

# UKRAINIAN ART CENTER NEWS

## THE UNSTOPPABLE FORCE OF THE ARTS

Issue No. 10

Winter 2020

### HOLODOMOR: A REMEMBRANCE

It's November 2020 and it's 87th anniversary of the Holodomor. Every year since 2006 on the fourth Saturday of November people in Ukraine and all over the world are lighting candles in memory of those killed during Holodomor genocide of 1932-33.

In 1932-33, Moscow's Stalinist regime deliberately starved millions of Ukrainians to death in a man-made famine. Known as the Holodomor, the Ukrainian term for killing by starvation, the famine stands as one of the most horrendous genocides of the 20th century.

Targeting principally Ukrainian farmers, in a land that for centuries was known as the "breadbasket of Europe," Stalin aimed to annihilate those parts of the Ukrainian population that were especially resisting Soviet repressive policies in Ukraine, and to terrorize the surviving Ukrainian population into submission to the Soviet totalitarian regime. While the exact number of victims is not known, many scholars and historians place the number at 3 to as many as 10 million. One third of the victims were children; at the height of the Holodomor, tens of thousands died daily of starvation.

87 years after this unprecedented crime, the Holodomor remains one of the least known genocides.

UAC held a very special event/a virtual exhibition to honor the 87th anniversary of Famine-Genocide that occurred in Ukraine in 1932-33. This exhibit was presented on UAC website, UAC Facebook Page and Instagram from Nov. 1 through the 30th.

To honor the victims of Holodomor, a virtual slideshow depicting 26 mixed-media artworks of Houston-based Ukrainian-American artist Lydia Bodnar-Balahutrak, replaced an on-site exhibit.

Lydia Bodnar-Balahutrak is on the Studio School Faculty of the Glassell School of Art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Her works can be found in museums and private collections in the USA and Europe.



### HOLODOMOR: A REMEMBRANCE

The Hiding and Seeking Portrait

2009

16 x 22 in

Oil, resins on charred wood

Private Collection  
New York, NY

In 1991, the artist traveled to Ukraine for the first time. She states: "My eyes and soul were opened to a land that was beautiful but ravaged by the Soviet regime. The people were long-suffering yet hopeful – the culture was rich but sabotaged. Years of Soviet oppression had left their mark and were visible everywhere. Mass graves were being uncovered, revealing horrific historical events long denied by the Soviet government."

This new knowledge of so many innocent victims did not pull her down into despair but rather created an urgent need to tell their stories – which was also her story.

Not only did this travel experience change her world view, it also changed her approach to art making. She states: "My art of loss and remembrance responds to the genocide waged by Soviet regime against the Ukrainian nation and reflects my ancestral roots. Millions perished in Stalin's orchestrated 1932 -33 famine in Ukraine. Merging Holodomor victims' images with icon 33 famine in Ukraine. Merging Holodomor victims' images with icon conceits, I honor them."

The artworks featured are striking, compelling and filled with an anguish that roots viewers even if one wishes to avert their eyes. This is precisely the artist's intent even if one wishes to avert their eyes. This is precisely the artist's intent – we must look in order to honor the victims and acknowledge past so that we can move on. Throughout, titles provide clues to the meanings and symbolism of her work.

*continued on page 6*

### HOLODOMOR: A REMEMBRANCE

Winged

2001

22 x 22 x 5 in

Clay, gesso, plaster, paper

Private Collection  
Houston, TX



## A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT...

#GIVING  
TUESDAY



#GIVING TUESDAY is on December 1, 2020 where your donations will make a difference in securing the funds needed to design and finalize a professional art display room.

On the December 1st, UAC is joining a national day of generosity - #GIVING TUESDAY. It's a day when you will have the ability to positively impact this much needed project. You can help us achieve our goal by donating to Ukrainian Art Center and joining this global movement that helps to inspire personal philanthropy and encourage charitable giving during the holiday season.

With your help UAC will make a difference in fulfilling our mission of preserving and sharing the beauty of Ukrainian culture and arts within California. UAC has acquired through many donations a multitude of artifacts that should be displayed in a proper manner.

We need your help to hire a designer to create a showroom worthy of these cultural treasures.

Share in our progress by following us on our website [www.UkrainianArtCentersocal.org](http://www.UkrainianArtCentersocal.org) and on Facebook and Instagram.

Thank you for your continued support!

*Daria Chaikovsky, UAC - President*

#GIVINGTUESDAY



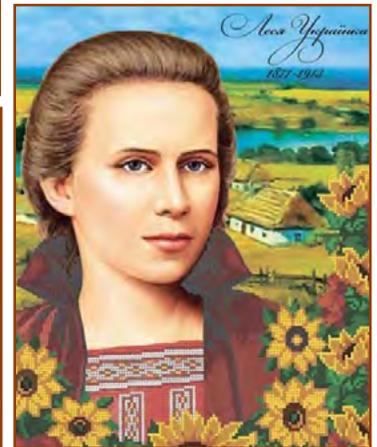
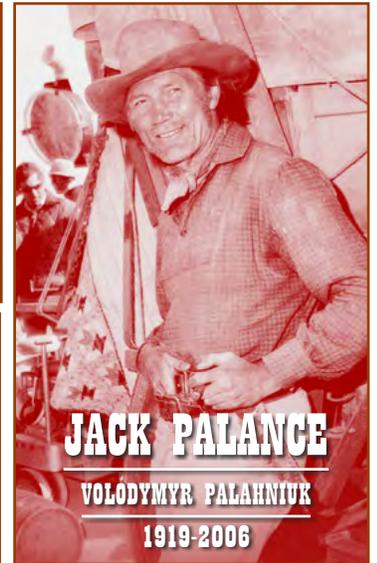
UKRAINIAN ART CENTER  
УКРАЇНСЬКИЙ МИСТЕЦЬКИЙ ЦЕНТР

**PLEASE JOIN UKRAINIAN ART CENTER  
IN FINALIZING THE DESIGN OF  
OUR ART SHOWROOM!**

# PLEASE SUPPORT US!

JOIN US AS A MEMBER AND VOLUNTEER - CONTACT US TODAY!

LET US CONTINUE TO BRING TO YOU THESE BEAUTIFUL EVENTS AND EXHIBITIONS



Donations can be made at: [www.UkrainianArtCenterSoCal.org](http://www.UkrainianArtCenterSoCal.org)

The Ukrainian Art Center is a federally recognized 501c3 and your donation is 100% tax deductible



## SPOTLIGHT ON PETRO BRECKO

My name is Petro Brecko. Our dear UAC president Daria Chai-kovska asked me to write my bio for the UAC newsletter. I'm not very sure if I'm the right person for the Newsletter column "Our Featured Artist" but I promised to Pani Daria to tell about myself long before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, so here is my story.

I'm the owner of a print shop called **PrinterPretation** located in the beautiful city of Santa Clarita, just north of Los Angeles. At my store I help to put together, design and print the UAC Newsletter already for a few years.

I think my story would be incomplete if I had not told about my parents first, because our ancestors influence and define our lives.

Both my parents were born in West Ukraine. At that time it was Galicia, part of the Republic of Poland, newly created after collapse of Austria-Hungarian Empire. My mother was one of five siblings in the family that lived in an Ukrainian village near Ternopil. My father grew up in a farmer's family at the village near Kalush, Stanislaviv region where almost half of its residents had the last name Brecko.

As most of Ukrainian young people at that time, they were very patriotic, active participants in Prosvita, and had joined OUN (Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists). When the time came they became members of the resistance. My mother was a liaison (зв'язкова) with UPA (Ukrainian Insurgent Army) and father joined UPA in 1944 and was wounded in a battle.



*My Dearest Parents, Maria Glinska and Ivan Brecko*

They were arrested by NKVD in 1945/1946 and after a long interrogations were sent to Kolyma hard labor camps on Far East of USSR. They went through the hell of torture, humiliation, backbreaking work for more than 10 years. They were released from camps a few years after the death of Stalin without the

possibility to return to Ukraine. I don't know how my parents met each other, for some reason they didn't talk about it in our family, but I was born a few years after they married. We lived in a small village 70km from Magadan, the main city of Kolyma. It was a settlement in a taiga on the Kolyma's major road at exactly the same spot where the labor camp / temporary stop for the prisoners transported to the gold and uranium mines was. At that time people still lived through brutal winters lasting for almost nine months a year in barracks left from the labor camp. My parents moved back to Ukraine only in 1982.

Now scientists say that we inherit from our parents through our genes all their positive and negative experiences. I think that I am a poster child for this hypothesis. From one hand I've got from my parents fear that horror of some events in their lives could be repeated. I think that fear influences very much of my decision-making ability. On the contrary, I inherited such an unrelenting craving for everything Ukrainian: songs, vyshivankas, cuisine, sceneries of Ukraine, language. I remember how heartily my parents sang beautiful songs, even the rebel ones, when they met with their friends, to celebrate Ukrainian holidays, and how I, then a little boy, loved to listen to them.

My parents spoke to me only in Ukrainian till I was two year old. They read Ukrainian books to me, though I still don't know where they could find them there at that time. But when they put me in kindergarten, on the very first day I had a hard time explaining to my Russian kindergarten teacher that if she couldn't find my "черевички" (little shoes) I wouldn't go outside. And she had a hard time understanding me. So my parents decided not to expose me to mockery and hate from my Russian teachers and peers and I was allowed to speak Russian in the family even when parents spoke Ukrainian. I remember my childhood as a miserable and dark period of my life, living in a very cold place where all buildings, factories, roads were built by prisoners of labor camps, educated by Russian teachers who tried to make me a perfect member of communist society. I was a top student at my school, member of Pioneers and Komsomol (both are soviet communist youth organizations). But my educators didn't like me because I was "too smart" and always asked inconvenient questions about politics and history. Now I look with jealousy when I compare that to the high school education that my daughter has here in US.

After my high school graduation I didn't have too many choices. I could stay in Kolyma, what was unthinkable to me, I could try to get into some university in Ukraine but at that time they still had unwritten rules to not accept descendants of Ukrainian insurgents, so I decided to try my luck and flew to Latvia, one of the Baltic republics. Three Baltic republics (Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia) were still occupied by the USSR, but were always considered better developed and had higher degree of freedom in the whole Soviet Union.

I've got in to the computer department at Riga Polytechnic University, and, oh boy, what a difference it was for me. Riga (capital of Latvia) is a beautiful city with medieval architecture and even more than 40 years of communistic economics couldn't destroy it completely. I fell in love with Latvia, with its hardworking and calm people, with the beauty of its nature, with sandy beaches of the Baltic Sea. There I met my beautiful wife (we are together for the 35+ years). Our oldest daughter was born there (she is an assistant professor at Rochester University Business School now, after graduating from Cornell

University and PhD program at Stanford University). I learned Latvian, it's our family language now.

Then the collapse of the USSR happened. It's hard to comprehend the importance of some occurrences when you live through them, when you are busy with your everyday life. History becomes history only when events become the past, and you look at them from the future. That happened to me. I understood the significance of the crash of communism only a few years later. After some hard times, life started to get better and the future didn't seem so grim, as it had been during soviet times.

After graduating from university, I started to work as a computer programmer but over time, I realized that instead of programming I enjoyed computer design much more. With that revelation, I became involved in design for printing and publishing houses and soon bought a print shop and started my small business owner adventure.

Then we've got the opportunity to move to the United States and we did so. That was such a different experience for me. If somebody doesn't know what cultural shock is, ask me, I have struggled for a few years to understand people, to be understood, and to achieve any professional success. My first job in the US was a paper cutter operator at a big printing house. A year later I became a proud owner of a small print shop on Ventura Blvd. in Sherman Oaks, CA.

Here, in the United States, my youngest daughter was born. She is straight A, bright high school student now. She is just half Ukrainian but I can see so many typical Ukrainian features in her: love of freedom, some anarchy, a little stubbornness, artfulness and craftsmanship of her Galician ancestors.

In 2014, when Russia invaded Ukraine, I couldn't sleep, searching for any possible information online. After many years I started to read and speak Ukrainian again. The language just came back to me with words and phrases were popping out in my head as if I had spoken Ukrainian not a many years but just a couple weeks ago. My desire to do something for Ukraine and Ukrainian community resulted in online search, so I found Ukrainian Culture Center and Ukrainian Art Center in Los Angeles, and offered my skills and services in graphic design and printing. Ever since I always try to do my best at helping Ukrainian community in the Los Angeles area to create and print professional newsletters and marketing materials for the events.

At the end I would like to tell a story of how my first name, traveling from one place to another, was transformed. I was born on St. Peter and Paul's Day. So my parents, actually, had only two options to name me. They choose the first one and I became Petro. But Russians didn't like Ukrainian sound of my name, so they put name Pyotr (Пётр) in my documents. When I moved to Latvia and received Latvian citizenship, local bureaucrats didn't allow me to take the Latvian equivalent of my name, Pēteris (after so many years of Russian occupations, I don't blame them for that) and in my Latvian passport my name appeared as Latvians pronounced it – Pjotrs. It was funny to see the wide open eyes of border patrol officers in the USA when they, with difficulties, read my name: Pdzotrs?! For some time I was Peter but when the time came to receive my US passport I decided to legally change my name. And even if some people from Latin American countries ask me how my first name is related to oil-production companies, I don't care. I am PETRO again!

## **З Різдвом Христовим і Новим Роком!**

**Прийміть найкращі побажання та щирі  
подяку за Вашу підтримку українського  
мистецтва в м. Лос-Анджелес**

*Дирекція Центру Українського Мистецтва*



**ХРИСТОС РОДИВСЯ!**

**During the Holiday Season, more than ever,  
our thoughts turn gratefully to those who  
have made our progress possible.  
And in this spirit we say, simply but  
sincerely...**

**Thank you and Best Wishes for  
the Holiday Season and a Happy  
New Year!**

*Board of Directors of the Ukrainian Art Center*

## HOLODOMOR: A REMEMBRANCE

The Guardian

1993-1998

22 x 42 x 6 in

Clay, embroidery, braided hair, letters, wood



Lydia Bodnar -Balahutrak completed her undergraduate art studies at Kent State University, studied at the Corcoran School of Art and received her Master of Fine Arts degree in painting from George Washington University, Washington, D.C. Born and raised in Cleveland, Ohio, she moved to Houston 1977, where continues to live and work.

An IREX grant enabled her to travel Ukraine for the first time in 1991. Five years later she visited Chornobyl Zone. These trips marked turning points in her creative work and world view. A concern with the human condition – always at the heart of her art – took new form and urgency. Her current work continues to explore narrative and cultural metaphor by combining collage, text figuration.

Since 1991, the artist has participated in pseveral national and international exhibitions several national and international exhibitions and has been awarded artist residencies in France, Ukraine and U.S. venues. Her work can be found in museum and private collections in the USA and Europe, including The Museum of South Texas and Oxford University. A monograph focusing on her art from 1979-2001 was published in 2005. Planned for 2021-22, a year-long traveling solo exhibition of her work opens at the National Museum in Lviv, Ukraine, and continues to art venues in Chernivtsi, Lutsk, Kyiv and Kharkiv.



## HOLODOMOR: A REMEMBRANCE

Will the Grass  
Grow over it?  
*(detail)*

2013

48 x96 in

Oil, pigmented wax, print  
media collage on linen

UAC thanks the Holodomor:A Remembrance Exhibition Committee for the invitation to participate together with other Ukrainian Partners.

## UAC is dedicating this IN MEMORIUM column to those who left us this year

With sorrow and eternal memory we acknowledge the passing of members and supporters. They were active community members and provided their experience with useful knowledge.

### Eternal Memory! Вічна пам'ять!



ANNA BUCHAY

was one of the last remaining HOLODOMOR GENOCIDE (famine 1932-33 in Ukraine) survivors.



ALEXANDER RIVNEY

was an active member of UCC and a long standing member of OCHUSU.



OXSANA KOZBUR

was a long time member of Ukrainian Woman's League LA chapter 111 and a consistent supporter of UAC.



OLHA BOYKO

was 98 years old and a long standing parishioner of NBVM Ukrainian Catholic Church, and one of the original members as well as a long time supporter of UAC.



NICHOLAS SEMCHYSHYN

In younger years he honored the community with his wonderful tenor at concerts and church services.



Світла пам'ять



*We are ecstatic to see 2020 dissipate into eternity and pray 2021 will bring joy with the advent of long awaited solution to this rife pandemic.*

*Happy New Year!*

### **THANK YOU to ALL**

who participated in Daria's #GivingTuesday  
Fundraiser for Ukrainian Art Center, Inc.

You are part of our team in making a commitment  
to keeping Ukrainian Art and Culture Alive!

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We thank you in advance!



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**UkrainianArtCenterSoCal.org**

*Tell us your story, your favorite memory of us.  
What have you seen that inspires you?*

**Sign up for our newsletter, view us on Facebook**  
**[facebook.com/UkrainianArtCenterLA](https://facebook.com/UkrainianArtCenterLA)**

## THE HISTORY OF THE UKRAINIAN ART CENTER

Based in Los Angeles, California, UAC, Ukrainian Art Center is a non-profit community organization. It was initiated by Daria Chaikovsky together with a group of like minded people in 1986 to preserve, promote and develop the Ukrainian arts in Los Angeles and California. Its initial goals reflect its present plan to create a new Ukrainian Museum in Los Angeles and to develop cultural and educational programs, alongside festivals and exhibitions. Mrs. Chaikovsky worked tirelessly with the UAC Board alongside her own business, presenting folk festivals, lectures, workshops and community projects on a small scale, consistently providing a much needed resource for the local area. Over the years UAC was the main focal point for Ukrainian arts and culture on the West coast and involved people from all ages and backgrounds including non-Ukrainians. During these fruitful years, the local city council and private patrons funded its activities including regular Annual Easter Pysanka and Holiday Yalynka events, exhibitions, concerts and more, encouraging many diverse groups and individuals to explore the richness of Ukrainian Culture.

**Become a Member of UAC** If you enjoyed any of UAC programs/events like Maidan, Road to Freedom, Pysanka Festival, Museum Fundraiser Auction, Magestic Woman-Lesia Ukrainka, and other events and workshops over the years, you are invited to become Member of UAC and take part in development or have the opportunity to help the organization grow. A Ukrainian background is not necessary - just a passion for and a need to learn about Ukrainian contemporary arts and folk arts. You will work closely with our artists, board directors and other members. We could use your help and expertise in running future programs. **Email: [ukrainianartcenter@gmail.com](mailto:ukrainianartcenter@gmail.com) | Tel: 818-635-8999**  
**Website: [ukrainianartcentersocal.org](http://ukrainianartcentersocal.org) | Facebook: [www.facebook.com/UkrainianArtCenterLA](http://www.facebook.com/UkrainianArtCenterLA) "Ukrainian Art Center Los Angeles"**

**Newsletter** The Board worked together to create a newly formatted newsletter. Previously several editions of the UAC Newsletters were published and after a break has reemerged in its new form and is available online. The UAC is run by a newly formed Board, each bringing with them unique skills and life experience that enriches the organization with a true commitment to developing its long term goals.

**'The Ukrainian Art Center News' Editorial Group:** Daria Chaikovsky, Editor in Chief; Olenka Krupa Griffies, Editor; Petro Brecko, Designer

**Contributors:** Olenka Krupa Griffies, Daria Chaikovsky, Luba Keske; **Printing:** Petro Brecko, Printer/Pretation

**UAC Board:** Daria Chaikovsky, President; Olenka Krupa, Vice President; Danuta Lopuszynska, Secretary; Olga Starow, Archivist; Paul & Michele Budilo; Asia Gorska; Elizabeth Zaharkiv Yemetz

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**Benefactors:** Bohdan & Olena Buchinsky (Supporting), Yar Chaikovsky (Founder), Daria & Lubko Carpiak (Voting), Miron Chomyn (Voting), Natalie Orlins-Gebet (Supporting), Irinej & Anne Prokopovych (Voting), Oksana Tyshovnycky (Supporting)

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