced to change my thesis almost entirely. However, in April 2020 I began to see these embroidered masks everywhere and knew that I could continue studying what I loved, perhaps in a more meaningful way than initially intended.

Josée Chartrand

While studying the *vinoks* at Shumka, it was so hard not to look into every part of the costume! There is so much to be analyzed in those costumes, that, in many ways, I was able to delve deeper into the significance of these costumes by limiting my current research to the *vinok* alone.

FEATURE: INTERVIEW



IF THE PUBLIC WANTED TO FIND YOU ONLINE, WHERE COULD THEY FIND YOU?

Oleksandra Telizhenko

Facebook: oleksandra telizhenko

Website: telizhenko.com.ua

Marija Chumarna

Facebook: Marija Chumarna

Larisa Sembaliuk Cheladyn

Website: artbylarisa.com

Facebook: Larisa Sembaliuk Cheladyn and Artbylarisa

Twitter: @artbylarisa

Katya J. Chomitzky

Instagram: @KJChomitzky 

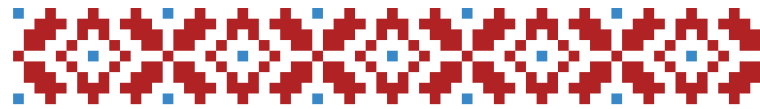


PHOTO PROVIDED BY NATALIJA IASHNIKOVA | NEEDLE FELTING



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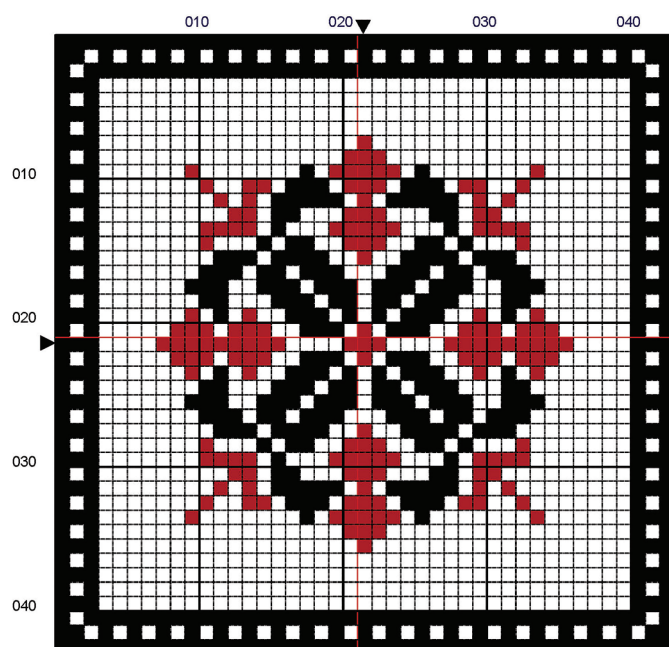


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So You Want To Learn To Embroider?

TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED

By Isabella Sheptak | Research by Joyce Howell



What type of thread should I use?

The most common type of thread used for embroidery is 6-strand cotton floss. DMC floss is the most readily available, but you may also run into brands such as Anchor and J&P Coats that are equally sufficient.


What type of fabric should I embroider on?

Ukrainian embroidery requires evenweave linen fabric. Cross-stitch is the exception, commonly using Aida cloth - a defined cotton fabric - instead. Look for 28 count evenweave or 14 count Aida.

What type of needle should I use?

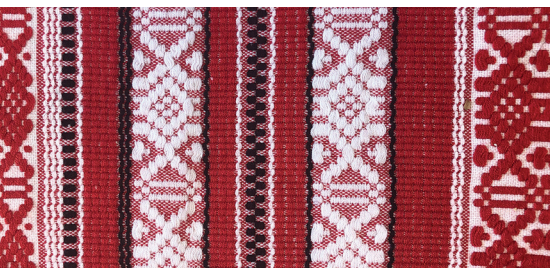
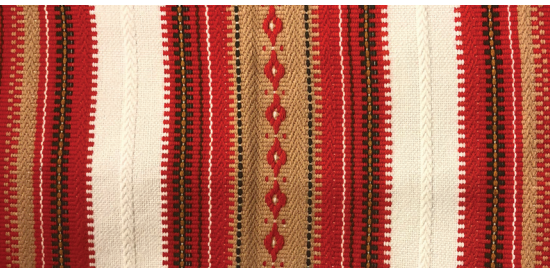
Tapestry needles are used for Ukrainian embroidery. They have an elongated eye and a dull point which allows the needle to go through the fabric smoothly. Look for a size 24 needle, with higher needle numbers indicating finer needles.

Where can I find patterns?

Look for patterns in Ukrainian embroidery books, Youtube videos, or online PDFs. ACUA holds embroidery workshops throughout the year if you would like to learn in-person. If you are looking for someplace to start, you could try your hand at this cross-stitch pattern! 

CARING FOR YOUR Traditional Textiles

By Isabella Sheptak | Instructions by Elizabeth Holinaty



Display dyed textiles away from direct light to minimize fading. When storing your textiles, keep them in a clean, cool, dry, dark area.


Identify the fibres that make up your textile. This information is vital for understanding how best to care for it. Do not attempt to clean an item unless you know it is safe to do so (if you are in doubt, seek advice from a conservator or museum).

Washing. Colourful and washable items should be washed and stored unironed, unstarched, and unblued. If you are washing an item with a detergent, it should be one with a neutral pH. Do not use soaps as they can cause just as much damage as the stains you are trying to remove.

Vacuuming. If an item cannot be cleaned in any other way, it should be vacuumed if possible. Check for any loose threads, beads, or other items that could be damaged by vacuuming, and then vacuum on a low setting. If the item is very fragile, place a piece of fiberglass screen on top.

Roll rather than fold old fabric. Folding puts strain on the fibres and may weaken them. Small items may be stored flat. Textiles should be removed from storage and aired periodically.

Insects. Keep a dried lavender sachet with your stored textiles. It is a natural insect repellent!

Hand-Dyed Textiles. Textiles which use hand-dyed fibres might bleed and should not be washed. You can test the colorfastness of the dyes by wetting a piece of white cloth with cold water and gently rubbing it over each different color of thread in your textile. If there is any color transfer onto the cloth, do not wash it. Contact a professional if you need help with stain removal. 



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