

Rural Life in Ukraine: A multi-medium selection - 1949-2023

From the collection of Ellie Valentine, Cambridge, NY

An exhibit organize for the “Our Farm Heritage” Community Breakfast



Hubbard Hall, Cambridge, NY December 7, 2024



Ellie Valentine has been engaged in international academic exchanges and international development projects since 1978. In her travels she has always appreciated the arts community. Ellie worked in Ukraine from 1994-2002 and again 2008-2013. Her work with Indiana University, the Ohio State University, and the American NGO “Winrock International” was primarily to implement the governance programs of the United States Agency for International Development. She traveled extensively within Ukraine. From 1994-2013 she visited many galleries, met many artists and visited their studios, and actively supported fundraising events participating in art auctions. From 1995-1998, she volunteered in the organizing committee of the “Great Ukrainian Women Artists” exhibitions organized by the International Women’s Club of Kyiv. She continues to support Ukrainian artists today through charitable organizations and online events.

“Ukraine is famous for its “black earth” and as the “breadbasket of Europe” and now the world. According to the International Trade Administration, Ukraine is one of the most fertile places on the planet, with 25-30 percent of the world’s black soil reserves. With over 100 million acres of agricultural land, covering 70 percent of the country, agriculture is Ukraine’s largest export industry.

Soviet and Ukrainian artists often depict village life and rural landscapes featuring the harvest – and many, many haystacks! What impressed me while living in Ukraine was the diversity of mediums that artists employed to express their perspectives on contemporary and historical daily life. The selection of works for this exhibit on the theme of “Farming Heritage” showcases the variety of themes embraced by artists from the socialist realism predominant in the soviet period (1917-1991) through to graphic works produced in most recent years. Soviet propaganda posters were used in public spaces and schools to promote socialist goals of the state and to encourage work output – including work in the fields. Today’s contemporary artists also employ “message art” to highlight the challenges that Ukrainian farmers experience in the face of the ongoing Russian war of aggression and to encourage community support and belief in Ukraine’s eventual victory.

Fields and Harvests	
Kolhoz Field, 1950 Oil on Carton	I.N. Mirniy
 <p>I bought this piece because it reminded me of working with my 8 brothers and sisters in our family garden outside of Buffalo, NY. But this is a group of women working on a collective farm somewhere in Ukraine. My guess is that they are planting something requiring back-breaking manual labor – possibly sugar beets (Kyiv was the center for sugar production in the 19th century) or planting a huge cabbage patch!</p>	<p>Unfortunately, I don't have any information about this artist. I hope to learn more about him soon!</p>
Haystack in Summer Field c. 1970, Oil on Canvas	Vladimir Yusifovych Belyak ,1921-2009, Odessa
 <p>The fields around Kyiv are abundant with wheat, oats, buckwheat, and sunflowers. In the 1970s, all the farms were large collectives owned and managed by the state. Since 1991 the collective farms have been privatized, although land reform is still ongoing to improve the agricultural market system.</p>	<p>He was born in the suburb of Odessa – Lystdorff (Chernomorka). From 1940 to 1947 he studied at the Odessa Art School and from 1947-1953 at the Kyiv State Art Institute. In the 1950s he participated in an exhibition of Ukrainian art in Moscow as part of the “Decade of Ukrainian Art” initiative. His series of paintings of Kyiv begun in the 1960s is notable. His works are represented in museum and private collections in Ukraine, Russia, France, Poland, and other countries.</p>

<p>Kostyantynivka Village, 1949, Oil on Paper</p>	<p>Ivan Dzyuban, 1923 - 2008 Kostyantynivka</p>
 <p>Kostyantynivka Village is in the Donetsk region near Pokrovsk. Although the eastern part of Ukraine, known as “The Donbas,” is known primarily for coal mining and steel industry, there was also significant large-scale farming– primarily wheat, sunflower, and rapeseed. Kostyantynivka Village is currently on the frontline of the War of Russian aggression.</p>	<p>Born in the village of Kostyantynivka, Donetsk region. In 1937 he entered Luhansk Art College. He fought on the front from 1943 until the end of WWII. After demobilization in 1947, he returned to Luhansk and completed his studies. From 1949 to 1955, he studied at the Kyiv Art Institute, specializing in poster art. He exhibited numerous USSR and international exhibitions, including at the XIX Biennale in Venice in 1960. He also designed the ceramic work in the underground passage in Kyiv. His works can be found in many museums and private collections in Ukraine and abroad.</p>
<p>A Cloudy Day on the Desna, 1970, Oil on Canvas</p>	<p>Viktor Hryhoriovich Pouzyrkov (1918-1999)</p>
 <p>The Desna River originates in Russia in the Smolensk region near Bryansk and flows south through muddy swamp terrain passing through the city of Chernihiv and emptying into the Dnipro River just north of Kyiv. In Ukraine the width of the river ranges from 60 to 250 m with an average depth of about 3 m. Farmers often used the river for personal and goods transport</p>	<p>Born in 1918 in Katerynoslav (now Dnipro) in a worker's family, his first art education was at a children's after-school factory workshop. In 1936 he entered the 3rd year at the Dnipropetrovsk Art School and in 1938 became a student at the Kyiv Art Institute. In June 1941 he went to the front as a cavalry officer and was seriously wounded in August of that year. Upon his discharge from the hospital he was sent to Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan where he learned that the professors and students of the Kyiv Art Institute had been relocated to Samarkand, Uzbekistan. He studied in Samarkand until 1944 when he returned to Kyiv. His mother's stories of the Nazi occupation of Dnipropetrovsk inspired him to create monumental works on war themes and later was seconded to paint the Black Sea Fleet in Crimea. From 1948 he was on the</p>

 <p>The Desna River</p>	<p>faculty of the Kyiv Art Institute. One of his students was Anatoliy Kryvolap. In the later years of his life he turned to small-sized landscapes full of spatial depth and coloristic energy - these are landscapes of the Kyiv region, perspectives of the Dnieper and its banks. Viktor Puzyrkov's works are included in the expositions of leading art museums in Ukraine, Canada, Russia, and the USA, and are also in private collections.</p>
<p>Crossing the Desna, 1963, Lithograph</p>	<p>Valeriy Panfilov 1927-2003, Vladikavkaz, (now North Ossetia-Alania, Russia)</p>
 <p>The first bridge to cross the Desna was built in 1859 near Chernihiv, until then one needed to use the cable ferries to cross the river. That bridge was destroyed in 1919, WWII, and again in March 2022. The cable ferry may still be in use. This lithograph is typical of this artist's contrast of light and shadow, color and texture, dark lines of silhouettes on a lighted background.</p>	<p>Graduated from the Kyiv Art Institute in 1958 and USSR Academy of Arts in Kyiv (1965) where he studied easel and book graphics. He worked in color and black and white linocut, etching. His works are found in the T. Shevchenko National Museum (Kyiv), the Luhansk Art Museum.</p>

<p>Haystacks on a Winter's Night (1988) Etching</p>	<p>Mykhailo Hordiiiovych Derehus 1904-1997, Vesylolye</p>
<div data-bbox="203 296 748 678" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>This likely is a depiction of the artist's native village in the eastern border of Ukraine in the winter. The artist was a significant art educator and chaired the artists Union of Soviet Ukraine 1955-1962. He was renowned as an illustrator of classical Ukrainian literature. The village of Vesylolye is now on the eastern front and was taken by the Russian army in May 2024.</p>	<p>Outstanding Ukrainian painter and graphic artist, teacher, cultural worker. He was born in the village of Vesylolye (in the Kharkiv region). From 1923 to 1930 he studied at the Kharkiv Art Institute. In 1932-1941 and 1944-1950 he taught at the Kharkiv Art Institute. From 1955 to 1962 he was the chairman of the board of the National Union of Artists of Ukraine. He was renowned as an illustrator of classical Ukrainian literature. He exhibited within the USSR and abroad and his works are found in museums throughout the former USSR.</p>
<p>"Pumpkin Patch", 1998, Oil on Texture Board</p>	<p>Maryna Semesiuk</p>
<div data-bbox="203 1052 565 1388" data-label="Image"> </div>	<p>I often saw Maryna's work in the Kyiv "Mistetska Kramnichka" on the main boulevard "Kreshatik" – but unfortunately, I don't have more information about her yet.</p>
<p>Pumpkins play an important role in Ukrainian rural life. In some Ukrainian wedding traditions, the bride's parents may meet the groom at the door with a pumpkin. This means that the groom's marriage proposal was not accepted by the bride or her family. The pumpkin is given to the groom so he doesn't leave empty-handed.</p>	



Together in Our Narrow Circle (1956) Lithograph Print




This piece has an explanatory note that it is from the series “Approach of the Army to Voryzevo in 1918” I am still trying to learn more about it, but to me it is also subtly portrays Stalinist tactics for forced collectivization resulting in the famine in Ukraine that Popov would have survived as a child. The Soviet famine of 1930–1933 in the major grain-producing areas of the USSR including Ukraine, Kazakhstan and different parts of Russia, resulted in an estimated 5.7-8.7 million deaths from starvation, among them 3.3 million ethnic Ukrainians. While it was not recognized as a crime against humanity in Ukraine and Kazakhstan until after independence in 1991, those states sponsored memorials, research, and publications examining this tragic chapter in the history of Ukraine and Central Asia. Since 2006, 34 countries and the European Union have recognized the “Holodomor” (famine) as a genocide.



Mykola Tarasovych Popov 1927 - 2010

Born in 1927 in Yastrebovka village in the Kursk region (of what is now Russia) into a farming family. In 1950–1956 he studied at the Kyiv Art Institute. He taught there from 1961 at the Department of Graphic Arts, and from 1978 he was a professor. He was a member of the Soviet Union of Artists from 1963.




Seasonal Nuance of Village Life	
Spring Landscape, 2000, Oil on Canvas	Anatoliy Kryvolap, 1946-
 <p>The artist is best known as a colorist of abstract landscapes. This may very well be of his native village outside of Kyiv. Often villages were organized along rivers or near lakes or large ponds. It is interesting to compare this with “A Cloudy Day on the Desna” as Viktor Pouzyrkov was his professor at the Kyiv Art Institute in the 1970s.</p>	<p>He was born in Yahotyn, a village in Kyiv region. He graduated from the Kyiv State Art Institute, faculty of Painting in 1976, but rejecting socialist realist trends, he retreated from public art activity until the 1990s. From 1993 to 1995, he actively participated in the activities of the Picturesque Reserve, known in the history of modern Ukrainian art as an association of artists who had their own established views. In 2012, he was awarded the Taras Shevchenko National Prize of Ukraine for his <i>Ukrainian Motive</i> cycle (which included 50 abstract landscapes). He is considered a master of non-figurative painting and a colorist. Full member of the National Academy of Arts of Ukraine. His work is found in museums and private collections around the world.</p> <p>“A painter feels and reacts with colors... Tints are like neurons which create a sensation”</p>
Untitled 1961, Tempera on Paper	Volodymyr Masyk 1917-1996
 <p>This springtime in the village is reminiscent of the early spring when trees are still bare and the earth is muddy, but the promise of renewed growth is fostered by the warming sun.</p>	<p>Born in Katerynoslav city (now Dnipro), he studied at Konotop Art Studio, Dnipropetrovsk Art College, Kharkiv Art Institute, and Kyiv Art Institute. From 1954 he participated in USSR and foreign exhibitions. Works are presented in the State Tretyakov Gallery and many art museums in Ukraine.</p>

<p>Untitled - 2008</p>	<p>Valentyn Volodymyrovych Shumakov (1940-2013)</p>
 <p>Springtime in the village is abundant with the blossoms of fruit trees – apples, plums, cherries, and pears.</p>	<p>Born during soviet Ukraine in Maikiivka, Stalinist Oblast (now Donetsk), his family moved back to their home village of Velyky Vystorop in Sumy Oblast to the north. In 1960, he entered the Kyiv School of Applied Arts, but his education was disrupted for three years for military service, After his service and completing his high school studies he entered the Kyiv State Art Institute from which he graduated in 1972. He worked in the Art Fund of Ukraine and the souvenir shop at the Art Fund of Ukraine and was engaged in the development of carving on slate, reviving that ancient art form known since the times of Kyivan Rus' (10th Century). His works are in museums of ethnography and folk art in Ukraine.</p>
<p>Cottage of Uncle Mykola, 1983, Oil on Carton</p>	<p>Daniil Panteleevich Bednoyshe 1924 – 1989, Velikie Dmitrovichi, Kyiv Region</p>
 <p>Older residents of the village maintained their homes while children went off to the cities to seek greater opportunities. This is a typical village home with a fenced yard to keep the chickens nearby. Behind the cottage is perhaps a small orchard – here it seems just past the spring bloom. There is always a bench outside to welcome neighbors for a chat.</p>	<p>Ukrainian painter, landscape painter, Honored Artist of Ukraine, Member of the USSR Academy of Arts. He was born in the village of Velikie Dmitrovichi in the Kyiv region. He was a decorated soldier of WWII. From 1947 to 1953 he studied at the Kyiv Art Institute. He started exhibiting in 1951. He lived and worked in Kyiv. His work can be found in museums and private collections of Ukraine, Russia, Europe, USA, and Japan.</p>

<p>Warm Summer Day, 1995, Watercolor on paper</p>	<p>Ruslan Pokotilo, c1950, Kyiv?</p>
 <p>Rural Ukrainian farmers depended on their horses for transportation well into the 2000s. Village homes also depended on their wells for water supply. This would have been a relatively isolated home with its own well.</p>	<p>This is an artist whom I met during a visit to the open-air museum “Pirohovo” outside of Kyiv. This National Museum of Folk Architecture and Folkways of Ukraine exhibits buildings brought from all different parts of Ukraine. Each building is decorated in the style of the region of origin. I have seen Pokotilo’s oils on canvas for sale on several sites, but unfortunately, they don’t give more information about the artist. I hope to learn more soon!</p>
<p>Untitled - 2009</p>	<p>Valentyn Volodymyrovych Shumakov (1940-2013)</p>
	<p>Born during soviet Ukraine in Maikiivka, Stalinist Oblast (now Donetsk), his family moved back to their home village of Velyky Vystorop in Sumy Oblast to the north. In 1960, he entered the Kyiv School of Applied Arts, but his education was disrupted for three years for military service, After his service and completing his high school studies he entered the Kyiv State Art Institute from which he graduated in 1972. He worked in the Art Fund of Ukraine and the souvenir shop at the Art Fund of Ukraine and was engaged in the development of carving on slate, reviving that ancient art form known since the times of Kyivan Rus’ (10th Century). His works are in museums of ethnography and folk art in Ukraine.</p>

Makovyji, 1996, Oil on Textureboard	V.P. Vysochanskaja
	<p>This is an artist whom I met during a visit to the open-air museum “Pirohovo” outside of Kyiv. This National Museum of Folk Architecture and Folkways of Ukraine exhibits buildings brought from all different parts of Ukraine.</p>
<p>Sunflowers are grown in Ukraine as a cash crop in large fields, but also are commonly planted near a village cottage. This thatched roof house is situated on the main road through the village that ends at the church. Many churches were destroyed during the soviet period- or used as warehouse, silos, or barns in rural communities. After 1991 many were restored or rebuilt by their communities.</p>	
Village Outskirt, 1964, Watercolor on Paper	Hryhoriy Sokryns'ky 1900 – Biloouseva Persha (Vinnytsia Region)
	<p>Born in Biloouseva Persha in the Vinnytsia region (west of Kyiv). He graduated in 1930 from the Kyiv Art Institute. He studied under F. Kryvchevs'kyi and V. Tatline. He is well-known for his landscape genre.</p>
<p>Villages in Ukraine are usually built on either side of a main road with houses on both sides. The road may lead to a central structure. In this scene, we see a windmill which most likely was used as a central point where individual farmers could bring their grain for milling. This landscape, with higher hills is more typical for areas further in the west of Ukraine where eventually the hills merge into the Carpathian Mountains.</p>	

Allée, 1955, Oil on Cardboard	Yurij Zlyden' 1925 - 2001
 <p>As spring turns to summer, the roads that lead to the village – often tree-lined with sprouting fields bordering on each side – welcome visitors and those coming home to the village to plant potatoes. Every year, my colleagues and friends would inevitably announce that this weekend they are unavailable for they must go to the village to plant potatoes in their family's small plot.</p>	<p>Born in the village of Zachepilovka, Kharkiv region. He is a decorated veteran of WWII. In 1946 he entered the Dnepropetrovsk Art College, graduating with honors in 1951. Participated in exhibitions in the USSR and abroad. From 1952 to 1967, he lived and worked in Mariupol then moved to Kyiv. His works are in collections in local art and history museums, in gallery and private collections in Ukraine and abroad.</p>
Untitled, 2010, Oil on Canvas	Valentyn Volodymyrovych Shumakov (1940-2013)
 <p>The Interior of village houses usually were one or two rooms with a white-washed clay stove as a central feature in the kitchen. These stoves played an important role in agriculture and the everyday life of Ukrainians. Used for cooking, baking, and heating, clothes would be dried on the side benches, and some had spaces for sleeping at the back. They were often decorated with folk motifs.</p> <p>https://dnister-cult.tilda.ws/en/pich</p>	<p>Born during soviet Ukraine in Maikiivka, Stalinist Oblast (now Donetsk), his family moved back to their home village of Velyky Vystorop in Sumy Oblast to the north. In 1960, he entered the Kyiv School of Applied Arts, but his education was disrupted for three years for military service. After his service and completing his high school studies he entered the Kyiv State Art Institute from which he graduated in 1972. He worked in the Art Fund of Ukraine and the souvenir shop at the Art Fund of Ukraine and was engaged in the development of carving on slate, reviving that ancient art form known since the times of Kyivan Rus' (10th Century). His works are in museums of ethnography and folk art in Ukraine.</p>

Hornitsia (Loft), 1954, Oil on Carton	Nina Yakivna Marchenko 1940-
	<p>Born in 1940 in Leningrad city, USSR, she graduated from the Kyiv Art Institute in 1965. Honored Artist of the Ukrainian SSR (1976). She has participated in exhibitions since 1963. A member of the National Union of Artists of Ukraine (1973), her works are in collections in the USA, France, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Austria, Russia, and Ukraine.</p>
<p>The loft is a well-kept room. The word “hornitsa” historically referred to a room on the basement, the second floor of a house. The loft, unlike the basement, had several windows. The sofas also served as beds at night. Woven kilims would cover the bedding. A carpet was often fastened to the walls to add extra warmth. To the right is the side of the clay stove. Treasured pictures are draped with embroidered “rushyki” – embroidered towels.</p>	
Near the Well, 1962, Tempera on Carton	Daniil Panteleevich Bednoyshe 1924 – 1989, Velikie Dmitrovich (Kyiv region)
 <p>The winter thaw was always welcome as it made gathering water by the women of the village that much easier. The common well in the village was often a place for exchanging news and gossip- much like the office watercooler!</p>	<p>Ukrainian painter, landscape painter, Honored Artist of Ukraine, Member of the USSR Academy of Arts. He was born in the village of Velikie Dmitrovichi in the Kyiv region. He was a decorated soldier of WWII. From 1947 to 1953 he studied at the Kyiv Art Institute. He started exhibiting in 1951. He lived and worked in Kyiv. His work can be found in museums and private collections of Ukraine, Russia, Europe, USA, and Japan.</p>
Winter Morning, 1983 Oil on Canvas	Nina Yakivna Marchenko 1940-
 <p>Winter, spring, summer or fall – water must be carried from the well. Usually, it was the women who carried the water, often in these yoked buckets walking from the well through the village.</p>	<p>Born in 1940 in Leningrad city, USSR, she graduated from the Kyiv Art Institute in 1965. Honored Artist of the Ukrainian SSR (1976). She has participated in exhibitions since 1963. A member of the National Union of Artists of Ukraine (1973), her works are in collections in the USA, France, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Austria, Russia, and Ukraine.</p>

<p>Untitled, 2010, Mixed Technique</p>	<p>Natalia Pastushenko, 1972 -</p>
<div data-bbox="203 226 441 529" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>In her works this artist most often uses mixed techniques: acrylic, ink, colored and transparent varnishes, which gives the possibility of combining graphic and painting techniques. Here she has illustrated a fantasy of two rural women in traditional Ukrainian costumes to create an imagined meeting with their puppet-like farm animals. The wolves perhaps circling and seeking their prey? At the time that she created this piece, the artist was in the Ukrainian folklore ensemble "OTVA." They traveled from village to village to learn old folk songs from older village women. Certainly, this experience was an influence for this piece. Oh, and by the way, 'Otava' in Ukrainian is a word used to describe young grass shoots that sprout after the first mowing and regardless of how often it is mowed, it will always grow!</p>	<p>A Ukrainian artist, currently living in Poland, she graduated from the Architecture Department of the Ukrainian Academy of Fine Arts in Kyiv as an artist-architect in 1996. She works in graphics, painting, book illustration and interior design. She teaches art classes for children. In 2007, she received a Polish scholarship to work on a series of illustrations for Ukrainian fairy tales. Since 2010 she has also collaborated as an illustrator with several Polish magazines. She is also the author of illustrations for 18 children's books. She has implemented over 30 projects for banks, television studios, scenography for performances, exhibition pavilions, cafes, and private apartments. She has participated in numerous exhibitions in Ukraine, Poland, Germany, Italy, Slovakia and the Czech Republic.</p>
<p>Still Life, 1980, Oil on Canvas</p>	<p>Nina Yakivna Marchenko 1940-</p>
<div data-bbox="203 1201 479 1444" data-label="Image"> </div>	<p>Born in 1940 in Leningrad city, USSR, she graduated from the Kyiv Art Institute in 1965. Honored Artist of the Ukrainian SSR (1976). She has participated in exhibitions since 1963. A member of the National Union of Artists of Ukraine (1973), her works are in collections in the USA, France, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Austria, Russia, and Ukraine.</p>
<p>The only thing missing in this still life is a huge loaf of dark bread. Eggs, of course, are a staple in rural communities. In Ukraine "Salo" is a national element of any larder. Raw, boiled, or smoked pork fat back, "salo" is sliced thin and placed on a slice of thick, dark bread sprinkled with salt and consumed – you might add sliced onions or garlic, but totally not necessary.</p>	

Folk Traditions

Wedding, 2000, Oil on Texture Board

Yulia Korbut, Kyiv c. 1988-



This work is done in the style of Petrikivka folk art. The scene depicted here is a typical village scene of preparing for a wedding. The musicians' music signals that the young girls are coming to help prepare the bride for the ceremonies. The cottage is next to the babbling brook. There are chickens in the yard and a rooster is crowing from atop the thatched roof. Haystacks can be seen in the fields beyond the yard and forests in the hills far away.

This work is done in the Petrikivka folk art style that originates in the village of the same name near Dnipro. Sadly, I don't know enough about this young artist. I saw this work at an exhibition in the Kyiv House of Actors Theatre housed in the former [Karaité Jewish Synagogue](#). I asked the administration of the theatre whether the works were for sale. They gave me a phone number to call. The woman who answered hesitantly agreed to meet at a café. The woman was with a young girl whom she introduced as her daughter, Yulia Korbut the author of the painting. Yulia was 12 years old at the time, and that was her first art sale.

Wooden Covered box, Petrikivska Decoration and
Wooden vase, Petrikivska Decoration



"Petrykivka" is a traditional [Ukrainian](#) decorative painting style, originating from the 18th century in the village of the same name in [Dnipro](#) region where it was traditionally used to decorate house walls and everyday household items. It continues to thrive and develop as a modern art form. The distinctive features of this folk-art style are its flower patterns, distinctive brush techniques, and its traditional white background (contemporary painters, however, often work on black, green, red or blue backgrounds). In 2012, the [Ministry of Culture of Ukraine](#) recognized Petrykivka painting as a part of the [intangible cultural heritage of Ukraine](#), and it was included in the [UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity](#) in 2013.^[1] Petrykivka painting has become a "brand" in Ukrainian popular culture, and a "Petrykivka" trademark belonging to the artisans of Petrykivka village has been created. Today in Petrykivka village, the "Petrykivka" Center of Folk Art operates, which brings together about 40 famous masters of Petrykivka painting.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petrykivka_painting>

Handcrafted traditional Ukrainian souvenir Oberih, wood, ceramic, dried materials and plants



This elaborate Oberih portrays a happy couple in a warm home filled with provisions – grains and vegetables, a traditional musical instrument (bandura) and lots of clay pots to preserve milk, honey, and spirits. The various dried seeds and herbs are to wish good health and prosperity. The couple sits at the table with an embroidered runner- symbolizing their long union.



Handcrafted traditional Ukrainian souvenir Oberih are made from straw and covered with various items that are thought to bring good fortune.

For example, nuts and herbs are thought to represent good health, while stalks of rye and oats symbolize beauty.

“Motanki” c. 2010, cloth, wood, and straw



“Motanka” is a type of Ukrainian folk doll and amulet. The first Motanka dolls appeared 5,000 years ago and were common in almost every country. Ukrainian motanka is sometimes elegantly and originally decorated doll. It has long been a talisman in every Ukrainian family, symbolizing femininity and wisdom. It is believed that she protected the family ensuring comfort, well-being, and protection from evil forces – and perhaps even could control the weather, protect the crops, and cure diseases.

Barynia (Lady) , c. 2000, Glazed Ceramic	V. Omelchenko
	<p>The ancient Cossack town of Opishne (Opishnya) located in Zinkiv district of Poltava region is an important center of cultural identity of Ukrainians. It is considered the "Pottery Capital" of Ukraine. It is the highest town of the Poltava region, situated on seven hills that were formed by the Vorskla River. There is evidence that pottery making was practiced here 3000 years ago, and at the beginning of the 20th century, there were almost 1000 potters. Both men and women were potters. Maliuvalnytsi (women-painters) were more engaged in ceramic painting.</p>
Clay whistles	Unknown Authors
	<p>Whistles are the most popular of all clay toys and bird motifs are the most popular whistles. Typically, these are very generalized designs and are made in all regions of Ukraine where there were potters. Here are samples from central Ukraine, Kyiv region, and Opishne near Poltava.</p>



Wooden Birds

Unknown artists, Yavoriv Workshop
Ivan Pryhodko, 1939 -, Dudarkiv, Kyiv region



Ivan Prykhodko is one of the last folk artists in Ukraine. He is self-taught. He has participated in many ethnographic and art festivals, fairs, symposiums, and national, local, and regional folk and decorative art exhibitions. He has received many state prizes and is an honorary member of the **National Union of Folk Art Masters of Ukraine**. From 1972 until a few years ago, he had been running a folk painting studio in the village of Dudarkiv in Ukraine. His paintings can be found in private collections and museums in Ukraine and abroad. He is featured in the documentary film [Ivan's Land](#).

Wooden toys are popular folk items. Brightly colored, made of wood, and distinguished by their flat profile, Yavoriv toys have been created by craftsmen in western Ukraine's Carpathian Mountains since the 15th century. For over 50 years, I.V. Prikhodko has been engaged in decorative painting, folk toys and wooden sculpture. Some of the toys are mechanical- others are used as hanging mobiles in the home.

Decorative Plate, c. 2000, Glazed Ceramic	Unknown artist, Kosiv Workshop
 <p>This Kosiv plate shows some traditional floral patterns of the rural community – Wheat stalks, Sunflowers, Tulips, and perhaps dahlia. . These ceramics are used in everyday life and have a practical and artistic value. Masters work in family workshops and small craft workshops and the practice constitutes an identity marker and sign of affiliation with the community.</p>	<p>The tradition of Kosiv (a region in Western Ukraine) painted ceramics arose in the 18th century, reaching its golden age in the mid-19th century. The products are made using local grey clay, watered with a white clay of creamy texture; when dried, they are painted using a metal stick scratching technique to form a graphical contour drawing. They are then fired and painted with metal oxides to produce the traditional green and yellow colors, an indispensable feature of the ceramics. Sometimes, masters add a little cobalt, but not so much as to lose the traditional coloring. During the firing, the green dye spreads to create the watercolor effect, usually called ‘tears’.</p> <p>The main feature of Kosiv ceramics is the figurative design of the ornament. The plot motif expresses the history, life, folklore, beliefs and customs of the Hutsuls, and surrounding flora and fauna. The Department of Art Ceramics of Kosiv College ensures the continuity of generations of masters and bearers and has a special responsibility for sustaining the tradition, preserving the traditional technological cycle (potter’s wheels, clay, tools and pottery kilns).</p> <p>Tradition of Kosiv painted ceramics - intangible heritage - Culture Sector - UNESCO</p>
“Spiders” of Straw	Uknown Artists
	
<p>Straw toys and decorations are now made mostly in the North-Central regions of Ukraine. Made from ripening wheat, larger items might have served as rattles for infants, others as ornaments for the Christmas tree.</p>	

<p>“Rushnyk” (hand towel), c. 2000, Cotton Embroidery,</p>	<p>Unknown Artist, Central Ukraine</p>
<div data-bbox="203 262 641 903" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>The symbols used on this item – the bird couples, the hearts, the tree of life, indicate that it was probably meant to be used as a wedding towel to hold the bread and salt to greet the bride and groom, to join their hands in matrimony – and then would be hung in their couple’s home, draping a religious icon or family portrait.</p>	<p>Each region has its own designs and patterns with hidden meaning, passed down from generation to generation. The rectangular shape of the fabric indicates a life's journey, and the ornamentation captures the cultural ancestral memory of the region. A baby is wrapped in a “rushnyk” at birth, and it follows the person throughout life and is used in the funeral service after death. The majority of “rushnyks” in Central Ukraine are embroidered with red threads. Red is the color of life, the sun, fertility and health. A diamond-shaped design is an ancient agricultural symbol, which means a sown field, or the sun, and expresses the idea of fertility and protection against evil. Ducks in the center of the “rushnyk,” symbolize the element of life-giving water</p>
<p>For the Winners of the “Rural News” newspaper Competition, Porcelain Vase, c. 1970</p>	<p>Poltava Porcelain Factory</p>
<div data-bbox="203 1274 446 1648" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>In the USSR porcelain and crystal vases were often used as prizes in competitions- this one for Rural News – hence the wheat motif.</p>	<p>Established in 1964, by 1969, their output was 3 million items a year. They mass-produced tableware but they also made collectibles as figurines and anniversary tableware services. In the 1970s, production was automated, increasing output to 13.5 million items in 1975. In 1989 they employed over a thousand workers. In the beginning of 1990s the economic condition drastically worsened following the breakup of the Soviet Union. The Ukrainian factory stopped production in 2002.</p>

Posters and Post Cards	
<p>“We will Collect the Bolshevik Harvest on Time and without Loss”, 1951, Watercolor on Paper</p>	<p>Ivan Krupsky 1922-2003 and Mykola Rodin 1919-20??</p>
<div data-bbox="203 338 716 684" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>Posters were a popular form of “social media” in the USSR and Eastern Europe in the 20th century. Posters encouraged communal activities and encouraged work for the “motherland.” They were displayed in public spaces such as schools, government offices, and common spaces – such as canteens – in communal farms. This piece was an original watercolor for this poster promoting a successful harvest. In post WWII USSR, women were often engaged in manual labor in agriculture and industry.</p>	<p>Krupsky was born in the village of Mala Alexandrovna (Dnepropetrovsk region). He graduated from the Penza Art College in 1943 and the Kiev Art Institute in 1952. He remained in Kyiv and was a popular poster artist, and also exhibited portraits, still lifes, and landscapes in the USSR and abroad. His work is in many public and private collections in Ukraine and abroad. Rodin was born in Zharki village south of St. Petersburg, Russia. He graduated from Kyiv Art Institute in 1952. He is known for his soviet themed graphic works and history themed engravings. He has exhibited in the USSR and abroad. His works are in the National Museum of Ukraine, the Tretyakov Gallery, and in private collections in America, England, France, and Germany.</p>
<p>The First Tractor (1947) – Postcard</p>	<p>Mikhail Weinstein (1940 – 1981)</p>
<div data-bbox="203 1163 651 1499" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>In the USSR, messaging was conveyed in film, song, parades with banners, posters, and also postcards and stamps. This poster was reproduced as a postcard.</p> <p>In post-WWII the farms in Ukraine were already collectivized. The arrival of the first tractor in a village or on the collective farm was cause for a celebration. Men and women were wearing their precious “Vyshyvanky” – embroidered shirts for such special occasions.</p>	<p>Weinstein was a soviet painter born in Druzhkovka, Donetsk region (now occupied Ukraine). He studied at the Kyiv Art Institute and Academy. From 1965 he was a regular participant in soviet and international exhibitions. He painted thematic pictures, portraits and landscapes.</p>

<p>Good Evening, we are from Ukraine” (2022) Printed Postcard</p>	<p>Ukrainian postal service</p>
<div data-bbox="203 327 555 575" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>Footage of Russian tanks and other military vehicles being towed across fields and villages by brave Ukrainian tractors quickly became one of the defining images of the country’s resistance against the Russian invasion. Usually, farmers would take abandoned, broken-down, or fuel-depleted Russian military vehicles from the battlefields and hand them over to the Ukrainian armed forces fighting against the invasion.</p> <p>It’s unclear who was the first Ukrainian to tow a Russian tank, but things gained momentum when Viktor Kychuk and his friends acquired a Soviet T-80 tank on March 1, 2022, in Slatyne, located in the Kharkiv region of northeast Ukraine, just 13 kilometers away from Russia.</p> <p>As a gesture of appreciation and acknowledgment of the farmers’ contribution to the war effort, the Ukrainian postal service “Ukrposhta” dedicated one of its wartime stamps to them, titled “Good evening, we are from Ukraine.”</p> <p>https://uapostcards.org/from-fields-to-battlefront-how-ukrainian-farmers-contributed-to-overcoming-enemies/</p>	<p>.</p>

<p>Be Ukrainian: Do what you have to do (2022)- Printed Postcard</p>	<p>Olena Sheveka, c.2000, Mykolaiv</p>
<div data-bbox="203 296 548 516" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>The ongoing war in Ukraine has seriously impacted the country's agribusiness sector, which has always been a significant contributor to the Ukrainian economy, accounting for approximately 14% of the country's GDP and employing up to 25% of the population. Since the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion, Ukraine's agribusiness has suffered huge losses, including land, harvest, infrastructure, agricultural equipment, and machinery damage. Some farmers lost their businesses due to occupation or military actions in the frontline territories.</p> <p>Moreover, logistics problems and supply chain disruptions have plagued almost every company during this war, adding to their dire situation. With the 2022 harvest under enormous threat, Ukrainian farmers had to work in very dangerous circumstances to uphold national food security. Fields in many regions of Ukraine remained polluted with unexploded ordnance, leading to severe injuries or even death for people who work in the fields.</p> <p>Despite all the difficulties, Ukrainian farmers managed to grow a decent harvest in 2022, around 53 million tons, less than in previous years but enough to cover internal needs and remain the most significant exporting sector in the country. Ukrainian farmers have shown remarkable resilience and determination in the face of adversity, working tirelessly to keep the agribusiness sector afloat amidst the ongoing war.</p> <p>https://uapostcards.org/working-against-all-odds-ukraines-farmers-in-wartime/</p>	<p>A young group of Ukrainian activists have initiated a series of Postcards with the Ukrainian Postal service which are sold as a fundraising activity.</p> <p>Our Team - UA Postcards</p> <p>Olena Sheveka is an artist and the creative mind behind these stunning postcards. Her artistic skills bring beauty and inspiration to our project, touching the hearts of supporters and soldiers alike. You can check her Instagram here - https://www.instagram.com/sheveka_art/</p>

<p>"War-life balance should never exist", 2023 Printed Postcard</p>	<p>Olena Sheveka, c.2000, Mykolaiv</p>
<div data-bbox="203 296 690 640" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>After over a year of devastating war, Ukraine is now one of the most mined countries in the world. <i>Military remnants, including mines, cause the most significant</i> number of victims in the civilian population, especially children. According to the United Nations, more than 1.8 million Ukrainian adults and children live surrounded by mines. Therefore, mine safety education is one of the critical issues nowadays and in the coming years. Russian aggression against Ukraine has also caused the huge contamination of a significant part of fertile land with mines, oil products, and unexploded artillery shells. The Atmospheric air, forests, and water also suffered from war-related pollution. The ongoing war makes it difficult to estimate the total damage from environmental crimes. The latest report by the HALO Trust (Hazardous Area Life-Support Organization), an international mine action organization, points out that Ukraine is currently clearing over 1.6 million square meters of suspected hazardous areas. The report estimates that it may take several decades to complete the demining process in Ukraine at the current clearance rate. But we believe that being supported by international partners, Ukraine will soon defeat Russians and start full-scale post-war reconstruction, which could accelerate demining. https://uapostcards.org/ukraines-road-to-demining-and-recovery/</p>	<p>A young group of Ukrainian activists have initiated a series of Postcards with the Ukrainian Postal service which are sold as a fundraising activity. Our Team - UA Postcards</p> <p>Olena Sheveka is an artist and the creative mind behind these stunning postcards. Her artistic skills bring beauty and inspiration to our project, touching the hearts of supporters and soldiers alike. You can check her Instagram here - https://www.instagram.com/sheveka_art/</p>

Language is the Heart of a Nation, 2024,
Printed Postcard

Oleksandr Tebenko and the UA Postcards Team



A young group of Ukrainian activists have initiated a series of Postcards with the Ukrainian Postal service which are sold as a fundraising activity.

[Our Team - UA Postcards](#)

Alex and Oleksandr Tebenko are twin Brothers, Co-founders & Visionaries of the UA Postcards initiative. They drive this project with unwavering passion. They have been actively helping soldiers on the frontlines with essential supplies and unwavering support.

[Our Team - UA Postcards](#)

A young group of Ukrainian activists have initiated a series of Postcards with the Ukrainian Postal service which are sold as a fundraising activity.

“Language is more than words—it’s the soul of our heritage and the voice of our nation. With each purchase, support those who defend Ukraine and protect the traditions and language that bind us.” Throughout the history of Russo-Ukrainian relations, the Russians have attempted to denigrate or even eliminate Ukrainian identity, including Russian language publication and performance. Ukraine’s “Revolution of Dignity” in the fall of 2013 was a turning point in strengthening and defending Ukrainian language and identity.

Life Always Wins!, Printed Postcard

Olena Sheveka,
c.2000, Mykolaiv



On April 2, 2022, Russian troops left the Kyiv region, marking a turning point in the ongoing war. After they left, many cities in the region were severely damaged, with many destroyed houses and fewer people living there. Despite this, storks started returning to their nesting sites, giving people hope that life could return to normal.

Storks have always been important in Ukraine. They make their nests in the spring after spending the winter in Africa, and they are seen as a symbol of the start of spring and of new life. People in Ukraine believe that storks bring good luck, like big harvests, family happiness, peace, and love for their country.

After the Russian troops left, storks returned to their usual nesting sites, even in the most damaged areas. Their return gave hope to the people still living there who had gone through so much during the war.

Residents told stories about how the storks came back just a few days after the Russian troops left, and they quickly began to build their nests in their usual places. It seemed like the storks knew things were quiet now, and they could come home safely.

One person said, "Storks will always be special birds for Ukrainians, giving us hope for peace and the victory of spring over winter and good over evil."

In the end, the return of the storks to the Kyiv region shows that life always finds a way to win, even in the hardest times. Their presence is a powerful reminder of the strength and hopes that nature and people can bring, even after a terrible war.

<https://uapostcards.org/storks-bring-hope-to-war-torn-kyiv-region/>

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Olena Sheveka is an artist and the creative mind behind these stunning postcards. Her artistic skills bring beauty and inspiration to our project, touching the hearts of supporters and soldiers alike.

You can check her Instagram here

- https://www.instagram.com/sheveka_art/

This holiday season you can help support families in Ukraine who are healing from the impacts of war and working to build a brighter future. Razom' Ukraine, through their core programs, are providing psychological and medical support, rebuilding communities, and empowering families devastated by war.

Your donation will provide vital support, aiding Ukraine's recovery and ensuring families have the tools they need to thrive and contribute to a better world.

<https://www.razomforukraine.org//>