





# From the Peter and Doris Kule Chair in Ukrainian Community and International Development - Research



Dr. Jeff Stepnisky



Dr. Jeff Stepnisky. Drs. Peter and Doris Kule Chair in Ukrainian Community and International Development

## When did your interest in Ukraine begin and how did it become part of your body of research?

I suppose it started with my great-grandparents who were part of the first wave of Ukrainian immigrants who came to Canada and settled in Alberta (on my mother's side) and Manitoba (on my father's side) at the end of the 19th century. On both sides, my grandparents were business owners and leaders in their church communities. My grandfather in Manitoba was a barber and store owner in the town of Rosburn and was very proud of his Ukrainian identity. When I was a kid, he used to take me (and my brothers and sisters) on a drive to a small settlement just outside of Rosburn called Seech. I didn't realize it then, but the name given to the Cossack settlements and fortifications in Ukraine was Sich. Part of my personal interest in collective memory is to find out whether the Rosburn Seech was a reference to the Cossack Sich.

I went to a bilingual Ukrainian program during elementary school, but my scholarly interest in Ukraine started after I finished my master's degree. I had the opportunity to travel to and live in the Ukrainian city of Odesa. Through the Canadian Bureau of International Education, I was among a number of master's graduates from across Canada placed at Ukrainian institutions. I worked at the Ukrainian Academy for Public Administration for about five months, and that was a very exciting time for me.

After I finished a PhD in the United States, I came back to Canada and was hired at MacEwan, which has the Ukrainian Resource and Development Centre. In 2013, I connected with the centre during the Maidan revolution (oftentimes referred to as the Revolution of Dignity). I became part of a group of researchers connected through URDC to faculty members at the University of Alberta and universities in Ukraine.

When the revolutionaries of Maidan occupied central Kyiv, some of them called their occupation Sich. I think, but I'm not sure, that the Seech of Rosburn where my grandfather lived must also have been a way that settlers tried to remember their Ukrainian past in Canada.

## What are you hoping to accomplish during your time as Kule Chair?

Something that this position gives me is an opportunity to focus on my studies.

My research on collective memory will be the centrepiece of the next couple of years. This includes research on the Maidan revolution but also something on the collective memory of the Ukrainian community in Edmonton. I can't expect to learn this whole field and become an expert in that time, but the Kule Chair position provides me an opportunity to develop a really strong foundation.

I also want to bring the things I'm learning and studying about Ukrainian history to the classroom, particularly in a 400-level seminar I teach that is focused on the topic of collective memory.

What do you foresee to be the biggest challenges to this work?

The topic of memory is an extremely complex field of study, and there are a lot of delicate political and emotional issues. Memory is not something that just happens, it's not a snapshot of the past. If you study the sociology of collective memory, a big part of that is controversies over how a community is going to remember its past, and that can become quite contentious especially in Ukraine where I'm also an outsider. That's a challenge I anticipate, but I'm also doing my best to mitigate that.

I'm approaching this as not an expert but as somebody who wants to learn, and so far, I've been having some success. I went to a memory studies conference out of Warsaw, Poland.

In July, Dr. Jeffrey Stepnisky, associate professor in the Department of Sociology, began his three-year appointment as the Kule Chair in Ukrainian Community and International Development - Research.

During his time in this role, Dr. Stepnisky plans to continue his work on collective memory and the commemoration of the Maidan revolution.

Here, he shares a bit about his projects, upcoming challenges and how he hopes to make connections.



Through this online conference that was attended by a number of scholars out of Ukraine and Eastern Europe, I managed to make a number of connections by taking this path of being somebody who wants to learn rather than somebody who already knows.

I think you do the best scholarship when you're asking questions. When you know that you don't know, your questions come from a place of real curiosity.

**How might your research work involve students and faculty members?**

I've already hired a MacEwan sociology/political science student, Assia Rami, as a research assistant for the

Edmonton project, and Assia will be able to gain a bit of additional knowledge about sociology and community that can roll into the rest of her studies.

I would also like to help build a network of students and faculty members who are working on common research. MacEwan has a number of staff and faculty — including Larisa Hayduk, director of URDC, and Dr. Elizabeth Burgess-Pinto who is the Chair of International Health Research — who have already been building a research community around Ukrainian issues. I hope to contribute to that.

One of the reasons I've chosen to focus on collective memory is because

there is a lot of interest around that topic, so it might be possible to use this Kule Chair position in its Ukrainian focus to build connections with people who have research interests also in areas of collective memory and identity but may not be exclusively working in the area of Ukraine. We could have a dialogue between different approaches to subject matter like that.

The Kule Chair position isn't exclusively devoted to research. I'm hoping to get out there and meet people, to create connections and build something that will sustain itself after I leave.

## Health and Nursing Technology Fund



*Dr. Svitlana Danchak, Professor Mykhaylo Korda, Rector, Dr. Svitlana Yastremska of Ternopil National Medical University.*

The Health and Nursing Technology Fund was established to provide financial support to medical institutions in Ukraine and abroad. The fund was created through contributions from Drs. Peter and Doris Kule and matched by MacEwan University.

Through the endowment from this fund, the Faculty of Nursing upgrades nursing technology used for teaching on campus and in MacEwan nursing projects abroad. Long-time partner of the Ukrainian Resource and Development Centre (URDC) and MacEwan, Ternopil National Medical University in Ukraine was the first international partner to benefit from the fund.

In 2021, \$30,000 from this fund was used to support several medical institutions in Ukraine and the Canada-Ukraine initiatives below:

- Ternopil National Medical University received medical equipment including infusion pumps, fingertip pulse oximeters, a 12-channel ECG machine and intravenous injection simulator.
- Zaycev V.T. Institute of General and Urgent Surgery of National Academy of Medical Sciences in Kharkiv received a grant for the purchase of medical technology that supports heart surgeries for children.
- URDC financed the Ukrainian translation of J. David Creswell and John W. Creswell's pioneering text *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* which will be distributed to universities in Ukraine.



*Dr. Svitlana Yastremska and colleagues from Ternopil National Medical University.*





# INTERNATIONAL HEALTH

## From the Chair of International Health - Research

Dr. Elizabeth Burgess-Pinto



The ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has captured the attention, time, and energies of everyone; however, through this tumultuous moment, the connection with Ternopil National Medical University (TNMU) has been maintained remotely. Meetings facilitated by Larisa Hayduk of the Ukrainian Resource and Development Centre (URDC) are held every two weeks to discuss ongoing projects and future plans. Over the past year, several exciting projects have come to fruition.

In late summer 2021, Dr. Mykhaylo Korda, Rector of TNMU, invited Larisa Hayduk, Dr. Olenka Bilash and myself to collaborate on the planning committee of an online nursing conference being organized with nursing faculty in Siedlce, Poland. In consideration of the

short timeline, we met frequently to plan details and discuss the conference platform. The online conference, a collaboration between Collegium of Mazovia Higher School of Innovation, Siedlce, TNMU, URDC and the Ukrainian Language Education Centre (ULEC) – University of Alberta, was entitled, “A New Generation of Nurses: Achievements and innovations in Nursing.” It took place November 25 to 26, 2021 for three hours each day to accommodate the time difference between Edmonton, Siedlce and Ternopil.

A presentation was given by Dr. Narnaware from MacEwan University. Dr. Narnaware teaches anatomy and physiology and is interested in knowledge retention in undergraduate

nursing students. He would like to connect with his counterparts in Ukraine and Poland in order to collaborate on further research in this area.

Preparations are underway for the virtual spring course HLST 400: Global Health Perspectives. The course is organized to align with three essential components of planetary health: relationality, sustainability, and ways of knowing. The course is created in collaboration with TNMU faculty, and in the past year, monthly planning meetings were held via Zoom. In 2018 and 2019, Canadian students were able to visit Ukraine to interact face-to-face with TNMU students. For the past two years, the course has been evolving in an online format in which students



*HLST Global Health Perspectives Course with Ternopil National Medical University prior to the pandemic.*

from each institution are partnered to engage in dialogue about current and future global health issues, but also to develop a shared understanding of how people relate to each other and their environments.

Students compare Canadian and Ukrainian approaches to health and create a space for understanding different ways of knowing and how these enhance health and wellbeing. Each year, the primary focus of the course is different, and past topics have included the Sustainable Development Goals (2018), the global migration issue (2019), COVID 19 (2020) and the global issue of food and nutrition (2021).

Students work in teams to create projects related to the topics of interest. The Faculty of Nursing has restricted student travel abroad until Spring of

2023, so the course will be online this coming spring, with planning to start in December 2021.

Currently, Tatiana Kloster (the instructional designer for the 2021 course) and I are collaborating to write an article about the course. We have chosen a publication and will be consulting with TNMU faculty to create a collaborative paper.

We are in the process of cleaning the data obtained through our COVID-19 survey. A MacEwan statistician will provide guidance for data analysis, and we hope that a student can be hired to assist with this process. The team from Chile has been more active and we are hoping to launch the second survey in early Spring so that all three institutions will collect data concurrently. Preliminary results from the open-

ended questions in the survey were presented at the International Council of Nursing Congress in November 2021.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted several projects organized in collaboration between the Chair of International Health, URDC, and TNMU.

In January 2021, Dr. Bilash, Larisa Hayduk and I began monthly conversations with approximately 22 TNMU faculty members to discuss organizing a qualitative research workshop. The plan is to defer the workshop to an in-person format in June 2022.

We look forward to a brighter future where we can once again collaborate in person with our international colleagues.





*Drs. Elizabeth Burgess-Pinto and Yvone Shelast with Ukrainian colleagues.*

## MacEwan Students Join Ukrainian Students for Global Health Perspectives Course

Lauren McMullen

In 2021, students from Ternopil National Medical University (TNMU) and MacEwan University had the opportunity to learn together through an online interdisciplinary course, (HLST) 400: Global Health Perspectives.

Taught by faculty members from both universities, the course was focused on expanding students' worldviews on issues that affect the international health community, such as social justice, human rights, political agendas and more. At the end of the course, the students emerged with skills in examining global health development, analyzing emerging challenges in the health community, and applying this

knowledge to relevant populations in a global setting.

To create a well-rounded experience, the three-week course covered a variety of topics, including food security/insecurity, sovereignty and global health, special populations (such as groups that experience malnutrition, obesity, and diabetes), nutrition in pediatric populations and pregnant women, eating disorders, and the relationship between COVID-19 and food. Over the duration of the semester, students were able to take part in activities that connected them to policy makers, health-care workers, other students, faculty members and health-care agencies.

This focus on collaboration emphasized the importance of teamwork and professionalism in nursing. Overcoming the challenges of remote learning, students from Canada and Ukraine were partnered together for a group project to create a critique and timeline of an issue related to food security.

Spencer Beckman, a third-year nursing student from MacEwan, said the collaborative aspects of the course were a great learning experience. Beckman hopes to work with people from many different cultures after he graduates, and he says that the Global Health Perspectives course was important to him because it has allowed him to



work and interact with people from diverse cultures. The collaborative and interdisciplinary aspects of this course were fundamental to the way Beckman learns. The significance of hearing the perspectives of students overseas allowed him to learn how life in Ukraine and Canada differ — for example, the difference in local food availability between the two countries and how the lack of local and fresh food availability in Canada has led to unhealthy eating habits.

Going into the course, Beckman was interested in learning about food supply chains in times of disruption, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. He believes that studying these systems — their weaknesses and their strengths — will lead to improved processes in the future.

Now that he has completed the course, Beckman says that his main takeaway is that change is possible. After growing up under the narrative that “the world is breaking, and we want to change it, but there’s not a lot to do about it,” Beckman says that the Global Health Perspectives course was helpful in addressing the real, practical steps that can be taken to address harmful and unsustainable systems. “There are some issues where idleness is not an option, and so it brings a lot of hope to learn about what is being done, and how change is being made,” he says.

With a previous degree in teaching English, TNMU master’s student Diana Kollins chose to study public health because of her desire to help people live healthy lives. In the future, she would like to continue teaching English while also making a positive influence in the world by promoting healthy lifestyles and raising awareness of the public health issues we face today.

Kollins says that her main takeaway from the Global Health Perspectives course is the knowledge of the hardships we are currently facing with food quality and availability. Her time in North America as part of a student exchange program in 2015/16 opened her eyes to the differences between Western food availability and what she experiences at home in Ukraine. She was able to take the knowledge she gained from the course and share it with her friends and English students back home.

Kollins says the interdisciplinary and collaborative aspects of the course were incredible. “I really enjoyed the variety of topics discussed ... the topics and lectures delivered to us were amazing,” says Kollins, who was excited to experience the course alongside peers from Canada, noting that “sharing thoughts and working on a project together was a great experience.”

For Kollins, the Global Health Perspectives course is important to the field of health education. “Food itself is an integral part of being healthy and full of energy,” she says. “Food is one of the key concepts of how we can combat many existing diseases or at least help our body to be stronger in those fights.”

Oksana Chukur works as an assistant in the Department of Internal Medicine and is in the PhD programme at TNMU. Her dissertation focuses on the influence of thyroid pathology on the course of menopause in overweight women. She hopes to one day find ways to improve the quality of life of overweight patients with thyroid pathology through her research.

Her experience in the Global Health Perspectives course gave her the opportunity to study the culture of eating in Ukraine, which has led her to

consider the role of food in slowing the progression of many diseases. According to Chukur, the interdisciplinary nature of the course enhanced team skills and created a positive learning environment. Cross cultural collaboration and adopting a global perspective allowed Chukur and her peers to explore different ways of living, including gaining experience with different religions, ethnic groups, and languages. Considering the tumultuous nature of the pandemic, Chukur says the experience was wonderful. “It was a great pleasure to work with students from Canada.”

The course struck a chord with Chukur, who notes that it is very important to have a proper health education system in place because “health is an invaluable asset not only for the individual but also for society as a whole. Health is an important condition for a full and happy life.”

As the world begins to better understand the profound impacts of COVID-19, courses that engage in systems thinking and global perspectives are essential. Beckman posits that this global crisis, and all global crises, will be “followed by periods of great change,” and that educating people in global health perspectives creates professionals that are ready to support these times of change and employ well-educated and long-lasting solutions.

Likewise, Kollins and Chukur express gratitude to everyone that was involved in creating this course. Kollins is grateful that her university had a chance to “cooperate with such amazing and knowledgeable people who are sharing their knowledge and making a difference in this world.”



# MacEwan University Leads Qualitative Research Methods Professional Development Course for Ternopil National Medical University

Lauren McMullen



MacEwan University has partnered with Ternopil National Medical University (TNMU) in Ukraine to offer students and nursing faculty at TNMU the opportunity to partake in a new Qualitative Research Methods professional development course, led and taught by faculty and staff from MacEwan. The initiative was spearheaded by Dr. Olenka Bilash, president of the Ukrainian Foundation for College Education (UFCE), Dr. Elizabeth Burgess-Pinto, chair of International Health at MacEwan, and Larisa Hayduk, director of the Ukrainian Resource and Development Centre (URDC). The course launched in early 2021 and continued to evolve and adapt throughout the year and into 2022. The pandemic and travel bans meant that the course had to be adapted from the originally planned structure, but it has proven to be successful, nonetheless.

The course explores a multitude of concepts to help students develop a practical and comprehensive knowledge of qualitative research. Some of the topics include constructing effective research questions, the application of ethical principles, data collection tools, interview protocols, data analysis and more. Once participants have completed the course, they will have developed crucial skills for conducting meaningful and effective research in diverse medical fields. During the first component of the course, launched in 2021, participants attended monthly meetings, which were supplemented with additional readings. The hope is that once travel bans are lifted, representatives from MacEwan

will be able to fly to Ukraine to facilitate the planned in-person elements of the course, including gathering and analyzing data and writing research reports.


The course comes at an opportune time as nursing is currently an evolving profession in Ukraine. In fact, Dr. Burgess-Pinto will be working in partnership with MacEwan's Faculty of Nursing and faculty from TNMU to study the perception of nursing in Ukraine. Qualitative studies like this one are becoming more common in regions with evolving economies, and one of the goals of this course is to give researchers in Ukraine the tools they need to participate in and shape these global studies. In North America, qualitative research is common and well-practiced, but Dr. Burgess-Pinto emphasizes that this course is not about importing Western research methods into Ukraine. Rather, it strives to adapt qualitative methods to fit Ukrainian practices, perspectives, and worldviews.

Many of the participants began the course without experience in qualitative research methodologies, due to the dominant research paradigms in Ukraine that favour quantitative research. Many Soviet values and beliefs persist in Ukrainian society, but change is happening. Dr. Burgess-Pinto reports that even in the last five years, the changes in worldview in Ukraine have been profound.

The course also has the potential to influence the landscape of Ukrainian research in many ways. First, as Dr. Bilash points out, this course is

introducing a paradigm shift to the community and teaching researchers the importance of listening to diverse perspectives. Dr. Bilash states that “in some ways, we are just planting seeds,” and that exposing participants to ideas over the duration of a single course is a significant step in expanding worldviews well into the future. The course will also help researchers in Ukraine develop the tools they need to publish in Western journals and disseminate their findings globally.

Dr. Bilash and Dr. Burgess-Pinto feel fortunate to be able to build connections and relationships across borders. Dr. Burgess-Pinto noted that a significant impact of the course for herself has been the exchange of ideas and further strengthening the relationships between MacEwan and Ukrainian post-secondary institutions. She is also thrilled to contribute to the development of nursing in Ukraine — a country that both she and Dr. Bilash emphasize is full of hospitable, adaptable, intelligent, and talented people. She believes that there are good thinkers no matter where you are in the world; sometimes, they just need help getting their voices heard.

The relationship between MacEwan and TNMU has been an important catalyst in the success of this course. MacEwan has established a trusted presence in Ukraine through several projects that date back to the 1990s — many that were initiated in collaboration with URDC. This history of trust between the institutions was instrumental in the reception of these new ideas. 





Screenshot from the annual Interdisciplinary Dialogue Project featuring speakers Theo Harasymiw and Oksana Zhelisko.

## The Interdisciplinary Dialogue Project: Creative Responses to Crisis from artists Oksana Zhelisko and Theodora Harasymiw



Lauren McMullen

The Interdisciplinary Dialogue Project is an annual program that engages MacEwan professors, staff, students, and members of the public in an exploration of a wide range of social justice issues. The topic for the 2021 Interdisciplinary Dialogue was COVID-19's Calls to Reimagine Relations. The project involved three learning forums on the chosen topic. The third and final forum, "Creative Responses to Crisis - Innovating, Experimenting, Imagining", occurred at the end of March and featured five speakers ranging from actors to biochemists. Among the speakers were Oksana Zhelisko and Theodora Harasymiw – two Ukrainian Canadian artists who offered their perspectives on the connections between crisis and creation.

Oksana Zhelisko, who was trained in Eastern Europe before her art career launched in Lviv, Ukraine, studied at the Ivan Trush College of Decorative Arts. Her first solo exhibition was held at the Lviv University of Ivan Franko in 2001. Zhelisko specializes in paintings and murals, in which she incorporates a variety of genres, such as portraiture, still life and landscape.

The reality of the pandemic became real for Zhelisko when she was preparing to open an art show for 500 viewers that featured 50 artists. The night was to be a bustling affair complete with wine and cheese, but it all came to a halt when COVID-19 began to spread around the world. Like many, Zhelisko found herself in a new world without income, travel or her family in Ukraine, but she stressed that she never let the crisis bring her down. Rather, she found ways to transform crisis into a source of creativity. According to Zhelisko, the strongest pieces of art come from moments of imbalance: "When we paint, the outside world doesn't exist at all." The upheaval of 2020-21 allowed her to connect and share ideas with other artists, and she was able to bring into fruition her long-time goal of launching online art classes.

During the forum, Zhelisko paused to emphasize that art is essential for our minds, our bodies, and our creativity. The work that she created during the pandemic was not a reflection of the darkness surrounding isolation, but a positive and bright reflection on the internal balance she found. The

pandemic has shaped her perspective on crises by allowing her to find her truest friends, embrace a good aura and reject negativity, all while developing as an artist through providing mentorship and participating in online workshops. Oksana concluded her thoughts by sharing a quarantine painting with the forum viewers: a canvas of a woman enjoying a simple cup of coffee.


If you've been to the Royal Alex Hospital, the Glenrose Hospital, the Downtown Italian Centre, the Victoria School for the Arts, or many other iconic Edmonton locations, you may have seen some of Theodora Harasymiw's whimsical works. Harasymiw holds a degree in Fine Arts from the University of Alberta. With a focus in painting and murals, Harasymiw has drawn inspiration from the works of Antoni Gaudi in Spain, the textiles and patterns of Ukraine and the colours of Latin America.

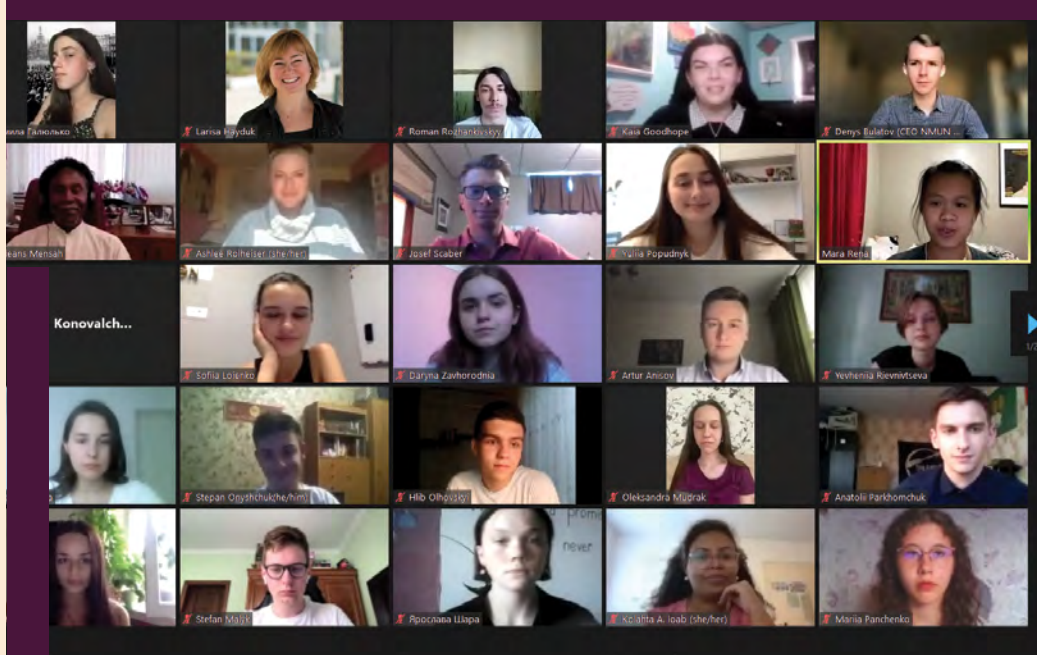
Harasymiw is an avid traveller, and while the pandemic disrupted her routine, it was not an entirely unwelcome change. Like many other artists—professionals and amateurs



alike—the pandemic became a time to slow down and experience the freedom of creation. The COVID-19 crisis gave Harasymiw time to recharge with her family before returning to her studio space, where she found that she could act as a beacon for those around her. Through collaboration, Harasymiw's studio space was transformed into a collective that not only gave otherwise scrambling artists a steady (socially distant) place to work, but also provided a small storefront for 25 local artists to sell their work. In this crisis, Harasymiw found strength through supporting others—a strength that has spread far and wide. Since the start of the pandemic, Harasymiw has been contacted by artists from across Canada looking to find a way to connect to their creativity.

Despite the turbulence of the past year(s), Harasymiw has found solace in creativity. Creative work is often unpredictable, even in non-pandemic times, and requires investing trust in yourself and your work. We must learn to continue through the unknown and find projects that reinvent us, Harasymiw reminds us, along with a few final words to remember: “We come alive with our passions.”

The third and final forum of 2021's Interdisciplinary Dialogue Project was a great success. It was a wonderful opportunity to sit down and reflect on the past year through the eyes of two incredible Ukrainian Canadian artists who remind us that responses to crisis and uncertainty look different for everyone, and how we can find moments of connection within chaos. 



*Screenshot featuring one of the virtual conferences.*

## Canada Ukraine Model United Nations Project



### PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Canada Ukraine Model United Nations (UN) Project was launched in 2019 with the vision of developing a community of students from Canada and Ukraine who are interested and engaged in global issues and in promoting respect for the values of democratic principles and fundamental human rights. Students from the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (NaUKMA), Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU) and MacEwan University have been collaborating, creating, teaching, and learning together through in-person and virtual meetings, training, and conference participation.

The students' next goal is joint participation at the National Model United Nations – New York conference in March 2022, and in two mini conferences leading up to it. MacEwan alumni (and former members of the UN Club) continue to take an active role in the initiative by providing training and presentations to the Ukrainian partners. Both UCU and NaUKMA UN Clubs, created only last year, boast active and engaged participants and ongoing programming.

Notably, a faculty learning community was built as a result of this initiative. Dr. Chaldeans Mensah, Dr. Dmytro Sherengovsky, Dr. Dmytro Ishchenko, Kateryna Podhorska, and Larisa Hayduk presented on the success of the Canada Ukraine Model UN Project at the Canadian Bureau for International Education annual conference. Professors from three universities – Dr. Halyna Protsyk (UCU), Dr. Galyna Solovei (NaUKMA) and Dr. Chaldeans Mensah (MacEwan) – have co-developed and will co-teach a Collaborative Online International Learning course (COIL) focused on the principles of the National Model United Nations (NMUN) in Winter 2022. This comes on the heels of the development of the International Organizations course taught twice by Dr. Protsyk with support from MacEwan. The participants are grateful for financial support from several community organizations in Alberta and generous support from the NMUN Board to see these projects to completion.

The Canada Ukraine Model UN represents an outstanding achievement and is proud of the long-lasting, productive, and mutually beneficial relationships that have been formed with its Ukrainian counterparts at NaUKMA and UCU.





## LOOKING BACK AT 2021

**Sarah Jackson**

What began as a small project between the MacEwan United Nations (UN) Club and faculty from MacEwan University, National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (NaUKMA) and Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU) has blossomed into a long-standing, collaborative initiative.

The Canada Ukraine Model United Nations (UN) Project is now composed of UN clubs from all three universities. Through summer Schools, numerous video conferences, and training sessions, ongoing communications, joint international conference participation and the co-development of online courses, the project has made lasting memories for the UCU, NaUKMA, and MacEwan students and faculty members.

The original goal of the Canada Ukraine Model UN project was to promote a unified understanding of the core functions of the United Nations by exploring various topics from resolution writing to United Nations committee dynamics. The program has greatly advanced club members' skills in the art of foreign diplomacy and relations, critical thinking, oral communication, speech writing, debate, and negotiation tactics.

After an inaugural Canada Ukraine Model UN summer school in Kyiv in 2019 and a virtual summer school in July 2020, Canadian and Ukrainian students were given the opportunity to unite (virtually) at the 2021 National Model United Nations – New York conference.

As the respective delegations from Brunei and Vietnam, students from MacEwan University, UCU and NaUKMA put their knowledge gained over the previous year to the test. Their hard work paid off as the Ukrainian delegation won a Distinguished Delegation Award and MacEwan won an Outstanding Delegation Award.

"This is an impressive achievement by the delegates in navigating the world of diplomacy involving hundreds of participants from universities around the world," comments Dr. Chaldeans Mensah, associate professor at MacEwan University. "This success is testament to the quality of the academic programs at your universities. Our teamwork and collaboration contributed to this success."

Michael Eaton, executive director of NMUM, stated that "The National Model United Nations is grateful to MacEwan

NMUN UCU & NMUN NaUKMA clubs.

University in Canada and its Ukrainian Resource and Development Centre for their enthusiasm for the exchange that has linked students on campus with peers in Ukraine. Throughout its 90-plus years of history, NMUN has been committed to providing access to a United Nations educational experience to students from around the world. The students in the Canada Ukraine Model UN Project are part of almost 7,000 students from six continents we typically serve annually through programs in New York City, Washington, DC, and a rotating non-US site."

Once the 2021 NMUN conference was over, the Canadian and Ukrainian students got to work planning their third summer school, which took place virtually in July 2021.

"The Model UN summer school hosted by MacEwan and our Ukrainian partners was an incredibly supportive process from all parties involved," says Kaia Goodhope, current secretary-general of the MacEwan UN Club. "A comprehensive lecture series followed by a simulated conference experience made it possible for students to immediately practice the skills they learned in the condensed three-day period. This past year was the third year in a row that MacEwan delegates facilitated this international event, and we look forward to how it further evolves."

The Canada-Ukraine summer school attracted over 50 attendees consisting of faculty, students and guest speakers from Ukraine, Canada, and Germany.

"The Canada Ukraine summer school was very helpful to us in learning project management skills as well as gaining a new experience in tandem with foreign students and our colleagues from Germany and Canada," says Olha Tolmachova from UCU. "The most interesting thing for me was the lessons about executive team management and practical knowledge to revise position papers and resolutions writing. It was very helpful."

Both Canadian and Ukrainian students are busy preparing for another year of conferences and hope to be able to meet in person sometime in the near future. Ideally, they will run the next installment of the Canada Ukraine NMUN summer school in Ukraine in summer 2022.



The Indigenous Ukrainian Relationship Building Initiative (IURBI) logo was created by Sharon Rose Kootenay (Cherweniuk), artist of Metis and Ukrainian ancestry.

# INDIGENOUS-UKRAINIAN RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

## Logo Design and Process

**Sharon Rose Kootenay**

As a beadworker of botanical design, my daily inspiration begins with a walk through the bush, or time spent in the garden. Being amongst nature is essential to my practice, helping to create a sense of peace and well-being, and the occasion to explore and examine.

I have both Indigenous and Ukrainian ancestry, so the prospect of creating a logo for the IURBI initiative was an opportunity to visually articulate the deep love and gratitude I feel towards the women of my extended family, both past and present, and the seasons we collectively experience.

Like the abundant wild roses that grew on Flora's riverlot along the Peace River and the tiny poppy seeds Domka brought along on her epic journey from Bukovina to the

new country, the flowers of the logo represent fortitude, hope and faith, and the cycles and passages of their lives. The berries signify the commonalities of my grandmothers – their kindness and generosity of spirit, and their steadfast perseverance, achieved with an open and welcoming heart.

The process of creating the IURBI logo mirrors the initial design stages of my floral beadwork. For both, I utilize folded and cut paper pieces, sized and positioned until I am pleased with the placement and design. When the design is complete, the coloured petals, buds and berries become the templates that I would use to trace the flowers onto a beading substrate.

For this project, I would like to extend my gratitude to my collaborator, artist Jason Symington, who expertly rendered the design into a digital format.

### Artist Biography

A lifelong maker of textile arts, Sharon Rose Kootenay finds her inspiration in the forests and prairie landscapes she calls home.

Through honouring tradition and expressing a deep connection to the land, Sharon's colour-filled pieces tell a story of cultural identity and pride. Utilizing beads, thread

and needle, she creates fine craft that illustrates regional history, significant family events and personal perspectives.

A senior member of the Alberta Craft Council, Sharon has participated in numerous exhibitions and cultural projects throughout Canada. She maintains a home in Edmonton, as well as a studio and gallery in the historic Village of Vilna, Alberta.





## “The Stories of These Lands: Recovering Indigenous-Ukrainian Narratives in East Central Alberta”



Hailey Kennedy



Leah Hrycun

“The Stories of These Lands: Recovering Indigenous-Ukrainian Narratives in East Central Alberta” is the title of University of Alberta PhD student Leah Hrycun’s ongoing research on the historic and contemporary relationship between Ukrainian Canadians and Indigenous people in Canada. Hrycun, a member of the east central Ukrainian community, speaks of her upbringing and uses it as a lens through which to understand the erasure and missing narratives between Indigenous-Ukrainian relationships. She aims to open a dialogue between Ukrainian Canadians and Indigenous peoples, in a gesture of reconciliation.

On January 28, 2021, Hrycun presented a virtual lecture that introduced her research to the broader public, attracting an audience of over 500 people. The discussion launched *The Indigenous-Ukrainian Relationship Building Initiative*, a collaborative community-engaged endeavour between URDC (MacEwan) and the Kule Folklore Centre (University of Alberta). The initiative’s aim is to advance knowledge about, explore and reflect upon our Ukrainian Canadian history and our shared Indigenous-Ukrainian pasts, to build a better future together for the well-being of all.

Hrycun’s research focuses on the deconstruction of the ways Ukrainian settlers became a part of Canadian nation building project and reasons of the erasure of Indigenous histories. Her research methodology centres on uncovering Indigenous-Ukrainian narratives and critically considers the relationship Ukrainian settlers had with Indigenous communities in the past, and how it can be reflected within the present. Hrycun is interviewing members of both Indigenous and Ukrainian Canadian communities in an attempt to highlight the erasure of Indigenous People from Ukrainian Canadian histories. Part of her research involves understanding and exposing instances of “invisible structures of whiteness” and of being critical of racialized tendencies due to colonialism.

Hrycun asserts that we must recognize and be aware that racism exists between Ukrainian communities

and Indigenous peoples. Understanding how small nuances can be perceived and used to assert these racialized beliefs onto Indigenous peoples is important as this is the first step to changing these ideologies. Hrycun plans to create a safe space to educate others of the shared histories of Ukrainian and Indigenous communities within eastern central Alberta by creating a travelling exhibition, which will highlight the interviews as a unique way to educate the public. To help or contribute to the research, Hrycun suggests that we must keep each other accountable in instances in which Indigenous people may be treated unfairly, and to attempt to listen and understand others’ stories, even if they may deviate from our own beliefs or initial impressions surrounding the past.

Hrycun’s research is inspiring. She recognizes that there are gaps in narratives and histories and encourages us to critically consider who writes the past. In understanding this, we can acknowledge and promote personal narratives that may be used to encourage reconciliation between Indigenous and Ukrainian communities, reassert the presence of Indigenous people in Ukrainian Canadian histories, and criticize colonial tendencies in Canadian society. Ultimately, Hrycun’s research may have the potential to not only change Indigenous-Canadian relations for the better, but also shed light on past histories and narratives that have been either ignored or forgotten.



# Indigenous-Ukrainian Relationship Building Initiative: “Art Collaborations as Creative Care”



Lauren McMullen

Over the past year, the Ukrainian Resource and Development Centre has worked in collaboration with the Kule Folklore Centre at the University of Alberta on the [Indigenous Ukrainian Relationship Building Initiative](#) that includes public lectures, presentations, discussions, and experiential learning activities.

In April of 2021, the second event of the series focused on the arts. Moderator Chelsea Vowel, Métis writer and educator, was joined by David Garneau and Sandra Semchuk for an in-depth discussion on the collaborative works each have done as artists.

David Garneau is a Métis artist who currently works as a professor in the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Saskatchewan. Garneau is an accomplished creative who recently curated the exhibition *Kahwatsiretatie: The Contemporary Native Art Biennial* (Montreal, 2020), and co-curated the exhibition *Transformer: Native Art in Light and Sound* (New York, 2017) with Kathleen Ash Milby, to name a few.

During the event, Garneau explained and ruminated on his latest project involving the Tawatinâ Bridge, which crosses over the North Saskatchewan River – a river that Garneau notes represented a “space in between” for Indigenous groups in the past. Unable to be claimed by cultivation or other means, the river was, and still is, a powerful symbol of neutrality. The Tawatinâ Bridge art project involved Garneau and a team of about 20 other artists working in collaboration. Garneau also consulted with Métis and First Nation Elders and Knowledge Keepers to create 400 paintings to be hung along the bottom railings of the bridge.

Garneau acknowledged the impact that many Elders and Knowledge Keepers had on the project and emphasized, in particular, Jerry Saddleback’s instrumental contribution

and help. Saddleback’s stories and teachings inspired Garneau’s paintings by unfolding narratives for him to capture with his art. The paintings (that were installed in the summer of 2021) include representations of cranes, jackfish, hunting knives, a treaty medal, messages hidden in morse code and much more. It was crucial, Garneau noted, to keep the aspect of Indigenous oral tradition alive in his work, lest the art become mere pieces of popular culture.

Although the project was a collaboration, Garneau also reflected on the more subtle collaborations that influenced the project and inspired the creation of artwork, such as conversations about dreams and the stories he grew up hearing that shaped how he perceives his place on the land today.

Sandra Semchuk is a second generation Ukrainian Canadian scholar and photographer who was born in Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan. Her work focuses on the relationships between the self, family and community. During the event, Semchuk shared the story of a project she worked on in collaboration with her late husband, Rock Cree orator, poet and artist James Nicholas, and her late father, Martin Semchuk.

The project, titled *understoryoverstory*, is composed of photographs of a road near Beauval, Saskatchewan superimposed with the words of her family. Semchuk and Nicholas were on a trip together when the road first caught their attention after a talk with an old friend in a nearby gas station. The road was unused and reclaimed by vegetation, but the pair captured the quiet beauty of the area through a series of photographs taken by Semchuk and later edited together. Nicholas wrote the text that accompanies the photographs. Semchuk shared his words with the audience,

noting how he had a way with words that encouraged people to meditate on difficult issues: “Listen, acknowledge / that we exist / we are not shadows / of shadow cultures / we have / inherent rights / to the land / *ithin-eh-wuk* / we place ourselves / at the center.”

When reflecting on their collaborative work and its role in connecting the self to others and the natural world, both Garneau and Semchuk agreed that one universal experience is layered narratives and change. Garneau, who described his explorations of the land he grew up on as “a constant unfolding,” noted how each specific landscape that we inhabit is continually redefined by the connections we share with others in that space. For example, Garneau grew up exploring the Edmonton River Valley, hearing stories from his own father, and later gained new perspectives from the stories he received from Elders.

Semchuk described her own experience with collaboration as a “multiplicity of narratives in the land” and relayed how she views “land as the most profound of all teachers.” The landscape that she grew up in defines her identity, and she emphasized the importance of the relationships that we all share that run deeper than humanity – the texture of grass, the movement of clouds, the croak of the frog. She also noted that she finds it helpful to remain present in the current moment, always being aware of the world around us and what it has to say. Fitting to the theme of the night’s event, Semchuk emphasized the importance of the Earth in our narratives: “We come from the land, and we go back to the land.”

When two distinct cultures (in this case, Ukrainian culture, and Indigenous culture) come together, there is always common ground to be found and relationships to be built.

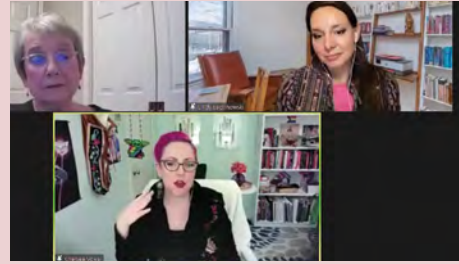




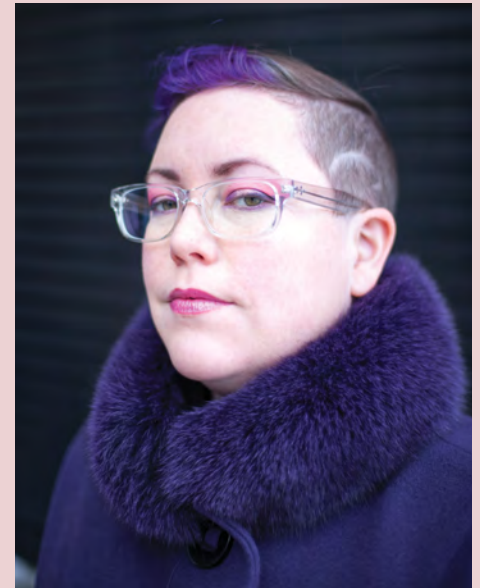
Myrna Kostash. Ukrainian Canadian writer.  
Photo by Markian Lozowchuk.



Elder Francis Whiskeyjack. Member of Saddle Lake Cree Nation and MacEwan University's kihêw waciston Indigenous Centre. Opening the panel discussions for the series “askîy / земля / the land”.



Screen shot of Chelsea Vowel, Myrna Kostash, and Lindy Ledohowski during the panel discussion “otâkosihk mîna anohc: вчора і сьогодні: Yesterday and Today On These Lands”.



Chelsea Vowel. Métis public intellectual and writer.

## Indigenous Ukrainian Relationship Building Initiative: “askîy / земля / the land”



Lauren McMullen

The [Indigenous Ukrainian Relationship Building Initiative](#)—a collaboration between the Ukrainian Resource and Development Centre (URDC) at MacEwan University and the Kule Folklore Centre (KuFC) at the University of Alberta—hosted a series of panel discussions on the topic of land. The series entitled “askîy / земля / the land” focused on the past, present, and future of land for both Indigenous and Ukrainian communities and the hard conversations that must happen to understand the importance of land in all of our lives.

Hosted by Chelsea Vowel, Métis, public intellectual, writer with Ukrainian heritage through her paternal grandmother, the event explored pre-colonial traditional Indigenous land-based practices. Panelists included Dr. Elder Francis Whiskeyjack, member of Saddle Lake Cree Nation and MacEwan University's kihêw waciston Indigenous Centre; Chief Greg Desjarlais, member of Frog Lake First Nation; Dr. John-

Paul Himka, professor emeritus in the Department of History, Classics and Religion at the University of Alberta; and Matt Hilterman, Métis historical researcher, interpreter, and artisan.

Dr. Himka gave the audience an overview of traditional land practices in Galicia and Bukovyna—the regions of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire from which many Ukrainians immigrated in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He stated that Ukrainians' relationship to their land was special; they had an intimate knowledge of the soil where they lived, and people knew the nutrient profile of their land so well that they knew the best areas to plant any crop. Simultaneously farmed land there often produced a much smaller yield than that in neighbouring regions (such as Austria) due to primitive practices and subpar working tools. It wasn't until immigration occurred that many farmers began working with metal tools.

Elder Francis Whiskeyjack shared

with the audience his memories and knowledge of Indigenous land-based practices. Reflecting on personal and shared histories, he noted that many Indigenous people knew the land based on where the medicines grew—sage, sweetgrass, mint, nettles, berries and more.

Chief Desjarlais' presentation explored land-based practices that existed pre-contact, including the traditional buffalo hunt. Agriculture was (and still is) an important part of Indigenous livelihoods. When the reserve system was established, the government expected Indigenous people to farm, yet they were often barred from selling their crops and benefiting financially. Chief Desjarlais ended his presentation with a final thought: when he flies on a plane and sees the large plots of land often owned by settlers, he wishes that his people had the same space and resources to raise large farms and cattle.

Matt Hiltermann, the event's final speaker, explored some of the



misconceptions about Indigenous land-practices, such as the notion that agriculture is an exclusively European concept brought to Canada during colonization. In fact, the earliest evidence of farming on the prairies dates back to 1200 AD, and the earliest Cree farming in Treaty 4 territory occurred in the 1840s.

Hiltermann also noted that farming, hunting, and gathering were not mutually exclusive events. The crops grown in the rich soil of the prairies were low maintenance, meaning that Indigenous people could hunt during the summer while their crops grew with minimal attention. According to Hiltermann, it is rare to hear about these land-practices because they do not fit the narrative of the “white man’s Indian,” and, echoing Chief Desjarlais’ discussion, many of the farming struggles faced by Indigenous groups are rooted in barriers put up by government policies, not farming acumen.

The second event of the land panel series, “otākosiĥk mīna anohc: Вчора і Сьогодні: Yesterday and Today on These Lands,” took place on October 20, 2021. Moderated by Lindy Ledohowski, a Canadian cultural arts and education expert, the panel featured speakers Myrna Kostash and Chelsea Vowel. Kostash is an Edmonton literary and creative nonfiction writer, and Vowel, writer and educator, Métis from manitow-sâkahikan (Lac Ste. Anne) with Ukrainian heritage through her paternal grandmother. The event explored pre-colonial traditional Indigenous land-based practices. The panelists discussed how colonization impacted Indigenous farming practices on the Canadian Prairies and the relationship Ukrainian settlers developed with farming when they arrived in Canada.

Vowel began the presentation by discussing the social and legislative forces that impacted Indigenous farming on the prairies. She began her presentation by reminding the audience that Indigenous land-based practices changed drastically when settlers arrived in Canada. As the buffalo were declining, Indigenous groups lost a critical source of sustenance. When



*Myrna Kostash, Maryna Chernyavska, Larisa Hayduk, and Kalyna Somchynsky at River Lots 23 and 24m, St. Albert, Alberta.*

the treaties were signed, particularly Treaty 6, Indigenous people negotiated certain provisions meant to provide their communities with crucial farming supplies such as hoes, spades, plows, seeds, and livestock to find new ways to provide for their people. Often, Vowel said, these supplies never arrived.

Vowel also described major policies that the government implemented around the 1880s that aimed to limit the success of Indigenous farming. The government implemented policies that banned Indigenous use of large-scale machinery and often, Indigenous-owned machinery was sold to settlers. Yet, despite the harsh efforts of the government and settlers to limit their success, Indigenous farmers were still able to produce good yields into the 1880s. On the other hand, Métis were excluded from the treaties and received no farming support or supplies from the government. Vowel concluded with a final thought: We can take individual action against discrimination, but we are facing a systemic problem that requires a systemic solution.

Kostash complemented Vowel’s presentation by speaking about her family’s experience as Ukrainian immigrants in the Canadian prairies. Her paternal grandparents, Fedor Kostashchuk and Anna Svarich, came to Canada to build a homestead near Vegreville. Referencing from her

grandfather’s memoir, Kostash detailed the obstacles that her family faced on the prairies, including crude shelters and stony, swampy land: “Here in the promise land, he had become a beggar.” Still, the Kostash family was luckier than some, arriving in Canada with wealth from farming in Ukraine, allowing them to buy materials and livestock on arrival. She concluded this chapter of her family history by reflecting that the Kostash immigration was a necessary severing of the link to ancestral soil in Ukraine.

In contrast, Kostash’s story of her maternal grandparents’ immigration is one of less triumph. Nikolai Maksymiuk and Palahna Kosovan lived in Edmonton as labourers for seven years before Nikolai passed away from pneumonia, and his brother, Andrew, married his widow. Andrew Maksymiuk was a labourer for a time as well before the family moved to a small acreage with a market garden, which was, as Kostash described, “the closest they ever came to becoming settlers”.

Reflecting on her own relationship with land in Canada, Kostash explained her experience visiting a mass gravesite of Indigenous people that occurred just 15 years prior to her family’s arrival in Canada. Kostash said that being on that historical site spurred her to reflect on the history of the land and she concluded her presentation by stating her belief that “times are changing.”







# THREADS THAT CONNECT INTERNATIONAL UKRAINIAN EMBROIDERY AND TEXTILE PROJECT



*Threads That Connect volunteers*

## Introducing *Threads that Connect*

Lauren McMullen



After years of planning, the Ukrainian Resource and Development Centre (URDC) and the Alberta Council for the Ukrainian Arts (ACUA) launched their *Threads That Connect* programming in early 2021.

Deborah Stasiuk, director of ACUA, describes the central theme of *Threads That Connect* as an exploration of how, through the fabric of our culture, we are connected. “Shared decorative motifs, customary kerchiefs and headpieces, collective sewing guilds, and sewing and stitching bees are just a few of the ways that fibres have been woven into our lives,” says Stasiuk.

The year-long celebration of Ukrainian textiles included an exhibition, curated by Larisa Sembaliuk Cheladyn, discussion panels, workshops, social media campaigns, development of online educational materials, and other interactive events. A large and complex project such as *Threads That Connect* would not be possible without an outstanding team. In fact, the project garnered the support from 16 community organizations, created over 170 volunteer opportunities, featured over 20 presenters and moderators who shared their research and led workshops, and was funded by three government organizations.

Under the mentorship of producer Darka Tarnawsky of Bottom Line Productions, a paid position was created for an individual to help implement the project. Lizzy Taylor, first a student and then an alum of MacEwan University’s Arts and

Cultural Management program, was hired and wholeheartedly dedicated herself to the success of *Threads That Connect*. Upon completion of her contract, Taylor enthusiastically accepted a position with ACUA.

The *Threads That Connect* programming officially opened on February 14, 2021 with the unveiling of a Ukrainian textile and embroidery exhibition curated by Larisa Sembaliuk Cheladyn. The exhibition was designed to showcase the evolution of textiles and embroidery throughout Ukrainian Canadian history. The exhibit also featured a large painting by Cheladyn that celebrated 40 years of Ukrainian dance culture. Cheladyn’s goal was that *Threads That Connect* could help Ukrainian Canadians identify with their roots and become inspired to explore cultural practices themselves.

Expanding on the ideas explored in Cheladyn’s exhibit, ACUA and URDC hosted an extensive series of lectures, workshops and roundtables throughout the year. The lectures and workshops were led by speakers including researchers from universities and museums across Alberta, North America and Ukraine, curators and folklorists, volunteers with Ukrainian dance groups and Ukrainian community museums, and practising artists and conservationists. Topics ranged from the history of the *khustka*, the *vinok* in the context of Ukrainian dance, symbolism of the *rushnyk*, and how the significance of embroidery and textile change in relation to their context, among others.

The *Threads that Connect* programming officially concluded with a **fashion show** on September 10, 2021 in MacEwan’s Allard Hall. Historic, retro, and contemporary Ukrainian fashions, including Ukrainian fashion designer Olena Romanova’s Fall 2021 collection, were showcased.

ACUA hosted a marketplace the following day to allow the public a chance to peruse Romanova’s collection and a curated selection of Ukrainian textiles, fashions, and accessories. It had been many years since a Ukrainian fashion show last appeared in Canada, making it a fitting and significant conclusion to a year of celebrating the importance of Ukrainian textiles and their role in weaving together Ukrainian identities in Canada.

If you missed any of the *Threads That Connect* programming, you can find a collection of resources on the ACUA website, including an e-book, a recording of the fashion show and a curator’s tour of the *Threads That Connect* exhibition, recorded lectures and virtual workshops, educational resources for teachers, and much more! These resources can be accessed at the following link:

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

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



Backstage at the Threads that Connect Fashion Show. Model wearing an elaborate *vinok*. September 10, 2021, Allard Hall, MacEwan University.

## The *Vinok* and Ukrainian Embroidered PPE

Lauren McMullen



As a part of *Threads That Connect International Ukrainian Embroidery and Textile Project 2021*, the Alberta Council for Ukrainian Arts (ACUA) and Ukrainian Resource and Development Centre (URDC) hosted a lecture in April consisting of two presentations. Josée Chartrand, assistant professor of Theatre Production at MacEwan University, and Maryann Baziuk, Shumka costume consultant, presented on the tradition of the *vinok* for Shumka dancers. Katya Chomitzky, Master of Arts candidate from the University of Alberta, presented a chapter from her upcoming thesis.

Chartrand's research has been informed by her career as a costume designer, maker, and educator. Baziuk became involved with Shumka as a dancer and continued her involvement with the dance company as a "Shumka Mom" after her two daughters showed interest in Ukrainian dance.

Chartrand and Baziuk's presentation gave the audience an overview of the symbolism of the *vinok*. The *vinok* is worn today during many festivals and is a part of the first costume set Shumka dancers own when they join the company. The *vinok* worn by Shumka dancers is composed of red, blue and white silk flowers and 17 ribbons that cascade down the dancer's back. Each flower carries a specific meaning, such as blue cornflowers for modesty and red poppies for youth. The colour of each ribbon also has a specific meaning: yellow ribbons symbolize the sun, green ribbons symbolize beauty and youth, blue ribbons symbolize the sky and water, and red ribbons symbolize magic and sadness.

For many of the dancers, the *vinok* is one of the few souvenirs from Shumka that they will carry with them for life. The *vinok* starts out pristine, but as the dancers gain

experience, the flowers and ribbons begin to tarnish and become a record of the dancer's story. The *vinok* are not often mended since they are seen only from a distance by the audience, but a closer look will reveal the tears and grime that have been built up from years of work on stage and the bustle of travel. The colours and ribbons that an audience glimpses from afar hold stories and histories, showcasing a dancer's commitment to their culture and devotion to tradition.

Chartrand and Baziuk have continued to collaborate as researchers and have been furthering their research on the *vinok*. Their relationship as co-researchers exemplifies the importance and value of community-university partnerships and the rich research that can emerge from these endeavours.

Katya Chomitzky presented an exploration of Ukrainian embroidery on the world's newest fashion item: face masks. Chomitzky's research includes ethnographic studies and surveys that form an understanding of the relationship between embroidery and personal protective equipment (PPE) during the pandemic. In her presentation, Chomitzky highlighted a few observations she has uncovered over the course of her studies.

One aspect of PPE fashion that Katya emphasized was the commercialization of embroidery patterns. Due to the size, shape and material of face masks, artists must modify their techniques and patterns. Often, embroidery patterns are simplified for the masks and only include, for example, a single stem of flowers rather than the intricate pattern common to many embroidered Ukrainian garments. The choice of imagery for pandemic embroidery is often selected to represent images of protection; in many cases, artists may embroider medicinal or spiritual plants such as mallow, which is traditionally used to treat sore throats and dry coughs. Finally, artists must be sure to avoid *Merezhka* embroidery, as this technique would leave holes in the face masks, rendering them ineffective. Rather, artists employ techniques such as cross stitch or leaf stitches to preserve the integrity of the fabric.

Chomitzky's research presentation also explored the motivations of consumers to purchase masks and the motivation of producers to create them. Consumers were most likely to associate masks with their cultural heritage, ancestry and pride, and many respondents in Chomitzky's surveys cited their desire to support Ukrainian artists as a significant motivator in their purchase. Many of the respondents who purchased masks already owned pieces of Ukrainian embroidery, and the decision to add the mask to their collection was a "no brainer." While artists were also likely to cite pride as a top reason for creating embroidered masks, they were also very likely to create masks for the purpose of the product being used as a protective talisman.

Material culture is an important aspect of Ukrainian heritage, and both presentations served as a reminder that the past still lives on within the objects we create and the traditions we cherish. As the world continues to change, we will continue to find new ways to express culture and keep our identities alive.





On the runway at the *Threads that Connect Fashion Show*. September 10, 2021, Allard Hall, MacEwan University.

to submit images of themselves wearing their favourite embroidered clothing. The social media campaign created an easy way for those interested in *Threads That Connect* to express their connection to their heritage and participate in this community-driven celebration of Ukrainian embroidery.

The *Threads That Connect Fashion Show* celebrated the history of embroidery and talent of the many artists who laboured to create these garments, while looking to the future of fashion.

The historical collection featured traditional clothing showcasing distinct embroidery patterns, motifs, accessories, and garment styles from diverse regions across Ukraine. The featured garments were from Lyudmyla Shefel's private collection. Shefel began researching and collecting Ukrainian traditional garments when she immigrated to Canada from Kharkiv, Ukraine 20 years ago. The retro collection showcased garments lent to ACUA and URDC for the fashion show. These items were sewn and embroidered by Ukrainian community members in Edmonton from the 1960s through the 1990s. Graduation dresses, formalwear and everyday items were modified by talented women to showcase the embroidery motifs they were taught by their mothers and grandmothers. It exemplified how the diaspora celebrated their Ukrainian heritage by proudly wearing garments featuring embroidered motifs on their dresses, jackets, shirts and more. The contemporary collection featured Ukrainian fashion designer Olena Romanova's Fall 2021 Collection. Romanova is a Lviv-based designer and member of the Ukrainian Designers Association who works out of her own studio to create clothing in diverse textile materials. For this collection, she took inspiration from traditional Ukrainian embroidery and reimagined it in the world of high fashion. Her collection featured clothing for the modern woman that blends contemporary styles with traditional needlework.

The fashion show concluded the

## Threads That Connect Fashion Show Hits the Runway

Lizzy Taylor



Throughout the afternoon of September 10, 2021, volunteers from the Alberta Council for the Ukrainian Arts (ACUA), the Ukrainian Resource and Development Centre (URDC), Ukrainian Shumka Dancers, post-secondary students and the broader Ukrainian community could be seen pressing garments and dressing mannequins. This bustling activity in MacEwan University's Allard Hall led to the *Threads That Connect Fashion Show*, the grande finale of a two-and-a-half-year collaboration between ACUA and URDC.

*Threads That Connect* was a celebration of Ukrainian embroidered fashion over time and a shining example of community-university engagement. The fashion show exemplified how embroidered clothing has evolved and adapted to changing trends while showcasing the wearer's relationship to their heritage. The grande finale of *Threads That Connect* consisted of three days of programming that

included a panel discussion, fashion show (composed of historical, retro and contemporary collections) and a marketplace at ACUA.

"The Circle of Life of Fashion" panel discussion featured business owners and fashion designers including Ukrainian designer Olena Romanova, whose designs were featured in the fashion show. The panelists discussed the evolution of Ukrainian clothing as a reflection of the environment, utility and cultural heritage in fashion, design, and art. They reflected on the idea of connection through time and space exemplified by how embroidery has developed over centuries and been used to represent Ukrainian heritage in Canada.

A collage of community-submitted photos of cherished Ukrainian embroidered clothing, the product of the social media campaign #Favourite\_Threads, was also displayed during the fashion show. Launched in early 2021, #Favourite\_Threads asked Ukrainians





year-long celebration of Ukrainian embroidery and textiles for the community-engaged *Threads That Connect* project. It honoured connections between different waves of immigration in Canada and the significant relationship between Canada and Ukraine. It showcased the diversity of Ukrainian heritage and gives hope and inspiration to future generations.

*Threads That Connect* would not have been possible without a team of dedicated volunteers such as members of ACUA, dancers from Cheremosh, Shumka, Viter and Volya dance companies, and active members of the local Ukrainian community who agreed to model in the fashion show, as well as post-secondary students and the enthusiastic participation of the Ukrainian community both in Edmonton and Ukraine. URDC's mandate is to bring community to the campus and the campus to the community — *Threads That Connect* highlighted community-university engagement at its finest. ❁







## Local Narratives: The Lives, Legacies, and Locales of Edmonton's Ukrainian Canadian Community



In September 2021, the Ukrainian Resource and Development Centre (URDC) launched a new long-term initiative called *Local Narratives: The Lives, Legacies, and Locales of Edmonton's Ukrainian Canadian Community*. This initiative aims to collect, showcase, and preserve the stories and oral histories of members of the Ukrainian community.

The project is led by Kalyna Somchynsky who recently joined URDC as a research assistant. Somchynsky completed her Master of Arts in the History of Art, Design, and Visual Culture at the University of Alberta in 2020. To inform her thesis on contemporary feminist art in Ukraine, Somchynsky conducted interviews with artists, arts professionals, and activists over the summer of 2019. She has led a lecture series in collaboration with Dr. Jessica Zychowicz on contemporary art in Ukraine at the Alberta Council for the Ukrainian Arts and is currently co-editing a volume of the Shevchenko Scientific Society *Zakhidn'okanads'kyi Zbirnyk* special issue on Ukrainian Canadian art with Dr. John-Paul Himka. She brings her experience conducting interviews, strong writing skills and interdisciplinary approach to research to URDC.

Somchynsky began conducting interviews for the *Local Narratives* initiative this winter. Interviewees will include members of the Ukrainian Canadian community in Edmonton who built and fostered Ukrainian education, scholarship at the secondary and post-secondary levels, have worked and volunteered with Ukrainian community organizations, and/or contributed to the development of political, economic, and cultural life in the province, nationwide, and Ukraine. She will additionally be researching places that are significant to the Ukrainian community and will interview individuals to animate the stories of these sites.

Once Somchynsky has gathered a few narratives, she will feature her full interviews on a forthcoming website. The interviews will be accompanied by photographs and a short, narrative text about the interview subject.

It is URDC's hope that this website will continue to grow as more interviews are conducted and that it can serve as a resource for the Ukrainian community and for future researchers.



Kalyna Somchynsky



Archival Photo. Edmonton-95 Street Looking South. City of Edmonton Archives, Open Data Portal.



Archival Photo. Jasper Avenue & 97 Street. City of Edmonton Archives, Open Data Portal.



## Ukrainian Arts Community - Engaged Research



Lauren McMullen

In partnership between the Ukrainian Resource and Development Centre (URDC) and the Ukrainian Foundation for College Education (UFCE), Dr. Olenka Bilash (president of UFCE, researcher and professor at the University of Alberta) and Larisa Hayduk (director of URDC) conducted a collaborative research project to explore the state of Alberta's Ukrainian arts community and make recommendations for future funding. MacEwan University Honours student Jade Radke was hired as a research assistant to support administrative work, undertake academic research, and co-author the final report.

The project involved a series of surveys, individual interviews and focus groups designed to find ways to improve the experience of local artists working within Alberta. With over eight per cent of Canada's artists calling Alberta home, the research facilitated a valuable opportunity to explore the support available to members of the Ukrainian arts community in the province and provide recommendations for better support. The project engaged practitioners of a wide variety of artforms, including visual arts and crafts, literary arts, performing arts, graphic and media arts, dance, music, and research in and advocacy for the Ukrainian arts.

The results of the research project illustrate that practitioners of the Ukrainian arts are proud of how their culture shapes their artistic practice and their dedication to celebrating and promoting the Ukrainian arts. Many artists surveyed look forward to future opportunities to collaborate with one another and to share their talent both within and outside the Ukrainian arts community.

## UFCE Board Members



**For more than two decades, the Ukrainian Foundation for College Education (UFCE) has been supporting a range of URDC initiatives, from student and faculty exchanges with universities in Ukraine to international collaborations and research. We extend our deep appreciation for the time and effort of UFCE Board and UFCE Trust. We could not have done it without your support. Thank you.**

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## URDC Awards



**The Anna Pidruchney Award for Young Writers | \$1,300**

Nadia Gereliouk for *The Academic Honesty of Bones*

**The Roman Soltykewych Music Scholarship | \$1,000**

*Ruta Youth Ensemble*, Ukrainian Women's Organization of Canada (UWO), Edmonton Branch

**The Serge Eremenko Music Award | \$500**

Olga Zaitseva-Herz

**William & Mary Kostash Award for Film and Video Arts | \$1,000**

Shumka Ukrainian Dancers-Media Arm for the short film *Promised Land*

**The Ukrainian Millennium Foundation Award | 5 x \$1,000**

Dane Jonas Bjornson, Faculty of Fine Arts, MacEwan University

Dylan Kenneth Cave, Faculty of Fine Arts, MacEwan University

William James Conway, Faculty of Fine Arts, MacEwan University

Peace Isochikanma Joshua, Faculty of Fine Arts, MacEwan University

Paige Kaylee Prins, Faculty of Fine Arts, MacEwan University

