

ACUA VITAE

ALBERTA'S UKRAINIAN ARTS AND CULTURE MAGAZINE

Spring 2016 | Volume 22, Issue 1

Timeless Treasures

OLD WAYS IN A NEW WORLD:

Survival and Innovation of the Ukrainian Podushka in Canada

IVAAN KOTULSKY:

Forged in Freedom

THE SPIRITUAL WINDOW:

The Ancient Art of Writing Icons

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Publisher: ACUA, The Alberta
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Production Team: Robin McHugh,
Dominika Koziak, Stephanie
Sabadaska, Deborah Stasiuk

Associate Editor: Robin Carson

Contributors: Nancy Lyzaniwski,
Daria Poliaska, Rania AlSaadi,
David Makowsky, Lyrissa Sheptak,
Andriy Nahachewsky, Morgan
Taylor, Dominika Koziak, Damien
Zakordonski, Elaine Verchomin
Harasymiw

Art Direction: Kristin Gibson
www.kristingibson.ca

Advertising: info@acuarts.ca

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ACUAVITAE



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**Old Ways in a New World: Survival and Innovation of
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SHOSTAK SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT:

Stephania Romaniuk

by Nancy Lyzaniwski

The Alberta Council for the Ukrainian Arts is pleased to announce that Ms. Stephania Romaniuk is the recipient of the Peter and Geraldine Shostak Award for Emerging Musicians.

Ms. Romaniuk, a mezzo-soprano and composer, is currently a vocal apprentice at the Vocal Arts Institute of Alberta (VAIA) and a student in the advanced performance program at Mount Royal Conservatory in Calgary, Alberta. Her extensive education includes a Bachelor of Music degree in vocal performance (with highest honours) from Eastman School of Music in 2011 and summer programs at the Vancouver International Song Institute, Bel Canto Institute in Italy, and the OperaWorks Emerging Artist program in Los Angeles. She has sung throughout western Canada and

New York state as a lead and supporting artist in various concerts and musical productions. Notably, in the summer of 2014, Stephania was one of seventeen singers chosen internationally to attend the Franz-Schubert Institut in Baden bei Wien, Austria; and she was recently invited to the Banff Centre for the Performing Arts to premiere a new Canadian work for soprano and accordion.

Ms. Romaniuk plans to continue to perform art songs, concert works, her own compositions, and Ukrainian and new music in local and international venues, and for recordings and competitions. She likes to work with dedicated young musicians by serving as a vocal and musicology professor focusing on Ukrainian vocal repertoire at a Canadian university. She wishes to contribute to scholarly research in Ukrainian music, publishing and speaking on this topic while maintaining an active performance career. 



PHOTO: BARBARA ROMANIUK

The Shostak Award was established in 2015 through the generosity of Peter and Geraldine Shostak to support emerging Alberta musicians and visual artists in establishing their careers. The award for visual artists will not be allocated in 2015. Eligibility criteria are available at acuarts.ca. The deadline for applications is **June 30, 2016**.

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ACUA LECTURE SERIES:

Ukrainian Avant-Garde and Modernism

by Daria Polianska

Ukraine is a land of beauty, courage, nature, mystery, rich culture, deeply rooted traditions and historical glory. Yet, much is left unsaid about Ukraine's art, especially the art of the early twentieth century. For that reason, this spring I will be offering lectures on Ukrainian Avant-Garde and Modernist art for ACUA.

Living in Edmonton for over two years now, I have witnessed the tremendous work the Ukrainian community puts into preserving the Ukrainian traditions and folk art. That work is both fascinating and extremely important. However, because more attention could be drawn to Ukrainian modernist and avant-garde movements at the beginning of the twentieth century, ACUA's lecture series has been designed to provide an introduction to this page of Ukrainian cultural life. The lectures will discuss literary and artistic trends as well as ideological and social conditions which formed the movements.

While modernism in Ukraine (roughly 1890s-1920s) is discussed more often, Ukrainian Avant-Garde (about 1910s-1930s), represented mainly by Futurism, is often compared in Ukrainian scholarship to Russian Futurism and is ignored or perceived as a negative phenomenon. The first

major English-language monograph, *Ukrainian Futurism, 1914-1930: A Historical and Critical Study*, was written by Professor Oleh S. Ilnytskyj of the University of Alberta. I am honored to base my research and lectures on it. My goal is to emphasize the uniqueness of Futurism as well as its difference from any other artistic trends. I also strive to discuss the phenomenon of Ukrainian Futurism in its comparison with modernism, particularly – impressionistic and expressionistic styles in art.



UKRAINSKA KHATA, 1910, NO. 2
IMAGE FROM INTERNET ENCYCLOPEDIA OF UKRAINE

The first Ukrainian Futurist group Kvero appeared in 1913 created by Mykhail' Semenko. His statement in the manifesto "Alone" was extremely brave and set a new tone in the movement's development: "Where there is a cult, there is no art . . . I burn my *Kobzar*." Thus, the young artist criticized Taras Shevchenko as well as the primitivism of Ukrainian culture insisting instead on experimentation with artistic forms.

In its turn, Ukrainian Modernism is distinctive from European and Russian movements because of the sociopolitical and historical situation in the country. It is an umbrella term which implies various styles such as symbolism, impressionism and expressionism. On the one hand, the Modernists' (represented by the journal *Ukrains'ka Khata*) literary and aesthetic position was in favour of a bohemian image and life-style, the "cult of Beauty," the intense sophistication of art and emphasis on high culture. They were against playing with form, which was the key for the Futurists on the way to the "progress and modernity." On the other hand, the Futurists (the journal – *Kvero-futurism*) criticized Ukrainian art, represented, in their opinion, by narrowness, provincialism and superficiality. Thus, they followed a formalist approach and claimed novelty and experimentation, totally rejecting the Modernists' definition of art with its high value.

This is just an overview of the ACUA project. We aim at bridging past, future and present to acknowledge the versatility of Ukrainian art. ^{AV}

Daria Polianska is a PHD student at the University of Alberta. For more information about this lecture series go to acuarts.ca.

OUR UKRAINIAN CULTURAL REFLECTIONS ART CONTEST



by Rania AlSaadi

In celebration of Ukrainian Festival 2015, Alberta Education invited Alberta Kindergarten to Grade 12 students who are currently enrolled in a Ukrainian language and culture program to participate in Our Ukrainian Cultural Reflections Art Contest. The contest encouraged students to illustrate aspects of Ukrainian culture.

Students also explored several aspects of life in Ukraine through collaboration with students from Ukrainian partner schools. Student artwork was submitted by groups of three or four students. Contest entries were evaluated in four grade categories, including Kindergarten to Grade 3; Grades 4 to 6; Grades 7 to 9; and Grades 10 to 12.

Artwork from the top students is being featured in a mobile Ukrainian Festival exhibition that will be displayed in several locations both in Alberta and throughout Canada until June of 2016. The exhibition opened on January 15, 2016 at the Alberta Council for the Ukrainian Arts Gallery and Artisan Boutique in Edmonton. 

ABOVE FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: IMAGES OF THE WINNERS ARTWORK: SHOWCASED ARE THE WINNING ARTWORK SUBMISSIONS FROM EACH GRADE CATEGORY. **KINDERGARTEN - GRADE 3:** LUCAS FERGUSON, AVA GRYKULIAK, JAIME MCGALE, SAVANNAH STEPANICK | **GRADES 4 - 6:** TEEGAN FEDORUK, LESLIE KATERENCHUK, JESSE KERYLUK | **GRADES 7 - 9:** KATRINA DEWHURST, RACHAEL HANSEN, ALYSSA SHUKALEK, EMILY STODOLA | **GRADES 10 - 12:** ANDREW KOZAKEWICH, KIARRA MCMULLAN, AMANDA OSZUST, KURTIS PODLOWSKI

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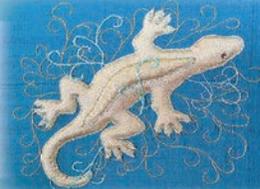
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plans are underway for a 3-Day Seminar at the Chateau Louis Conference Center September 16, 17 & 18. The Seminar will be conducted by 3 Canadian Knitting Instructors/Designers, who will each teach three one-day session. This seminar will not change other planned workshops and hopefully will become an annual event.

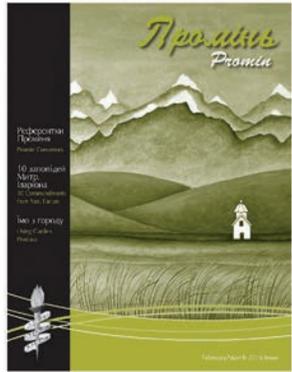
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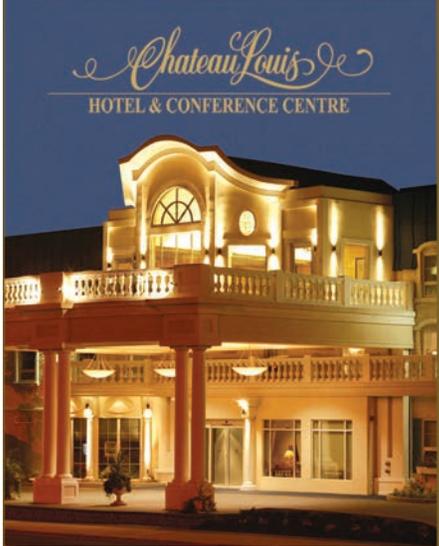
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WHERE WE CAME FROM

by David Makowsky

On Monday, May 23, *Where We Came From* opens as the newest feature exhibit at the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village.

Where We Came From will feature approximately fifty pieces of student artwork depicting family history of ordinary Alberta families of Ukrainian descent. It will touch on topics that range from a family's journey of immigration to Canada to family and cultural identity in a new land. This collection of artwork provides unique insight into children's perception of the world and, in this case, their understanding of the past. The judges were impressed not only with the artwork submitted by students, but also by the thoughtful descriptions that accompanied the images. In many cases, simple phrases captured the spirit and perseverance of immigrants who had left their old world behind to start a new life in Canada.

As Ukrainian communities across Canada commemorate the 125th anniversary of Ukrainian immigration to Canada in 2016, it is important for the youngest generation of Ukrainian-Albertans to seek a better understanding of and appreciation for their own family's history. This contest was created as a way to engage our community in sharing their stories with visitors to the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village. Through this contest, we give voice to one of our largest audiences — students — as they help to tell the story of where we came from.



For adult audiences, this artwork will examine complex stories of the past through the lens provided by children who are several generations removed from those ancestors who made this immigration journey.

Through this contest, we give voice to one of our largest audiences — students — as they help to tell the story of where we came from.

In the fall of 2015, Alberta students younger than eighteen were invited to share their family history through a piece of artwork. Submissions were grouped according to age, and the top submissions from each category were selected to form the foundation for this art exhibit. This approach of using an art contest was based on a successful model employed by International Education Services Branch of Alberta Education.

Where We Came From will be on display in the Visitor Centre from May 21 to September 5. In the summer of 2017, the Village will celebrate the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation by highlighting stories and experiences of all Alberta families. Submissions are now being accepted for the 2017 *Where We Came From* art contest. More information is available at www.ukrainianvillage.ca on the School Programs page. 

Operated by Alberta Culture and Tourism, the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village is located twenty-five minutes east of Edmonton on Highway 16. Starting May 21, it is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily until September 5. For more information, visit www.ukrainianvillage.ca or call 780-662-3640 (or 310-0000 for toll-free access in Alberta).

IVAAN KOTULSKY:

Forged in Freedom



by Lyrissa Sheptak

Ivaan Kotulsky was born in a Nazi labor camp amidst the pandemonium of World War II. Shortly after his birth, clutching her son to her heart under the bombs of the Allies, his mother secretly escaped the makeshift camp hospital and whispered, “I baptize you, Ivaan.” Fate obviously held something special for that baby boy, for he defied the odds and survived. Ivaan Kotulsky, internationally acclaimed artist and metalsmith, certainly came from a fearless, resilient tribe. The flames he sprang from would one day fuel his passion for his craft.

Ivaan spent toddlerhood as a refugee in Germany, but a family friend, Alex Tywoniuk, a blacksmith living in Smoky Lake, sponsored the Kotulskys to come to Canada. When the Kotulskys immigrated, they came to the little town—and young Ivaan took an immediate liking to it. He created strong friendships and frequented Tywoniuk’s blacksmith shop. But the Kotulsky’s time in Smoky Lake was short-lived because of Ivaan’s father’s frail health. Searching for milder climates, Toronto became their new home, and Cabbagetown district is where Ivaan spent the remainder of his youth, dreaming and adventuring.

As a teenager, Ivaan came to love photography. He studied photographic arts at Ryerson University, where, upon graduation, he was hired by Maclean Hunter Publishing, eventually becoming Chief Photographer. His talent earned him many awards and high-profile photo shoots.

On an assignment from *Chatelaine Magazine* in 1969, Ivaan was commissioned to cover a story in Western Canada. While on assignment, he took a detour to Smoky Lake to visit old friends—specifically Mr. Tywoniuk. Maybe it was the smell of coal smoke and beeswax lingering thick in the air. Perhaps it was the ‘clang’ of the hammer on the anvil, or the ‘whoosh’ of the giant bellows, but something in that smithy transfixed Ivaan. He had an epiphany that was the beginning of a “40-year love affair with molten metal.”

Ivaan’s transition into metalsmithing wasn’t smooth. Unlike today where help is only a click away, Ivaan’s only resources were books. He taught himself, and learned through trial-and-error.

After years of honing his skill, his preferred method of metalsmithing came to be the ancient Egyptian process of lost

Maybe it was the smell of coal smoke and beeswax lingering thick in the air. Perhaps it was the ‘clang’ of the hammer on the anvil, or the ‘whoosh’ of the giant bellows, but something in that smithy transfixed Ivaan. He had an epiphany that was the beginning of a “40-year love affair with molten metal.”

wax casting. He worked with precious and difficult metals like gold, silver, bronze, platinum, and steel, among others. His favorite was his own personal blend of steel and chrome which he liked to jokingly call, "Ukrainium."

*Kotulsky was fervent,
"solitary, and meditative."
"His jewellery was his art; and
when he was creating, nothing
else mattered — he was free.*

Ivaan was influenced by music and nature, and was true to his religious and cultural roots. Although his art didn't appear 'Ukrainian' in typical ways, his creative forces came from a man who knew who he was and what kind blood ran through his veins. Kotulsky was fervent, "solitary, and meditative. "His jewellery was his art; and when he was creating, nothing else mattered — he was free. Freedom of self was imperative for Ivaan, and it was expressed through his craft. Every piece he crafted told a story in its symbolism and expression; and because of that, he secured loyalty and clientele. His art didn't have 'an agenda', it just begged to be released. His work was honest. If people took the time to understand Ivaan the man, then they could easily understand and appreciate his art.

Ivaan had a fulfilling career and personal life. He married a remarkable woman, Eya, who was his partner in life, and later became partner in his art. As Ivaan aged, he became susceptible to heart attacks and strokes. Appreciating the success of his life, he felt compelled to return to its beginning and made a pilgrimage to Smoky Lake in 2001.

In later years, Ivaan suffered more strokes leaving him affected by paralysis.

His wife became an apprentice of sorts, learning many aspects of his craft. She became his hands, and they worked together until his time came, in 2008.

To preserve his legacy, and to satisfy popular demand, Eya continues to reproduce many of his pieces. She is able to do so because Ivaan left his designs and moulds in impeccable condition. At present, his jewellery is replicated, displayed and sold in their storefront studio, Atelier Ivaan, in Toronto. Who could know that Ivaan's journey toward freedom would leave such a legacy? 

ACUA has Atelier Ivaan's jewelry from Eya's private collection on display at the ACUA Gallery & Artisan Boutique, 9534 – 87 Street, Edmonton.



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ON THE COVER: FEATURE

OLD WAYS IN A NEW WORLD

SURVIVAL AND INNOVATION OF THE
UKRAINIAN PODUSHKA IN CANADA

by Lyrissa Sheptak

Deft hands, nimble fingers, clever patterns, hours of focus - one can appreciate the effort and expertise that goes into the creation of an embroidered Ukrainian pillow (*podushka*).

When Larisa Cheladyn looks at one, the artist in her appreciates the colours, designs, and the creative, meditative process. However, the Ukrainian-Canadian in her sees the immigrant's fearless quest for freedom, the tale of the new Canadian's respect of tradition in an ever-changing world, and the expression of 'self.'

Growing up a third generation Ukrainian-Canadian, Larisa was surrounded by what she describes as, "The trifecta of Ukrainian imagery – the *pysanky* (Easter egg), the *rushnyk* (ritual towel), and the

PILLOWS ON THE PEWS - UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX HOLY TRINITY CATHEDRAL
PHOTO BY: LARISA SEMBALIUK-CHELADYN

embroidered *podushka* (pillow).” Many of us have grown up the same way — some people noticing and understanding these items more easily than others; but did anyone notice them disappearing from our walls, sofas, and honored places? Larisa did.

She was “intrigued with the nebulous intersection that exists between the making of traditional folk art and the creation of new art”

Cheladyn began her Master’s thesis at the University of Alberta because she was “intrigued with the nebulous intersection that exists between the making of traditional folk art and

the creation of new art.” In the summer of 2015, her research took her across Canada in an effort to understand how immigrants and later generations navigated and adapted to their new environment, as well as what emerged when innovation through necessity was thrust upon them.

As part of her research for her “1000 Pillow Project,” as her thesis has come to be known, she boarded a train, thereby fulfilling a life-long dream to see her country in much the same manner as did her forefathers. The train took her all the way to the beginning — Pier 21 in Halifax. There, she stood on the same spot as did her great-grandfather when he walked off the ship into Canada those many years ago. By doing this, Larisa felt a resurgence of pride for not only the rich traditions, religion and culture that her ancestors fought so valiantly to preserve, but she felt pride in what Ukrainians have become since their arrival, 125 years ago. Not only have Ukrainians learned to survive in a new world, but they have learned to flourish and express themselves in new ways.

Larisa travelled from ocean to ocean, stopping every now and then to interview forty-four individuals and families who



KATIE AND ALICE IN SASKATOON | PHOTO BY: LARISA SEMBALIUK-CHELADYN



FOUR GENERATIONS OF PILLOWS | PHOTO BY: LARISA SEMBALIUK-CHELADYN

met with her to share their stories and podushkas. She examined pillows made as long ago as 1918 to as recently as 2015. Each podushka was made in Canada by Ukrainian-Canadian hands. Larisa discovered that, while never forgetting the history behind the traditional Ukrainian podushka, the immigrant, and later the Canadian citizen, became



ANNA MYKYTYN WITH HER PODUSHKY – TORONTO | PHOTO BY: LARISA SEMBALIUK-CHELADYN

innovative with supplies, patterns, and colour schemes.

What Cheladyn expected to find were pillows that followed generic, regional designs. What Larisa actually discovered was nothing generic at all. Rather, she discovered that each pillow carried individuality and uniqueness. Despite being influenced by other embroidered works or trends found in magazines like *Chatelaine* and *Nova Khata*, every person who embroidered a podushka left her own finger print on the pattern and colours they chose. These pillows became symbolic of the makers' identities, revealing who they were culturally, but more importantly, who they were as individuals. Each podushka became a “non-verbal expression for the lives they lived and their personal identity” — something that as an artist, Larisa can identify with. As a result, researching these podushkas gives insight into not only the people who created them,

but the political and economic flavor of the time too. She discovered this by examining the types and quality of supplies, as well as who influenced the embroidery style and patterns, such as friends, fashion magazines, and media.

So why do embroidered pillows feel like a thing of the past? Instead of being displayed, they're often packed away, or even end up in garage-sale bins or thrift

stores. Although her research isn't complete, Larisa has discovered a few interesting things. Early Ukrainian Immigrants in Canada were heavily discriminated against. In order to rise above this discrimination, many worked unceasingly

to assimilate to the standards of their new country. To overcome prejudices and become “accepted” members of society, traditions were oftentimes tucked away and replaced by new ones. Other influences can be attributed to changes in fashion and interior design. These fresher options came from decorating

trends found in magazines and other media. But one of the most common, and justified, reasons for the lack of pillows is simply to safeguard and protect the embroidery. Out of love and respect for the hands of the people who embroidered the items, many people have stored the pillows to prevent ruin.

On her trip across Canada, Larisa visited many museums, which contain wonderful collections of Ukrainian-Canadian history and culture. These museums house hundreds of thousands of pieces that are available as resources for projects like hers. But one thing that concerns Larisa is that, while museums are getting swamped with inventory that people want preserved, there is insufficient staff and funds for proper documentation. She hopes to bring attention to this matter and how lack of funds and trained personnel will affect the legacy of Ukrainian-Canadian textile history.

Larisa Cheladyn's “pillow talk” has created an open dialogue concerning not only our Ukrainian-Canadian past, but the future of our culture as well. Why does our baba's embroidered pillow symbolically seem to have become so heavy? Because the hands that created the podushkas long ago aren't really very different from the ones that hold them today.

On her cross-Canada trek, Larisa Cheladyn discovered how Ukrainian immigrants' quest for freedom was not only for the protection of their culture and religion, but it was also a quest for an environment in which to grow and thrive. In the new world, they finally had freedom to be who they were, culturally and individually — and the threads of their lives reflecting this freedom are woven into their podushkas. 



KULE FOLKLORE CENTRE: Mobilizing Knowledge

by Andriy Nahachewsky

A beautiful new exhibit is being created at the Kule Folklore Centre at the University of Alberta. Called *Making a New Home: Ukrainian Canadian Pioneer Experiences*, the ten-metre trilingual display tells stories of prairie settlers choosing their homesteads, building homes, and establishing communities. This project explores Ukrainian pioneer life from a new angle with historic images and text used to evoke empathy with the settlers' experiences: joys and sorrows, calm times and stress.

For these settlers, immigration and the first decades in Canada were full of surprises. Some information they had been given seemed unbelievable, but turned to be true such as giant ships, endless empty distances and as much free land as their old landlords once had! Many other reports, assumptions, and hopes ended up to prove false such as easy prosperity, freedom from exploitation and comfortable villages like those in the Old Country. These pioneers experienced many moments of discovery, but often, an all-to-familiar routine.

In this exhibit, many of the images are reproduced for the first time. They are assembled from the Kule Folklore Centre's own Bohdan Medwidsky Ukrainian Folklore Archives, UCAMA,

the UCHV research collection, and several other provincial and national institutions. The exhibit is partnered by the Ukrainian Pioneers' Association of Alberta and authored by Andriy Nahachewsky, Larisa Cheladyn, Maryna Chernyavska and Lynnien Pawluk. Larisa Cheladyn designed each panel to feature a huge watermark image to evoke the topic. Carefully selected photos, and texts like this one provide memorable impressions of pioneering days:

I got a job with a German twenty miles north of Gleichen. I worked there all summer and earned forty dollars in cash. The farmer also gave me an old mare and a cow. I can't tell you how I valued those animals!... When I came back to the homestead my wife got very excited. She thought that I must have stolen the animals from someone, and she began to scold me. I had to convince her that I earned them. My wife was surprised by the cow, and I was surprised by the new house she had built over the summer with our son. It was plastered with clay inside and out, and the roof was covered with bundles of slough grass that she cut down and carried half a mile from a lake... And that's how we slowly progressed in Canada.

— Kost Zahariychuk

(*Keywan, Greater than Kings, 1977, 53-4*)

This exhibit is designed to complement and continue the stories in an earlier display, *Journey to Canada*, which deals

with the voyage itself, and which has toured successfully since the 120th Anniversary of Ukrainian settlement in Canada.

The Kule Folklore Centre (KuFC) now has had seven exhibits, and has gained a strong national reputation with this kind of university-community collaboration. The Faculty of Arts at the University of Alberta has identified public engagement as one of its priority goals for the upcoming years, and the Kule Folklore Centre is a leader in that respect. The exhibit premieres at the Surrey Museum in British Columbia in February, and plans are for twenty more presentations across the country over two years to as many as 400,000 people. KuFC Director Andriy Nahachewsky beams, "We've been researching this subject for many years as we built our Medwidsky Archives, and this is an ideal time to bring it to the public — the 125th anniversary of Ukrainian settlement in Canada, and the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation." AV

Institutions interested in hosting the exhibit should contact lynnien.pawluk@ualberta.ca (780-492-6906)

PHOTOS: ABOVE LEFT: "RUTHENIAN HOME, THATCHED ROOF, LOG WALLS..." 1902 [N.L.]. COURTESY OF UCAMA. ABOVE RIGHT: ONE OF THE HISTORIC PHOTOS FROM THE EXHIBIT. MAGDALENA BOCKANESKY, SOUTH OF WHITFORD LAKE, STANDS WITH HER CHICKENS [N.D.]. COURTESY OF THE UKRAINIAN CANADIAN ARCHIVES AND MUSEUMS OF ALBERTA (UCAMA).

DANCE AROUND ALBERTA

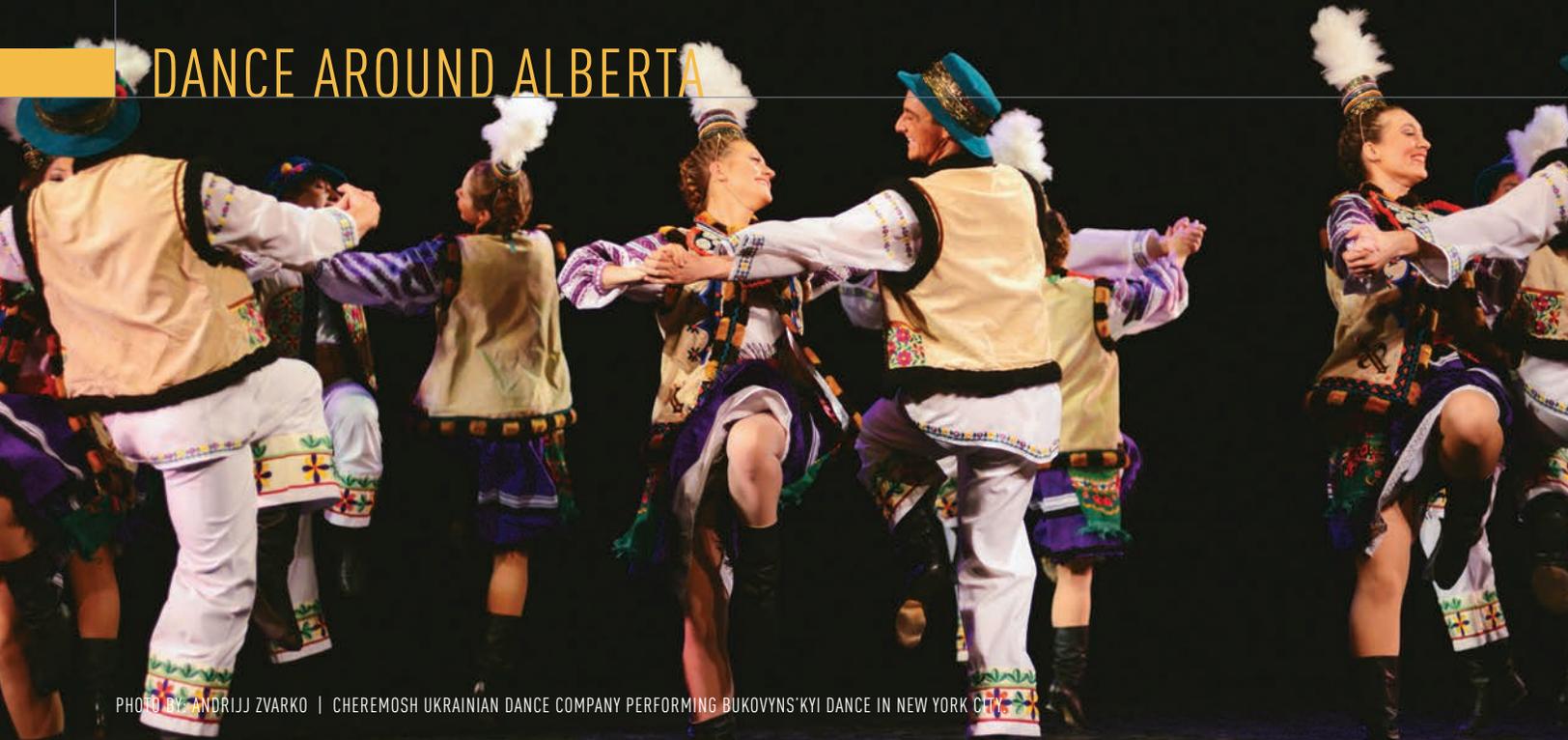


PHOTO BY: ANDRIJ ZVARKO | CHEREMOSH UKRAINIAN DANCE COMPANY PERFORMING BUKOVYNS'KYI DANCE IN NEW YORK CITY

Cheremosh Turns Heads in New York City Subways

ALBERTA & NEW YORK UKRAINIAN DANCE COMPANIES TEAM UP

by *Morgan Taylor*

New Yorkers, used to have seen pretty much everything on the subway, may have still been surprised last fall when thirty-two of Edmonton's Cheremosh dancers boarded the No. 1 train on Broadway — in traditional Ukrainian folk dance costume.

Heads turned and phone cameras emerged as the group navigated turnstiles, dressed in brightly-coloured and elaborately-embroidered attire. With the subway the most practical way to get around New York, Cheremosh dancers rode the rails on their way to Lincoln Square for a photo to commemorate their successful tour of New York and Pennsylvania.

Cheremosh Ukrainian Dance Company joined forces with New York City's Syzokryli Ukrainian Dance Ensemble for the Kaleidoscope of Ukrainian Dance. The history-making dance tour put more than seventy dancers on stage in Philadelphia and New York City this past October, and the companies will reunite on Canadian stages in June of 2016.

Cheremosh and Syzokryli have historic links going back decades, so it is only natural they have finally come together to wow audiences on both sides of the border.

Ukrainian dance has evolved in North America for the better part of a century since Vasyl Avramenko first toured the continent teaching it in the 1920s. His work brought him to Edmonton, where he appointed a young Chester Kuc as a leader of Ukrainian dance, who later founded Cheremosh in 1969. Avramenko's career took him to New York where Ukrainian dance students were looking to a new generation of instructors, such as Roma Pryma-Bohachevsky. The Ukrainian ballerina popularized Ukrainian folk dance

through camps and workshops, and she founded Syzokryli in 1978.

Kaleidoscope of Ukrainian Dance showcases the unique interpretations that have since developed on either side of the US border. Each ensemble explores contemporary ways to present traditional Ukrainian folk dance on stage.

Cheremosh began its fall, 2015, USA tour with a show in Rochester, New York, featuring performances from local Ukrainian dancers and musicians.

“We want to align ourselves with communities, like in Rochester, that strive to preserve the Ukrainian culture,” says Graham Currie, President of Cheremosh Ukrainian Dance Company. “It’s those connections that make the Ukrainian community thrive across the globe.”

Cheremosh met Syzokryli for their first performance together in a Philadelphia suburb called Glenside, a quaint community dense with Ukrainian culture and pride. The excitement built among dancers throughout the rehearsal — and then it was showtime! Backstage, the wings were crowded with eager eyes desperate for a glimpse of their new friends’ performance. With that, a sense of camaraderie and friendly competition ignited among dancers who were eager to put on a fabulous show for a full house and for the tapping toes backstage.

The joining Philadelphia and New York City shows brought crowds to their feet. “The audience’s reaction was the only variable I couldn’t plan for in advance,” said Emily Belke, Cheremosh dancer and tour coordinator. “But by the end of the show, one man in the front row was standing, cheering

By the end of the show, one man in the front row was standing, cheering at the top of his lungs, and waving a full-sized Ukrainian flag! It was the Ukrainian spirit and pride that united all Canadians and Americans in the theatre.”

In June, 2016, audiences in Edmonton and Saskatoon will experience the dynamic sampling of acrobatics, grace, and storytelling through Ukrainian dance, when Cheremosh and Syzokryli reunite for the Canadian leg of the tour. 

For tickets and information, visit www.kaleidoscopeofdance.com



CHEREMOSH UKRAINIAN DANCE COMPANY TRAVELING ON THE NEW YORK CITY SUBWAY. PHOTO BY: ZORYA BELANGER



CHEREMOSH UKRAINIAN DANCE COMPANY (EDMONTON) AND SYZOKRYLI UKRAINIAN DANCE ENSEMBLE (NEW YORK CITY) AFTER A PERFORMANCE IN NEW YORK CITY. | PHOTO BY: VICTORIA ERISTAVI



CHEREMOSH UKRAINIAN DANCE COMPANY PERFORMING KUBANS'KY VYSHAN'KY IN NEW YORK CITY. PHOTO BY: ANDRIJ ZVARKO



THE SPIRITUAL WINDOW

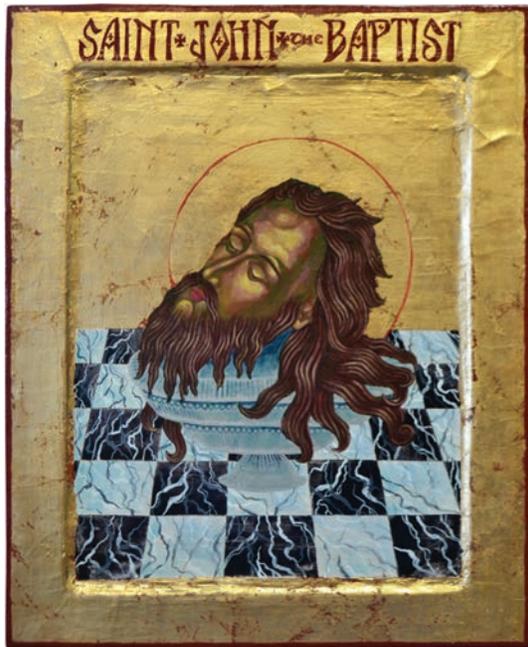
THE ANCIENT ART OF WRITING ICONS

by Dominika Koziak

Icons — whether you are religious or not, you know what they are. Icons are images in churches, small panels in homes, the card hanging over your rearview mirror. Over time, icons have become mass-produced images: photographed, photoshopped, printed, cut and pasted and shipped off to the masses. But is the spirituality of the icon lost somewhere along the way, somewhere in the filtered formula of production?

An icon is a symbol that forms a physical, visual representation of the idea of the spiritual. The icon takes viewers beyond the object of the painting itself and leads them from the physical to the spiritual realm. Iconography creates an anagogic relationship and connection between the image depicted and the viewer, creating a window directly between them and pointing to reality beyond the physical. Iconography demonstrates universal truths and values of religion, without being a product of era or a reflection of the artist's hand. This is accomplished through a specific and firm set of rules and processes. By taking out the artist's hand, vanity and pride are removed from the artist. The action of writing an icon is then made pure through the removal of self. Writing an icon is to praise the religion, not oneself.

In the Byzantine, or Orthodox styles, paintings seem “unnatural” because they represent higher states and qualities, spiritual beauty, and the dematerialization of the physical world. The flat, two-dimensional images give the effect of a vision appearing in front of the viewer. The anagogic mode is created by the distortion, the exaggeration and diminishing of features, which points to a reality beyond the physical. Examples of specific distortion can be found in facial features. In icons, most faces look the same, following



ICONS WRITTEN BY DOMINIKA KOZIAK | PHOTOS: PROVIDED BY THE ARTIST

the same proportions and stylization. Elongated noses are used to show gracefulness and calmness; large foreheads symbolize wisdom; mouths are closed in contemplation. Hands are used to hold objects representing the deeds and life of the person holding them, in praise to God, or as a sign of a blessing. Dematerialization can be seen through abstract representations of landscapes such as trees and mountains, as well as in cityscapes through flattening perspective and physical light.

The distortion of reality into the spiritual is also expressed through colour choice and the use of gold. Gold is extensively used as the illustration of spiritual light in our reality. Gold is also used as an active and alive material and gives the icon sensual presence. It is engaged through different interactions, such as light, breath, and

The distortion of reality into the spiritual is also expressed through colour choice and the use of gold.

movement. Photismos is the activation of the gold through candlelight, and this activation vivifies the gold and casts light,

allowing the role of light to evoke divine presence. Breath and movement animate the gold and the space between the viewer and the icon. This activated space and interaction engages the body fully in the spectacle of the icon's performance.

Proskynesis is the act of a prostration and kiss in front of the icon, while aspasmos is the connection of the eyes and lips with the icon. The symbolism and stylization are the basic idea of true iconography. That everything in the icon should be reminiscent of a realm different from the material world, and of men who have been regenerated into eternity is the basis of traditional iconography.

The relationship an icon gives the faithful of reminding us of and recalling our spirituality is called *hypomnesis*. Through this relationship, we are stirred to imitate the persons depicted. When we see the icons of a person, we recall their superior character and deeds. While we think on them, we think pure, sublime thoughts, and may experience higher feelings giving way to our existence on a higher plane of being while doing so. Through adoration of the holy personages, we, in turn, become more like those who are represented. By virtue of the icon, it focuses our distracted and dispersed souls onto the spiritual perfection of the divine. By steady devotion, we come to partake of higher spirituality.

Icons serve to awaken us, and remind us of our faith. Icons are essentially symbolic and lead our souls from the visible to the invisible, the material to the spiritual, the symbol and representation to the actual being. As viewers, we can personally engage with the personages in a non-abstract way. This is the virtue of the "window relationship" where there is a window directly between the imagined and reality. With the personage fully present on one side and the viewer present on the other, the window separates the spiritual and physical realms.

Can one truly experience all the possibilities and relationships icons can give us through mass produced images? Or does the symbolic and spiritual journey stem from a hand written icon, with the Holy Spirit guiding the iconographers hand? 

Dominika Koziak is an Edmonton based artist, who learned iconography at the Prosopon School of Iconology.



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. With your help we can finish the museum in 2016 in celebration of this significant event.

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.

We have enormous strength in numbers. The will of people have raised great monuments around the world: the pyramids of Egypt, the great cathedrals of Europe. The Empire State Building was completed in just 410 days.

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. Help make it happen in 2016.

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

For more information, contact UCAMA at (780) 420-0562



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PHOTO: PROVIDED

Sounding Triumphant:

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE RESURRECTIONAL PROJECT AND CONCERT SERIES

by Damein Zakordonski

For years, Fr. John Sembrat quietly worked to compose a large-scale divine liturgy for male voices. As he completed it, he approached members of the Axios Male Ensemble of Edmonton to determine whether or not they could help to bring his work to life.

With generous support from the Ukraine Millennium Foundation, his dream soon began to become a reality. In June 2011, under the direction of Oleh Mahlay from the Ukrainian Bandurist Chorus, a group of just over thirty recorded selections from Fr. Sembrat's opus.

In 2014, Fr. Sembrat and Axios turned to the artistic director and conductor of Pro Coro Canada, Michael Zaugg to help bring the whole composition to life. They willingly agreed and, in turn, began to assemble a fitting cast. Before long, the chorus had enlisted some of the best choral talent in Ukraine, as well as a host of professional and amateur singers from

Edmonton and the surrounding area as well as from across Canada.

In 2015, between June 19 and June 20, at St. Basil's Ukrainian Catholic Church in Edmonton, fifty-one male voices recorded the entire composition under the skillful direction of Maestro Zaugg.

The enthusiasm and camaraderie that developed between choristers, composer and conductor in this short time span elicited hope that somehow this unique cast could reassemble to perform this new composition for live audiences, as well as to perform the music for its intended purpose: the Resurrectional Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom.

Much like the original desire to record the liturgy, the resources to showcase the composition and the collaborative talents quickly materialized. As such, from March 30 to April 2, 2016, this combined choir will perform selections from Fr. Sembrat's composition, as well as works from other well-known Ukrainian

composers in a concert series in western Canada. It will also feature the release of the recording completed last June.

The cast features twelve members from renowned professional choirs in Ukraine: the Boyan Ensemble of Kyiv, the Chorus of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the National Philharmonic of Ukraine, the Homin Municipal Choir of Lviv and Vydubychi Church Choir of Kyiv. The ensemble of fifty-plus members will also include singers from Edmonton's Pro Coro Canada, the Ukrainian Bandurist Chorus of Detroit, the Axios Men's Ensemble, Hoosli Ukrainian Male Chorus of Winnipeg, and the Ukrainian Male Chorus of Edmonton.⁴⁰

This extraordinary concert series will mark the CD release of a Resurrectional Divine Liturgy composed by Fr. John Sembrat OSBM. For more information, including video and audio highlights, go to www.resurrectionalliturgy.com

UKRAINIAN MUSEUM OF CANADA SHOWCASES RECENT ACQUISITIONS

by Elaine Verchomin Harasymiw

It is fitting that donors who have made significant artifact donations to the Ukrainian Museum of Canada, Alberta Branch, be honored. These contributions ensure that the Museum remains a legacy for the future. The Ukrainian Museum of Canada is the first of its kind in Canada, having been established in 1936 with the Alberta Branch added in 1944. It holds as its mission the acquisition, preservation, study and interpretation of artifacts depicting Ukrainian culture and that culture's contribution to Canadian heritage.

On the evening of November 7, 2015, donors who contributed items to the Museum collection since 2009 were invited with the general public to view an exhibition of those recent artifacts and to celebrate their significance and beauty. Upwards of one hundred persons came to St. John's Cultural Centre to experience and learn about cultural ethnographic arts practised by Ukrainians who came to Canada and whose subsequent generations see the importance of preserving these gifts for future generations.

The exhibition featured a wide variety of items that included textiles, embroidery, pysanky, Ukrainian currency, religious artifacts, paintings, sculptures, and other articles reflecting the diversity of artifacts held in the collection. Each artifact tells a story — where, when and how it came to Canada, who its owners were, its use and other pertinent information. It is these narratives that speak for and give meaning to the article. As an embodiment of Ukrainian Canadian past and present, these artifacts constitute an historical record of Ukrainian life and who Ukrainians were: their achievements, culture and values, creativity and adaptability, and skills.

Although all artifacts on display are considered highlights in the Museum collection, some are particularly noteworthy. Among the many extraordinary artifacts on display were these:

- a 19th century Byzantine icon donated by Raina Yanda, an authentic example of icon painting from the Ternopil region;
- the Korchinsky family collection of embroidered shirts and other items of dress with photos of the parents wearing them;
- *kilims*, *rushnyky*, shirts and skirts from western, northern and central Ukraine, *keptari* (sheepskin vests), *korsetky* (women's vests), *pysanky*, ceramics, woodcarvings, and traditional toys and miniatures donated by the late Chester Kuc and Luba Kuc, major builders of the collection;
- a bronze sculpture, "Outdoor Oven" by John Weaver, donated by Dr. Orest Talpash; and
- embroidered vestments of the late Reverend Michael Yurkiwsky donated from the estate of the late Dobr. Stephania Yurkiwska.

The event was intended to prompt others who possess such artifacts to consider donating them to the Museum. By doing so, such artifacts become instruments that educate and teach about Ukrainian heritage. Too often, they are at risk of being discarded because their true value and significance is not recognized. Once lost, they are gone forever — along with the stories behind them.

The exhibit was expertly curated by Greg Borowetz with research assistance by Andrea Tarnawsky, and Larisa Sembaliuk Cheladyn as the display resource person. Elaine



PHOTOS: PROVIDED

V. Harasymiw, President, welcomed the guests, and Susanna Lynn on the *tsymbaly* (dulcimer) provided musical entertainment throughout the evening reception. Altogether, an atmosphere appropriate to the spirit of the event made the evening worthwhile for everyone, including donors as far away as Vancouver. Our donors bring life to the exhibit and give credence to the importance of preserving one's heritage and devoting resources to that end. AV

The Ukrainian Museum of Canada, Alberta Branch, is located at 10611 – 110th Avenue, Edmonton, telephone 780-441-1062, www.info@umcalberta.org.

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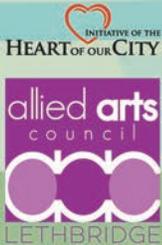
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