



25 Years of Weaving Stories

Across Cultures
and Generations

**KULE
FOLKLORE
CENTRE**

2025–2026



Kule Folklore Centre

Peter & Doris Kule Centre for Ukrainian & Canadian Folklore
Центр українського та канадського фольклору ім. Петра та Дорис Кулів



**UNIVERSITY
OF ALBERTA**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT





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THIS PURSE BELONGED TO ANNA KURLIIV, WHO USED IT TO KEEP HER LETTERS. SHE EMBROIDERED IT SEVERAL YEARS BEFORE MARRYING WASYL KURLIIV AND BEFORE EMIGRATING TO CANADA. IN 1988, WASYL AND ANNA KURLIIV MADE A GENEROUS DONATION IN SUPPORT OF KUFC.

WEAVING TOGETHER PAST AND PRESENT

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

It is a privilege to write my first "Director's Message" in my new role at the Kule Folklore Centre. While it's a new chapter for me, the centre itself is not new to my experience. I have followed the KuFC's work since 2011 and have long admired its rigorous research, meaningful community engagement, and lasting contributions to the study of Ukrainian culture. I extend my sincere gratitude to the centre's past directors and staff, whose dedication has built such a strong institution.

I am equally grateful for the support I received during my transition into this role — from KuFC staff, other colleagues at the University of Alberta, and members of our broader community. It is an honour to carry forward the KuFC's mission as we mark its 25th anniversary in 2026.

It must be said, however, that we're reaching this milestone at a profoundly challenging moment. Russia's full-scale invasion of

Ukraine, which began in 2022, is an escalation of the war that started in 2014 with its illegal occupation of Crimea and parts of Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts. The consequences of this armed aggression extend beyond loss of life — they also threaten Ukrainian culture, both tangible and intangible, and the identities rooted in it. Cultural, historical, and spiritual sites, as well as museums and archives, have been deliberately targeted and destroyed.

In Ukraine, archival heritage is also central to discussions of colonialism and decolonization. Over the course of multiple centuries, archival materials have been strategically removed from Ukraine through the practices of the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union, and, more recently, the Russian Federation. As a result, many of these materials are now held in Russian archives and remain largely inaccessible to researchers of Ukrainian history and culture.

At the same time, new archival materials are being created every day through the documentation of the ongoing war and the testimonies of those experiencing it, both within Ukraine and in the

diaspora. Many Ukrainians have been forced to leave their homes — villages, towns, and cities that in some cases no longer exist. This raises urgent questions about how to preserve and protect these emerging archives and ensure their future accessibility while addressing important ethical considerations.

In this context, the work of the KuFC and its Bohdan Medwidsky Ukrainian Folklore Archives gains even greater significance. Every document — whether a personal letter, memoir, photograph, or recording of a folk song — carries immense value. Together, these materials document the cultural traditions and lived experiences of Ukrainian communities across multiple waves of immigration to Canada.

From the early pioneers who came in search of opportunity to those displaced by the wars of the twentieth century, to more recent arrivals shaped by the collapse of the Soviet Union and Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine, these collections reflect a wide-ranging and complex history. Today holding approximately 550 shelf metres of material, the Medwidsky Archives continue to grow. The importance of preserving this cultural memory for research and for future generations has never been clearer.

At the same time, we know that many important historical and cultural items remain in small community and family collections, often at risk of being lost. Recognizing both the value of these records and the limits of institutional capacity, the Sustainable Ukrainian Canadian Heritage program

at KuFC continues to support community collaboration and provide consultations, training, and digitization services in order to help preserve these materials.

The KuFC also continues to support graduate students at the University of Alberta through fellowships and research opportunities. Supported students contribute to archival work, research projects, and community events organized by KuFC, while gaining valuable experience. We are also committed to supporting students and scholars affected by Russia's war against Ukraine.

In addition, the KuFC remains active in education, developing courses and teaching resources on Ukrainian culture and folklore. We are currently planning new online courses, especially focused on Ukrainian diaspora communities, as well as a comprehensive textbook on Ukrainian folklore. We also aim to expand our digital presence by developing new exhibits that present our collections in accessible, engaging ways.

Over the past year, the KuFC has organized a wide range of scholarly and community events, both in person and online. These events have helped broaden our reach and strengthen connections with diverse audiences. We have also expanded our online lecture series, which has attracted strong participation and interest.

Looking ahead, the KuFC remains committed to strengthening existing partnerships and building new ones. For instance, we are proud

to cooperate with the Ukrainian Resource and Development Centre at MacEwan University on the Indigenous Ukrainian Relationship Initiative, which fosters dialogue, collaboration, and shared understanding between Ukrainian and Indigenous communities. In cooperation with the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies and the Ya. Novytskyi Zaporizhzhia Scholarly Society we launched a three-year research initiative titled "The Voices of Steppe Ukraine," which will focus on digitization and preservation of archival collections of oral historical testimony on the history of Southern Ukraine.

The continued support of our partners, donors, and community members is essential to sustaining our work and enabling future growth. Your support allows us not only to preserve cultural heritage but also to make it accessible, relevant, and meaningful for future generations. In this way, the voices and experiences captured in our collections will continue to inform research, foster understanding, and connect communities locally, nationally, and internationally.

Dr. Oleksandr Pankiev,
*KuFC Director and Kule Chair in
Ukrainian Ethnography*



DR. OLEKSANDR PANKIEV

INTERIM DIRECTOR: IN APPRECIATION

Dr. Larisa Sembaliuk Cheladyn served as Interim Director of the Kule Folklore Centre (2024/25) and as the Kule Chair in Ukrainian Ethnography (2022/25), providing visionary leadership that strengthened the centre's role in the academic community and

beyond. Under her direction, the KuFC deepened its community engagement and donor appreciation through hosted events and exhibitions. She organized the "One Man, Talents Many..." exhibit showcasing the works of the Ukrainian Canadian artist Wadym Dobrolige at ArtsHub Ortona; brought the Canadian premiere of Volodymyr Mula's film *UKE: The Untold Story of Hockey Legends*, a story of hockey players with Ukrainian backgrounds in the NHL,

to diverse audiences; and salvaged 2,800 printing blocks, representing 100 years of journalism in the Ukrainian Canadian community (1910–2018) from the basement of the now-defunct Trident Press in Winnipeg, MB. Larisa had the blocks cleaned, archived for posterity and documented Ukrainian Canadian history, and turned into a work of art — an impressive nine-foot-high by forty-foot-wide mosaic collage with a digitally activated interactive search APP titled the "Ukrainian Voice Legacy Mosaic Project." She also supported student success by fostering research initiatives, guiding theses, and teaching innovative Ukrainian Canadian folklore courses. In recognition of her contributions to Ukrainian culture and folklore scholarship, Dr. Sembaliuk Cheladyn was honoured with a 2025 Hetman Award from the Ukrainian Canadian Congress' Alberta Provincial Council.



DR. LARISA SEMBALIUK CHELADYN

RECIPIENTS OF THE HETMAN AWARD,
NOVEMBER 9, 2025



WEAVING STORIES ACROSS CULTURES AND GENERATIONS

WHO WE ARE

The Peter and Doris Kule Centre for Ukrainian and Canadian Folklore (Kule Folklore Centre, KuFC) is a research unit at the Faculty of Arts, University of Alberta. It is one of the leading institutions for the study of Ukrainian and Ukrainian Canadian folklore and culture outside of Ukraine. For 25 years the KuFC has maintained strong links with ethnographic institutions across Canada, Ukraine, and beyond, weaving together collaborative research initiatives and scholarly exchange among its founders, endowed chairs, graduate students, post-doctoral researchers, and staff. Thread by thread, the centre has built an enduring network of partnerships and knowledge.

The KuFC houses the Bohdan Medwidsky Ukrainian Folklore Archives (BMUFA), which is the largest North American repository of Ukrainian and Ukrainian Canadian folklore materials, in or outside the university milieu.

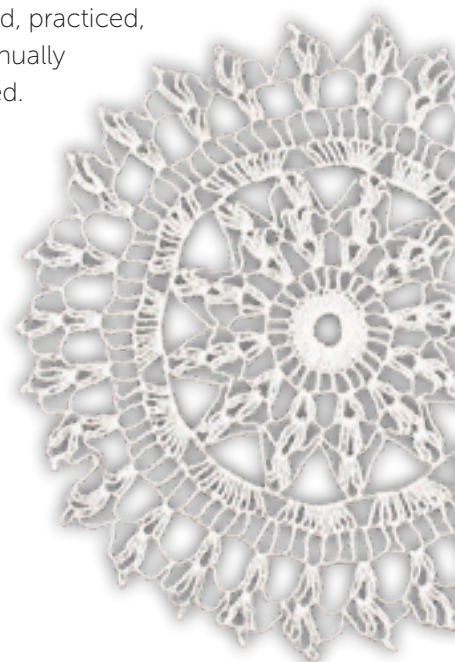
MISSION STATEMENT

The Kule Folklore Centre contributes to Ukrainian and Canadian ethnology — the discovery of truths and dissemination of knowledge about Ukrainian and Canadian culture and identity — in the context of the cultural diversity of our world. The KuFC engages with five **strategic priorities**:

- Conduct groundbreaking research in Ukrainian and Canadian folklore studies
- Maintain and enrich the Bohdan Medwidsky Ukrainian Folklore Archives
- Support undergraduate courses in Ukrainian folklore and vernacular culture
- Support researchers and students with scholarships and awards
- Engage with diverse communities through publications, exhibits, lectures, workshops, and more.

WHAT WE STUDY

Folklore studies and ethnology examine the arts, customs, beliefs, songs, crafts, and other traditions that shape everyday life, as well as the people who create and sustain them. Some traditions are centuries old, while others are surprisingly new! Through *ethnographic research*, we engage directly with communities to understand culture as it is lived, practiced, and continually reimagined.



НИТКА ДО НИТКИ – БУДЕ СВИТКА

OUR DONORS

The Kule Folklore Centre is deeply grateful for twenty-five years of opportunity to work, grow, and advance folklore studies thanks to all our donors — more than nine hundred individuals who have contributed funds, time, and archival materials to the centre and the Bohdan Medwidsky Ukrainian Folklore Archives. Your generosity has made our work possible and continues to inspire it!

Endowments

Ten permanent endowments, generously established by visionary donors and community leaders, enable KuFC to sustain its work and the work of the archives, provide support to students and scholars, and expand its mandate while remaining grounded in its core mission: researching and advancing the study of Ukrainian and Ukrainian Canadian folklore.

“HELP OTHERS, AND
THAT GOODWILL WILL
RETURN TO YOU A
HUNDREDFOLD. THIS IS
TRULY HOW I’VE TRIED TO
LIVE MY LIFE.”

— DR. ERAST HUCULAK

1985

Ukrainian
Folklore Program
Development Fund

1989

Bohdan Medwidsky
Ukrainian Folklore
Archives Endowment

2006

Peter and Doris Kule
Fellowship Endowment

2007

Mike and Elsie Kawulich
Family Endowment

2018

Peter Arabchuk Endowment
Fund for the Advancement of
Ukrainian Canadian Cultural
Heritage Preservation

1987

Wasyli and Anna Kuryliw
Family Foundation
Endowment

2003

Kule Chair in Ukrainian
Ethnography

2006

Peter and Doris
Kule Folklore Centre
Endowment

2008

Ukrainian Pioneers
Endowment Fund

2024

Cornel and Anne
Filipchuk Ukrainian
Folklore Archives
Endowment



KuFC permanent endowments were established by the following donors (alphabetical order):

PETER ARABCHUK



Supports a sustainable model of cooperation between the University of Alberta and community

archival organizations, where knowledge, expertise, and resources are shared and advanced. In particular, the endowment supports the Sustainable Ukrainian Canadian Heritage program (SUCH) as well as conferences, seminars, and special events for academic and community organizations.

CORNEL AND ANNE FILIPCHUK



Established to support the Bohdan Medwidsky Ukrainian Folklore Archives in its mandate to

document, study, and preserve for future generations Ukrainian folklore in Canada, Ukraine, and globally, and also Ukrainian Canadian history and culture.

ERAST HUCULAK & FAMILY



Erast and Lydia Huculak made a major donation to the Ukrainian Folklore Program Development

Fund (UFPDF) that was originally

established by Dr. Bohdan Medwidsky and sustained through numerous large and small donations from members of the Ukrainian community. This endowment made it possible to create the Huculak Chair in Ukrainian Culture and Ethnography and to support KuFC projects and graduate students.

MIKE AND ELSIE KAWULYCH



The Kawulich family established a special endowment

designated for scholarships, fellowships, awards, and other support for students of Ukrainian folklore.

PETER AND DORIS KULE



Peter and Doris Kule demonstrated their

remarkable generosity through substantial support of the Kule Folklore Centre. As exceptional benefactors, they established the Kule Chair in Ukrainian Ethnography Endowment, which supports the research of the Kule Chair; the Kule Folklore Centre Endowment, which sustains the centre's operations; and the Kule Fellowship Endowment, which funds post-doctoral and graduate fellowships in Ukrainian studies. In recognition of the Kules' contributions, the centre was renamed in their honour as the Peter and Doris Kule Centre for Ukrainian and Canadian Folklore.

WASYL AND ANNA KURYLIW



This family foundation honours the eminent

Ukrainian writer and ethnographer Ivan Franko by establishing a scholarship in his name. The endowment supports undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Alberta through scholarships, fellowships, research, and travel grants in the field of Ukrainian folklore.

BOHDAN MEDWIDSKY



Bohdan Medwidsky was the vision, inspiration, and driving force behind the Kule Folklore Centre, first

establishing the Ukrainian Folklore program in 1977 and later founding the centre itself. In addition to tirelessly fundraising donations and endowments, he dedicated a personal endowment to support the operations and development of the Ukrainian Folklore Archives (today named in his honour as the BMUFA).

UKRAINIAN PIONEERS ENDOWMENT

This fund supports Ukrainian cultural initiatives, publications, and bilingual studies. It assists in preserving archival records of the local Ukrainian community and promotes the distribution of materials on the Ukrainian Canadian experience to libraries, schools, and research centres in Canada and abroad.



On June 6, 2025, the Kule Folklore Centre held a plaque unveiling ceremony to recognize the foundational endowments that support the work and mission of the Kule Folklore Centre and the Bohdan Medwidsky Ukrainian Folklore Archives. New plaques honouring the generous contributions of the Mike and Elsie Kawulych Family, Peter Arabchuk, and Dr. Cornel and Mrs. Anne Filipchuk were added to the existing donor recognition display.

"The Kule Folklore Centre maintains a world-renowned archive and research library and upholds our vision to share knowledge through conferences, exhibits, and public outreach. The Kule Folklore Centre could not accomplish its many research and outreach goals each year without the support of our donors," declared Dr. Larisa Sembaliuk Cheladyn at the unveiling.

25

HISTORICAL FACTS ABOUT KuFC

1 In 1977, Bohdan Medwidsky taught the first introductory course in folklore at the UofA, which led to the creation of Ukrainian Folklore programs and, later, the KuFC.

2 In the 1980s, thanks to Bohdan Medwidsky, the programs grew into a recognized specialization at the BA, MA, and PhD levels.

3 In 1982, the first MA with a formal specialization in Ukrainian Folklore was defended.

4 The KuFC has ten endowments to date, the first being the Ukrainian Folklore Endowment, created in 1985. Almost nine hundred major and minor donations have been made to the KuFC to support its operations and various educational and research activities.

5 In 1988, the Wasyl and Anna Kuryliw Fund was created to provide scholarships to graduate students enrolled in the Ukrainian Folklore program at the U of A. Throughout its quarter-century history, the KuFC has supported more than sixty-five graduate students through endowed fellowships.

6 In 1990, the Huculak Chair in Ukrainian Culture and Ethnography was established, with Andriy Nahachewsky serving as the first chairholder (1990–2017).

7 In 1991, the first PhD dissertation with a formal specialization in Ukrainian Folklore was defended.

8 In 1995, the Friends of the Huculak Chair Society, later renamed the Society of the Friends of the Ukrainian Folklore Centre, was established to support the centre's activities and development.

9 In 2001, recognizing the significance of Ukrainian folklore studies, the U of A approved the founding of the Canadian Centre for Ukrainian Culture and Ethnography (today the KuFC).

10 Andriy Nahachewsky was appointed the first director of the KuFC (2001–2016).

11 Thanks to a generous donation from Peter and Doris Kule, the Kule Chair in Ukrainian Ethnography was established in 2004, and Natalie Kononenko was appointed the first chairholder (2004–19).

12 Since their creation at the U of A, the Huculak Chair and Kule Chair have offered dozens of undergraduate and graduate courses and seminars, including "Forms of Folklore," "History of Folklore Studies," "Slavic Mythology and Folklore," "Introduction to Ukrainian Culture," "Introduction to Ukrainian Canadian Culture Prior to 1930," and many others.

STEP BY STEP, STITCH BY STITCH

13 Four PhD graduates supported by KuFC have secured tenure-track positions: Maria Lesiv (Memorial Univ., Newfoundland), Sogu Hong (Hankuk Univ., Seoul), Natalia Khanenko-Friesen (U of A), and Andriy Nahachewsky (U of A).

14 In 2003, the Ukrainian Folklore Archives at the KuFC were renamed the Bohdan Medwidsky Ukrainian Folklore Archives in honour of their founder and inspiration, Dr. Bohdan Medwidsky. The Archives' collections began with Medwidsky students' fieldwork projects.

15 In 2003, the KuFC launched a major research project, "Local Culture and Diversity on the Prairies."

16 In recognition of the Kule family's exceptional generosity and their largest total donation to the centre, in 2006 the KuFC was given a full name, the Peter and Doris Kule Centre for Ukrainian and Canadian Folklore.

17 In 2007, the KuFC displayed its first exhibit on the U of A campus, "Ukrainian Weddings," which had previously been shown at the BWV Toronto Ukrainian Festival. Since then, the KuFC has regularly participated in numerous Ukrainian festivals in Alberta and across Canada. To date, the KuFC has created no fewer than thirteen different exhibits.

18 In 2008, the KuFC hosted its first post-doctoral fellow, Maria Mayerchyk (2008/09). The second post-doctoral fellow was Matthias Kaltenbrunner (2020/21), and the most recent one is Olga Zaitseva-Herz (2024–26).

19 In 2016, Jelena Pogosjan was appointed the second director of the KuFC (2016–22).

20 In 2018, the KuFC hosted a major conference, "Ukrainian Archival Collections in Canada: Preserving the Past, Building the Future."

21 In 2018, the Sustainable Ukrainian Canadian Heritage archival preservation program was launched, thanks to a donation from Peter Arabchuk.

22 In 2020, Natalia Khanenko-Friesen was appointed as Huculak Chair in Ukrainian Culture and Ethnography.

23 In 2022, the inaugural Annual Bohdan Medwidsky Memorial Lecture was launched, with Robert Bohdan Klymasz as the first invited lecturer.

24 After Pogosjan, the KuFC operated under two interim directors: Andie Palmer (2023/24) and Larisa Sembaliuk Cheladyn (2024/25), who also served as the Kule Chair.

25 In 2025, Oleksandr Pankieiev was appointed as the new director of the KuFC and Kule Chair in Ukrainian Ethnography, and as an associate professor in the Arts Faculty's Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies.



OFFICIAL REDEDICATION OF THE BOHDAN MEDWIDSKY UKRAINIAN FOLKLORE ARCHIVE MOVED FROM HUB MALL TO THE OLD ARTS BUILDING IN SUMMER 2009. APRIL 8, 2010

REPORTS BY OUR CHAIRS

Huculak Chair in Ukrainian Culture and Ethnography

During this reporting period, my work at the Arts Faculty's Kule Folklore Centre as Huculak Chair of Ukrainian Culture and Ethnography continued to focus on advancing Ukrainian cultural studies through research, public scholarship, and international academic collaboration, while also contributing to the institutional leadership of the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Alberta.

A significant highlight of the year was receiving the Order of Princess Olga, awarded by decree of the President of Ukraine on August 24, 2025. The award recognizes women who have made important contributions to culture, education, and public life in Ukraine and internationally. I accepted this distinction with deep gratitude, seeing it not only as a personal honour but also as recognition of the broader work being done in

Ukrainian studies at the University of Alberta and on documenting Ukraine's cultural and historical experiences during a time of war and transformation.

During the reporting period I also continued to serve as CIUS Director, and I was reappointed to this role for another term. CIUS remains one of the leading global centres for the study of Ukraine, and my leadership work involves supporting research initiatives, fostering international partnerships, mentoring scholars, and strengthening the institute's public and scholarly impact.

My research and publications this year focused on themes of archives, oral history, and the politics of memory during wartime. In an essay on archival sovereignty, I examine the challenges faced by Ukrainian archival institutions and researchers during Russia's war against Ukraine, particularly in relation to the preservation, interpretation, and protection of documentary heritage (transl. title "Archival sovereignty: Ukrainian archaeographic data and the challenges of wartime," *Ukraina Moderna*, 2025). Forthcoming in 2026, also in *Ukraina Moderna*, will be my peer-reviewed essay

exploring methodological questions of oral history research in the context of the ongoing war, reflecting on how testimony, memory, and research practice intersect during periods of crisis.

My work also contributed to several edited volumes and scholarly books. I wrote the introduction on community archiving in Ukraine for a manual dedicated to grassroots archival practices ("Community archiving in Ukraine at a historical turning point," in *How to Preserve Memory: A Manual for Community Archiving*, 2025). I also authored the introduction to an art book with the translated title "It Takes Three to Tango: The True Story of a Fictitious Romance in the Correspondence of Ivan Ostafiichuk and Natalka Husar" (Rodovid Press, 2025), which reflects on artistic collaboration, memory, and narrative. In addition, I co-edited (with Alex Averbuch and Jelena Pogosjan) a scholarly volume examining censorship, surveillance, and resistance in twentieth-century Ukraine through the lens of correspondence and letter writing (*Postal Censorship, Surveillance, Resistance: Twentieth-Century Ukraine and Letter Writing*, forthcoming 2026).

Conference participation and scholarly exchange remained an important component of my academic work. In May 2025, I organized and moderated a panel on Crimean Tatar studies at the annual conference of the Canadian Association of Slavists. The panel highlighted emerging research and was connected to the new joint CIUS/Faculty of Native Studies PhD Fellowship in Indigenous



ORGANIZERS AND PARTICIPANTS OF
WWWSI 2025 (JULY 31, 2025, UZHGOROD)

Crimean Tatar Studies at the U of A. Later in the summer, I participated in the XI World Congress of the International Council for Central and East European Studies in London, presenting in two panels—one focused on the Ukrainian diaspora during the war and another addressing archival activism and endangered memories.

In addition to these activities, I presented research in the U of A's College of Social Sciences and Humanities Research Showcase, highlighting our ongoing oral history project on Ukrainian displaced persons in Canada following Russia's escalated invasion in 2022. This project, conducted with CIUS's Mariia Burtseva, documents how newcomers arriving under the CUAET program are building lives and communities in Canada while maintaining connections to a homeland at war.

I also participated in several academic and public discussions addressing historical memory and wartime narratives. At the ASEES Convention in Washington, DC, I contributed to a round table examining the transformation of historical memory from KGB archives to digital media. My presentation focused on new AI-assisted analytical tools, developed through the Adalet Project, that help researchers to identify and interpret repressive language in Soviet archival documents related to Crimean Tatars. In February 2026, I initiated and joined colleagues in an online CIUS round table marking four years since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, where we discussed how narratives of the war are



evolving—from official chronicles and political analysis to testimonial and documentary forms.

Public engagement and cultural programming were also an important part of my work this year. I participated in several presentations of the book "It Takes Three to Tango" in Lviv, Kyiv, Edmonton, and Toronto, speaking about the project and its broader cultural and historical context. These events brought together scholars, artists, and members of the public and demonstrated the continued interest in Ukrainian culture and scholarship across different communities.

Two major research initiatives remain central to my work as Huculak Chair. The first is the community-based oral history project documenting the experiences of Ukrainian displaced persons in Canada after 2022, which seeks to capture stories of migration, adaptation, and belonging during wartime. The second is the continued development of the Witnessing the War on Ukraine Summer Institute, an international training and research platform dedicated to testimony, oral history, and the preservation of wartime memory, which I initiated in 2022 and continue to co-organize with several international

partners. The 2025 institute, held in Uzhhorod, Ukraine, marked the first time the program returned to Ukraine since the full-scale invasion in 2022. The WWSI focused on the theme "Testimonies as Cultural Heritage for Future Memory Landscapes." My roles included delivering opening remarks, moderating several sessions, and co-presenting a conceptual lecture on oral history as cultural heritage. The program has brought together scholars, archivists, and students to explore how testimonies of war can be preserved and interpreted for future generations.

Overall, this reporting period was defined by a continued commitment to research, mentorship, and international collaboration in Ukrainian studies. Through publications, conferences, teaching initiatives, and community-engaged research, I worked to strengthen scholarly understanding of Ukraine's cultural and historical experiences while supporting the development of new academic networks and research projects during a critical moment for Ukraine and for the field of Ukrainian studies.

Professor Natalia Khanenko-Friesen,
CIUS Director and Huculak Chair in Ukrainian Culture and Ethnography

Kule Chair in Ukrainian Ethnography

In July 2025, I was appointed as both the Director of the KuFC and Kule Chair in Ukrainian Ethnography as well as an Associate Professor in the Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies. As Kule Chair, I taught two folklore courses last year—"Forms of Folklore" and "History of Folklore"; although they are not exclusively focused on Ukrainian folklore, I incorporated numerous case studies and examples drawn from Ukrainian traditions and schools of thought in both.

I have also revised several existing courses to reflect current scholarship, evolving research, and public interest, shaped by the ongoing turmoil caused by Russia's war against Ukraine, as well as broader global trends. For instance, the course "Ukrainian Canadian Culture" has been retitled "Ukrainian Canadian Community and Culture"; the revised course examines the development of the Ukrainian community in Canada from the late nineteenth to the twenty-first century, with a focus on community life, folklore, collective memory, and other dimensions of cultural and identity formation and expression.

These revisions broadened the course's chronological framework, enhancing its coherence and inclusivity for students interested in both the Ukrainian Canadian experience and comparative patterns across different waves of immigration and intergenerational development. The course now

also considers diverse migration trajectories to Canada and the experiences of subsequent generations, situating the Ukrainian community within a broader historical and sociocultural context.

One of the most exciting contributions I can make to the department is developing new courses. For example, "Media, Propaganda, and the Representation of Eastern Europe" explores how Eastern European countries—particularly Ukraine—are portrayed across various media discourses. The course examines the historical, political, and cultural processes that shape these narratives in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. It addresses themes such as propaganda, memory politics, disinformation, national identity, folklore, and information warfare. Students engage with a wide range of media, including oral traditions, print and broadcast journalism, cinema, music, and social media, to analyze how both local and global actors shape representation. Special attention is given to the influence of Russian propaganda.

I am also exploring the possibility of developing a Massive Open Online Course focused on the Ukrainian diaspora around the world. This project is in the feasibility analysis stage, focusing on identifying potential sponsors and consulting with prospective collaborators.

In terms of research and publication, my article "Deconstructing Narratives of Belonging and Otherness among Steppe Ukraine Villagers: Place,

Space, Language, and Historical Consciousness" was published in the *Journal of Ethnology and Folkloristics*. I am also currently compiling a second volume of interviews and essays selected from the *Forum for Ukrainian Studies* when I served as its editor-in-chief. Forthcoming under the title *Narratives of the Russo-Ukrainian War: Voices of Faith, Hope, and Resistance*, this volume brings together critical reflections from a fascinating variety of scholars and experts on the ongoing struggle for survival, memory, culture, identities, and the future of Ukraine.

In addition, the proceedings of the conference that I organized last February in Ottawa, "The Russo-Ukrainian War: Russia's Information Warfare Strategies in Comparative Perspective," are currently being prepared for publication in early 2027.

Another stimulating area of my activity is presenting at conferences and round tables. I had the opportunity to do so in Germany, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada, exploring the intersection of digital folklore and propaganda and emphasizing their deep intertwining and mutual reinforcement.

I was also invited to host discussions and Q&A sessions following screenings of the 2025 documentary *Horizons of Belonging*, which I co-directed with Steven Brese. Screenings took place at several venues, including the Ukrainian Canadian Congress' Triennial Conference in Toronto in November. Additional screenings were held in February 2026 at the



HORIZONS OF BELONGING SCREENING IN VEGREVILLE, FEBRUARY 22, 2026.

University of Victoria, the University of Alberta, and in Vegreville, marking the fourth anniversary of Russia's escalated invasion of Ukraine. This ethnographic film examines how four Ukrainian families in Edmonton and Calgary navigate the challenges of rebuilding their lives in a new country following their emigration.

Finally, I participated in several podcast interviews. On an episode of the soon-to-be-released "Granddaughter of Immigrants" podcast, I discussed how different waves and generations of Ukrainian immigrants to Canada narrate their experiences of migration

and settlement, contrasting these accounts with narratives from individuals who lived in Soviet Ukraine and examining the role of fear as a mechanism used by the Soviet regime to shape personal and collective memory. I was also interviewed for the "SSH: The Podcast," which highlights research and creative activities in the College of Social Sciences and Humanities at the University of Alberta, where I discussed my research and projects led by the Kule Folklore Centre.

Dr. Oleksandr Pankieiev
KuFC Director and Kule Chair in Ukrainian Ethnography



OLEKSANDR PANKIEIEV AND KYLER ZELENY



ANNA PALENCHUK AND OLEKSANDR PANKIEIEV

// I TRANSLATED
TRADITIONAL
UKRAINIAN
EMBROIDERY
PATTERNS ...
INTO MUSICAL
COMPOSITIONS,
EXPLORING
HOW VISUAL
AND MATERIAL
HERITAGE CAN BE
TRANSFORMED
INTO SOUND. //

POST- DOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP

As an ethnomusicologist, composer, and performer, I have been particularly drawn to studying Ukrainian musical traditions preserved in diaspora archives and their contemporary resonance during Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. My work at the Kule Folklore Centre has allowed me to engage directly with archival recordings documenting Ukrainian immigrant communities in Canada and their efforts to preserve identity through song.

I developed artistic and scholarly projects that explore how archival materials can be reactivated in contemporary contexts. In my project "Embroidery in Sound," I translated traditional Ukrainian embroidery patterns—objects deeply embedded in cultural memory — into musical compositions, exploring how visual and material heritage can be transformed into sound. Similarly, in my project "Songs from the Prairies," I worked with archival folk song recordings collected by Robert Klymasz documenting Ukrainian immigrant communities in Canada.

As a Fellow at the Leibniz ScienceCampus Europe and America and Denkraum Ukraine at the University of Regensburg, I represented the

Kule Folklore Centre through a lecture-concert illustrating Ukrainian immigration to Canada through archival songs. As a Non-Residential Fellow at the USC Shoah Foundation, I studied musical testimonies of the Holocaust in Ukraine, examining how sound functions as historical witness and exploring parallels with contemporary wartime experiences. My research expedition to wartime Ukraine, participation in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum faculty seminar, and teaching appointments in Germany, Ukraine, and North America further deepened my engagement with documenting music as testimony during times of violence and displacement.

Looking forward, I plan to continue developing research and artistic projects based on archival materials, including a book exploring music as testimony and a weapon in contexts of war and displacement, as well as new compositions inspired by archival recordings. The Kule Folklore Centre has been foundational to my development as a scholar and artist, providing not only access to extraordinary archival collections but also an intellectual environment that has shaped my commitment to preserving and reactivating Ukrainian cultural memory.

Dr. Olga Zaitseva-Herz,
Post-Doctoral Fellow

DR. OLGA ZAITSEVA-HERZ



BOHDAN MEDWIDSKY UKRAINIAN FOLKLORE ARCHIVES

Over the last twelve months, the Bohdan Medwidsky Ukrainian Folklore Archives went through an important transition. In July 2025, Dr. Oleksandr Pankieiev was appointed Academic Curator of the Archives, succeeding Dr. Larisa Sembaliuk Cheladyn, who had served in this role for eighteen months. The BMUFA moved smoothly through this transition and continued to fulfill its core mandate, under the supervision of archive's assistant Nataliia Yesypenko, of preserving, managing, and providing access to Ukrainian Canadian folklore and cultural heritage materials. This period was also marked by the work of an active team of six archival assistants — graduate and undergraduate students whose contributions were essential to the archives' daily operations and overall productivity.

The BMUFA team mainly focused on archival processing, digitization, and reference services while maintaining ongoing cooperation with donors. During the reporting period, seven archival collections were fully or nearly completed, including the D-Drifters and Ukrainian Bookstore, Stephania Nahachewsky, and Triska-Aronec genealogical collections. One of the most substantial among them was the Dmytruk family fonds, formally acquired by the BMUFA in 2024.

STITCHING TOGETHER FRAGMENTS OF THE PAST

The initial point of contact with the Dmytruk family occurred when Rostyslaw Dmytruk visited the University of Alberta Archives and was referred to the BMUFA. During his first visit, he brought an envelope containing sewing patterns that had belonged to his mother, Neonila Dmytruk. The story of these patterns began in Graz, Austria, where the Dmytruk family moved after the Second World War. In their new circumstances, Neonila had to learn many new skills, including sewing clothing for a household of six.

After a series of meetings, the Dmytruk family decided to donate their entire family archives to the BMUFA and provided financial support for its processing. The Dmytruk family fonds includes several metres of family correspondence, diaries, and photographs documenting more than a century of family history, personal documents, and examples of clothing sewn by Neonila Dmytruk in Graz.

Approximately six hundred hours of work have gone into this project. Under Yesypenko's supervision,

archival assistants Marta Dvuliat and Illia Pokotylo have been working on the collection from the beginning. More information about the Dmytruk family history is available on the BMUFA website.

In 2025, the Medwidsky Archives accepted fourteen new donations, accessioning books, Ukrainian music on long-play 33-rpm records, and several family fonds from members of the Ukrainian community in Alberta, Manitoba, and Ontario.

Another central component of the BMUFA activities continues to be digitization. Staff and students scan documents and photographic materials, digitize audio cassettes, and create descriptive and technical metadata. One of the most significant digitization projects during the reporting period was, and continues to be, digitization of the UCAMA photograph collection. The Ukrainian Canadian Archives and Museum of Alberta (UCAMA) collected materials for over forty years before closing in 2020, at which point a substantial portion of its archival holdings were



BMUFA TEAM: ERIC FINCHAM, BRITTANY DYCK, JONATHAN GROSSMAN, NATALIYA YESYPENKO, ILLIA POKOTYLO, EMILY SIMON

transferred to the BMUFA, including photographs.

A test phase for this project began in the spring of 2025 with the help of a volunteer and, later, KuFC MA student Emily Simon, who digitized approximately two hundred photographs. This phase helped Nataliia Yesypenko to develop and test a workflow, calculate time requirements, and identify technical challenges. This work supported a successful application to the Young Canada Works (YCW) program, and during the summer of 2025 YCW student Marta Dvuliat continued working on the project. In total, over 2,500 photographs were digitized and metadata were created for more than 1,200 images. The full UCAMA Photograph Collection contains

approximately fifteen thousand photographs documenting personal histories, family life, and community events across Alberta.

This work remains in progress and will require further development, but it has already improved access to one of the Archives' largest photographic collections and laid the groundwork for future digitization and description.

Alongside ongoing digitization efforts, the Archives continued to address digital preservation challenges. The BMUFA backup storage infrastructure, which currently holds approximately 145 TB of data, requires constant monitoring and maintenance. Under the supervision of Nataliia Yesypenko, over the past year

Jonathan Grossman assessed older digital storage media and developed detailed documentation and a plan for future improvements. This work has helped to identify at-risk materials and prioritize them for immediate action. Replacement of the existing infrastructure with a more sustainable and reliable system is now underway.

Another aspect of the Archives' digital work was supported by Eric Fincham, who was responsible for maintaining obsolete equipment used for the digitization of various older media formats and ensuring its timely repair and calibration. He also reviewed and expanded existing digitization instructions for reel-to-reel audio tapes and long-play MiniDiscs, and is currently working on setting up a VCR player

to support future audiovisual digitization efforts.

Providing access to archival holdings and responding to reference inquiries is one of the Archives' core responsibilities. During the reporting period, the Archives handled over forty-five reference requests, reflecting sustained interest in both the physical collections and the online database. Requests included, for example, consultations on the Ukrainian Diaspora Composers collection, CIUS oral history project, the Olga Vesey Ukrainian folk tales collection, and materials related to embroidery, ritual practices, and Ukrainian music recordings on long-play vinyl records. Family and genealogical inquiries often focused on personal and community collections such as the Paranchych family, Mykhailo Bilas, Cultural Immersion Camp Selo, Ukrainian Catholic Brotherhood of Canada collections, with users seeking interviews, photographs, sound recordings, and contextual information linked to specific people and places.

Online access plays an important role in supporting this use. In 2025, the BMUFA website recorded approximately twenty thousand visits. The most viewed pages included records related to photographs, music collections, fieldwork materials, clothing and family fonds, including the Maryna Hrymych Brazil collection, Patricia Pelech Carrow Ukrainian folk art, Ivan Lahola, Robert Klymasz Fieldwork, Ukrainian Music on Long Play Record 33 rpm collection. Website visitors came

from a wide range of countries, including Canada, the United States of America, Ukraine, Poland, Germany, Australia, Brazil and more.

In the coming year, the Archives plans to continue processing priority collections and addressing remaining backlogs. Key initiatives include hosting archival residencies to advance the processing and interpretation of selected collections, participating in an international folklore conference in Reykjavik to share

research and archival practice, and engaging in community outreach through events such as the Pysanka Festival in Vegreville. At the same time, the Archives will focus on strengthening both its physical and digital stewardship of collections by continuing large-scale digitization efforts and completing the transition to a more sustainable and reliable digital storage infrastructure.

Nataliia Yesypenko

Archive's Assistant / Researcher



350+
COLLECTIONS

550+
LINEAR METRES

~800
TEXTILE ITEMS

~1000
ARTIFACTS

A ROOM WITHOUT BOOKS IS LIKE A BODY WITHOUT A SOUL КНИГА ВЧИТЬ, ЯК НА СВІТІ ЖИТЬ

KuFC LIBRARY

The cataloguing of the BMUFA Library steadily continues at the Kule Folklore Centre, with over 5000 records available for public viewing at present. This past year, Library Assistant Sia Chernyavska successfully completed cataloguing the Ukrainian folk songs section of our library. This rich collection encompasses a diverse array of folk songs, including Ukrainian *ballads*, *dumy*, *kolomyiky*, love songs, wedding songs, children's songs, and carols — each representing an important part of Ukrainian and Ukrainian-Canadian cultural heritage.

Our library's music and songs collection was significantly enriched through a generous donation organized by Christie Teterenko, consisting of books from personal collections of Rev. Father Andrew Mykytych Teterenko and George Skibineckij. The library also accepted donations from other community members, such as Joyce Sirski-Howell's cookbook collection, adding the breadth and depth of our holdings.

In October, the Kule Folklore Centre organized a memorable evening

with internationally acclaimed Canadian artist Natalka Husar, marking the publication of a new book, *It Takes Three to Tango: The True Story of a Fictitious Romance in the Correspondence of Ivan Ostafiichuk and Natalka Husar*. The event was a great success, and all available copies of the book left in the hands of event participants. KuFC is proud to have added this publication to our online Marketplace, alongside titles from various other authors. Husar also generously donated copies of some of her other publications to the centre, including *Mokre horyt': Soaking Wet and on Fire*, *Husar Handbook*, *Aptechka: Burden of Innocence*, and *Black Sea Blue: Natalka Husar Paintings* — all now discoverable through WikiLibrary.

At Edmonton's UFest Ukrainian festival in May 2025, our annual dollar book sale proved again to be a successful tradition, with new homes found for more than three boxes of Ukrainian and English-language books on Ukrainian and Ukrainian Canadian folk culture. Of the festival-goers gathered at the KuFC booth, recent newcomers were interested in books to practice English, and young Ukrainian Canadians sought to rediscover

their heritage through learning the Ukrainian language.

The Kule Folklore Centre collaborated with University of Alberta Archives, Library, and Museums on digitization of the *Kaliendar Ukrains'koho Holosu* (Ukrainian Voice Calendar). All the issues from our holdings, along with some that were generously lent to us by Karen Lemiski from the Basilian Fathers Museum in Mundare, are currently available through the Internet Archive, preserving these valuable resources for researchers and community members worldwide.

Throughout the year, Sia Chernyavska catalogued the remainder of the KuFC Library's *pysanky* publications collection (begun in 2024) among small collections from different sections: Ukrainian history books, published compilations of prose and folk tales, embroidery books, and folk dance publications. In addition to cataloguing new acquisitions, Sia continues the important work of updating call numbers and reclassifying Ukrainian history publications, contributing to broader efforts to decolonize Slavic Studies. This work ensures that our library holdings reflect contemporary understandings and respects the individuality and cultural context of Ukraine.

After the passing of her grandmother in late September, Sia found comfort in working with Ukrainian folk songs that her grandmother had sung to her during childhood — a poignant reminder of how our library materials carry not just information but living memories and personal stories.

Sia Chernyavska continues to assist library visitors on their research journeys, manage the KuFC's marketplace, and catalogue publications from the holdings, which number well over ten thousand to date.

We invite you to browse our catalogue at library.ukrfolk.ca or visit us in person to explore our

current collections. While our holdings are available for viewing at the KuFC, please note that library materials do not circulate at this time — we encourage researchers and community members to visit us and engage with these treasures firsthand.

Sia Chernyavska,
BMUFA Library Assistant



New additions to KuFC Marketplace:

Khanenko-Friesen, Natalia. *"Inshyi svit" abo etnichnist' u dii : kanads'ka ukraïns'kist' kintsia dvadtsiatoho stolittia* (The "Other World" or Ethnicity in Action: Canadian Ukrainianness at the end of the 20th century). Kyiv: Smoloskyp, 2011; Saskatoon: Heritage Press, 2011.

Khanenko-Friesen, Natalia. *Ukrainian Otherlands: Diaspora, Homeland, and Folk Imagination in the Twentieth Century*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2015.

Lykhach, Lidiia (comp.). (It Takes Three to Tango : The True Story of a Fictitious Romance in the Correspondence of Ivan Ostafiichuk and Natalka Husar). Introd. by Natalia Khanenko-Friesen. Kyiv: Rodovid, 2025.

Hanchuk, Rena Jeanne. *The Word and Wax: A Medical Folk Ritual Among Ukrainians in Alberta*. Edmonton: CIUS Press, 1999.

Hawryliw, Patricia (Pat). *Ukrainian Ritual Breads*. Saskatoon, 2021.

Gordey, Gordon. *His Name Was Henry*. Edmonton, 2025.

Medvids'kyi, Bohdan, and Maryna Hrymych. *Narysy z ukraïns'ko-kanads'koï fol'klorystyky*. Kyiv: Duliby, 2016.



SUSTAINABLE UKRAINIAN CANADIAN HERITAGE

During the reporting year, the Sustainable Ukrainian Canadian Heritage (SUCH) program continued its work of supporting Ukrainian Canadian archival initiatives. Based at the Kule Folklore Centre and supported by the Peter Arabchuk Endowment, the program continued to work from a simple premise: heritage should not sit quietly in boxes tucked away in church storage rooms or private basements. It needs to be found and used by community members as much as by researchers.

This year, the SUCH team, Dmytro Yesypenko and Sia Chernyavska, focused on practical groundwork: improving primarily database structure, refining outreach and staying in regular contact with partners. Much of their work unfolded through consultations and conversations with community leaders, KuFC colleagues, archival specialists, and scholars across disciplines. At the same time, it required steady, detail-oriented labour — indexing materials, verifying metadata, and preparing entries for publication in the SUCH Network database so that collections could circulate beyond their point of origin.

The SUCH Network database continued to expand. New materials were added, including resources related to diaspora communities and archival holdings from national institutions. Community-led initiatives also grew in scope. For instance, Russell Sawchuk's documentation of pioneer churches, long focused on Prairie sites, now includes Orthodox churches across Canada. The new materials will be incorporated into the collection description in the SUCH database. Supporting work such as Mr. Sawchuk's and helping to bring it to a wider audience is both a responsibility and a commitment we value deeply.

KNITTING COMMUNITIES THROUGH ARCHIVES

To improve usability, the team produced instructional videos explaining how to navigate the SUCH Network database. Early technical challenges — particularly with audio quality — underscored how easily small details can affect accessibility. Attention to such details reflects a broader commitment of the program: materials must be not only safeguarded but genuinely accessible — to visitors onsite and to users online, now and in the years ahead.

Digitization progressed on several fronts. For instance, the *Promin'* journal of the Ukrainian Women's Association of Canada (UWAC) advanced toward global accessibility through collaboration with the University of Alberta's Library Digital Initiatives team and the Internet Archive. The broader UWAC archival collection —

over one hundred boxes — was transferred to Library and Archives Canada through the dedication of UWAC volunteers and with support from the Kule Folklore Centre.

One of the most meaningful undertakings this year was continued work on the "Letters from Refugees" (Skytalsi) collection within the UWAC archive. Written between the mid-1940s and the 1960s, these letters capture the

experiences of displaced Ukrainians and the networks that supported them. The collection has been digitized, and the team began preparing a searchable index of names and locations mentioned in the correspondence. Because the letters are mostly handwritten, this process cannot be automated; it proceeds line by line. Yet its value is considerable. Even without publishing full texts, searchable names can reconnect descendants with fragments of family history and open new possibilities for research on postwar migration. Interest from colleagues — including from the University of Regensburg, in the region where some of the letters originated nearly eighty years ago — has further demonstrated the transnational relevance of the collection.

The program functions within the larger KuFC ecosystem. Working under the Director's guidance and in close collaboration with colleagues, the SUCH team benefits from shared expertise across the centre. When a community member recently sought advice on organizing the personal archive

18 COLLECTIONS
PRESENTED IN THE
SUCH DATABASE

15+ PARTNER
ORGANIZATIONS
& COMMUNITIES

130+ FAMILY HISTORY ITEMS IN THE
MOMRYK AND THE BMUFA
FAMILY HISTORY COLLECTIONS

280+
IMAGES IN THE
GUSHUL COLLECTION

1945–1965
COVERAGE OF THE "LETTERS
FROM REFUGEES" COLLECTION

~120 AGE OF THE OLDEST
MATERIALS PRESENTED
IN THE DATABASE

10+
EVENTS AND
WORKSHOPS HELD

9000+
VIEWS OF SUCH EDUCATIONAL VIDEO
RECORDINGS ON YOUTUBE

of a relative who had been a prominent figure in the Ukrainian Catholic Church, for example, the centre's archivist provided essential professional guidance. Encounters of this kind illustrate how the program operates in practice: less as a standalone initiative, more as a practical link between the initiatives of private custodians — who often lack formal training — and institutional archival standards.

SUCH's year was also shaped by the program's cooperation with the KuFC communications team. The centre's interview series

continued with Andrij Hornjatkevych, Khrystia Kohut, and Jars Balan. The generosity and depth of the interviewees consistently exceeded expectations. In particular, Jars' extended reflections — including a walking conversation that retraces the footsteps of Ukrainian pioneers in Edmonton — will, as time allows, be developed into a publicly accessible self-guided resource. Edited shorter versions of all the interviews will be released through the Kule Podcast, while the full-length recordings have been deposited for long-term preservation in the Medwidsky Archives.

The year also prompted renewed thinking about SUCH outreach. While newsletters and Centre events have been aimed at providing visibility, we realized that we need to explain more clearly what SUCH actually offers — consultation, digitization advice, database integration, and referrals to archival partners. Plans are underway for a larger fall event that will be dedicated to Ukrainian and Ukrainian Canadian archival initiatives, alongside enhanced newsletter engagement. Conversations with community leaders — including during recent visits from representatives

of the Shevchenko Foundation and UNF-Edmonton — reinforced the importance of listening attentively to community priorities.

Much of the work done by SUCH happens behind the



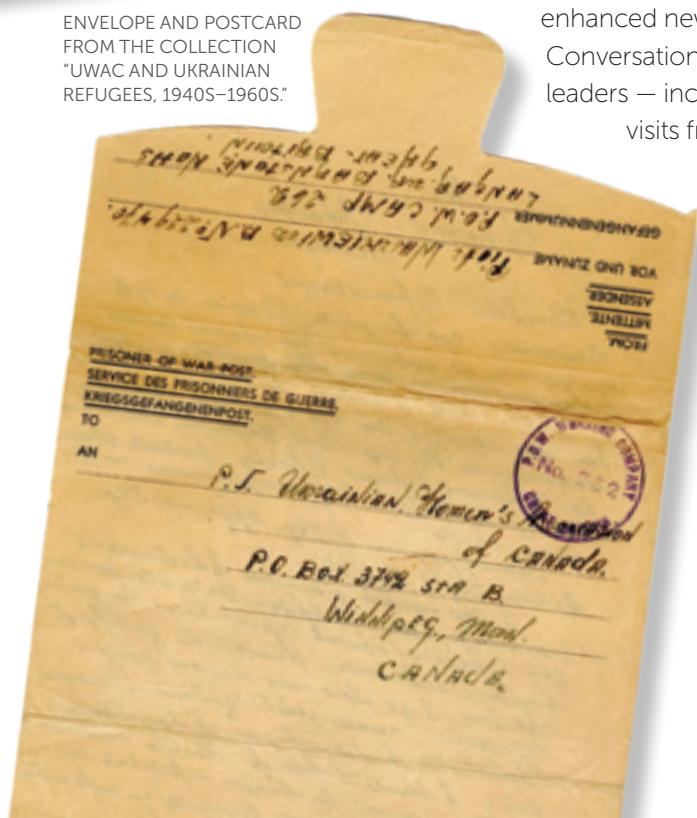
SUCH TEAM: DMYTRO YESYPENKO, SIA CHERNYAVSKA

scenes. We spend time clarifying permissions, advising community archivists, improving searchability, and linking local initiatives with national institutions. These steps are not always visible, but they create conditions in which research and community memory can flourish. The SUCH program directly advances the Kule Folklore Centre's commitments to community engagement, knowledge mobilization, and partnership-building. At a time when questions of memory and displacement remain pressing, this work helps to ensure that Ukrainian Canadian heritage is both preserved and actively used.

Sia Chernyavska & Dmytro Yesypenko



ENVELOPE AND POSTCARD FROM THE COLLECTION "UWAC AND UKRAINIAN REFUGEES, 1940S-1960S"



651
Хакада.
Canada

МЕЖДУНАРОДНОЕ



Ламонт Альта
Lamont alta
Бокс 201
Box 201
Дмитрук Елена
Dmytruk Kelly

Адрес отправления:

УССР

Украина ССР

Львів

ул. Черемшника №10

Дзюровиц

Іван Мисев



WE SHALL EACH TRAVEL THE
RIVER TOGETHER — SIDE BY
SIDE, BUT IN OUR OWN BOATS.
– FROM THE CENTRAL CREE PHILOSOPHY
CALLED WAHKOHTOWIN 'KINSHIP'

INDIGENOUS- UKRAINIAN RELATIONSHIP INITIATIVE

The Indigenous–Ukrainian Relationship Initiative (IURI), a joint initiative between the Ukrainian Resource and Development Centre at MacEwan University and the Kule Centre for Ukrainian and Canadian Folklore at the U of A, continues to explore, study, and reflect on our shared and divided Indigenous–Ukrainian pasts in order to be good neighbours and build a better future together.

The initiative is co-coordinated by Larysa Hayduk and Maryna Chernyavska, who are part of the IURI Working Group along with Myrna Kostash and Naomi McIlwraith. Below we share highlights of our activities throughout the past year — with gratitude to all those who have contributed, supported, showed up, asked questions, and listened. We are honoured to be learning along with you.

The ongoing research project “Visiting Neighbours, Learning from the Land,” which started with a land-based experiential event in 2023, is nearing completion. Our in-depth interviews have been transcribed, and a report is being prepared based on what we learned from the participants.

The work we are doing — including a resonant event that gathered Indigenous and settler participants, first at the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village (UCHV) and then at the Métis Crossing cultural centre — has had a ripple effect. We are very pleased to see the UCHV provincial museum integrating stories of Indigenous communities into its planning, training, and programming, as well as continued research into this area. We are also thrilled to see offerings of cultural events along the lines of those which were part of the “Visiting Neighbours, Learning from the Land” program at Métis Crossing, blending prairie cultural traditions and Métis and Ukrainian cuisines.

Also with the intention of nurturing more intentional relationships between Ukrainian and Métis communities, the IURI convened a virtual gathering in April titled

“Gathering Places: Bridging Indigenous and Ukrainian Traditions” (April 10, 2025). More than a webinar, it became a space of listening and remembering.

Tiffany Shaw, a Métis architect, spoke to the strength of community networks and the responsibilities embedded in Indigenous approaches to development — where land, kinship, and collective well-being remain central. Pamela Trischuk traced the evolution of Ukrainian gathering places in East Central Alberta — how halls, churches, and Métis cultural centres emerged not only as sites of celebration but as anchors of belonging. Her reflections invite us to consider how diasporic communities root themselves in new landscapes. Together, their insights encourage a deeper question: how might our respective traditions of gathering

THE INDIGENOUS–
UKRAINIAN
RELATIONSHIP
INITIATIVE BRINGS
INDIGENOUS
AND UKRAINIAN
COMMUNITIES
TOGETHER
THROUGH DIALOGUE,
RESEARCH, AND
CULTURAL EXCHANGE
TO FOSTER
UNDERSTANDING,
KINSHIP, AND SHARED
FUTURES.



KOHKOM'S BABUSHKA PLAY BY LIANNA MAKUCH AND JOLEEN BALLENDINE

move beyond parallel histories toward shared, ethical relationships grounded in respect, reciprocity, and place?

In collaboration with the Canadian Institute for Ukrainian Studies (University of Alberta) and the kihêw waciston Indigenous Centre (MacEwan University), the IURI hosted the “Carving Lost Family History: Ukrainian and Indigenous Cultural Revival in the Face of Colonialism” event at MacEwan University on November 6, 2025. This entailed a conversation between the Heiltsuk-Ukrainian master carver Ivan Rosypskye and historian Keith Thor Carlson about identity, memory, and reconciliation. Through carving and research, Rosypskye explores his Ukrainian refugee father’s long-buried story alongside his mother’s Heiltsuk traditions of cultural resistance. Offering pathways toward reconciliation, the “Carving Lost Family History” project was awarded a CIUS Grant for the Study of Indigenous-Ukrainian Relations in Canada.

In early 2025, IURI partnered with Ukrainian-Canadian and Métis theatre artists Lianna Makuch and Joleen Ballendine, respectively, to support their research, development, and production of *Kohkom’s Babushka* — a play exploring themes of cultural collaboration and shared experiences between Métis and Ukrainian communities. Makuch’s work on the play was a significant part of her tenure in the URDC’s Gene Zwozdesky Artist in Residence program at MacEwan.

IURI also organized an online event featuring Niigaan Sinclair, titled “Ukrainian people are my people too: An Indigenous perspective on relationality, war, and reconciliation.” The discussion reflected interest in issues of kinship, responsibility, and shared histories between Indigenous and Ukrainian communities in Canada. Sinclair emphasized relationality as a guiding framework for understanding war, solidarity, and reconciliation, creating a meaningful space for reflection and dialogue.

Kohkom’s Babushka, a family theatre production by Lianna Makuch and Joleen Ballendine, brings to the stage a heartfelt story inspired by the work of prairie author Marion Mutala. Directed by Makuch, with a talented cast including Cassandra Bouchier, Jessica Rose, Jeff Dingle, Rick Hughes, and Michaela Washburn, the play re-examines the legacies of traditional Canadian settler narratives while celebrating cultural traditions, generosity, and the enduring power of friendship. Supported by a creative team including movement director Anna Kuman, designers Stephanie Bahniuk, Jolane Houle, and Amelia Scott, and beautifully captured in photos by Abigail Edwards, *Kohkom’s Babushka* invites audiences into a thoughtful, adventurous, and visually rich theatrical experience.

Larysa Hayduk & Maryna Chernyavska
Co-coordinators of the Indigenous-Ukrainian Relationship Initiative



STUDENTS' STORIES

Dmytro Yesypenko, PhD Candidate

Over the past year, I continued intensive work on my dissertation, "Cultural imaginations of epidemics in Ukrainian and Polish literatures, 1820s–1880s," under the supervision of Professor Jelena Pogosjan, whose careful and sustained mentorship has been vital to the project's development from its early stages through the present year.

My decision to study epidemics in literature and cultural history comes from both personal experience and academic interest. The COVID-19 pandemic made me think about how earlier societies imagined disease, isolation, and collective fear. What began as a reflection on a contemporary crisis developed into a sustained inquiry into nineteenth-century Ukrainian and Polish texts. Over time, I came to see that epidemic narratives — especially in Romantic literature — are closely connected to folklore, vernacular knowledge, and cultural stereotypes about contagion. In addition to the personification and moralization of disease, the idea and process of "othering" became central to my reading of canonical Polish and Ukrainian authors.

During this reporting period, I had the opportunity, with support from the Kule Folklore Centre, to present my research at major international

conferences in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Poland, including the ASEES Convention. These presentations allowed me to test my arguments on Słowacki, Shevchenko, and contemporary interpretations of epidemic metaphors in literature and popular culture. The feedback I received was thoughtful and supportive but also constructively critical, encouraging me to clarify my arguments and reconsider some earlier assumptions.

At the invitation of colleagues from the interdisciplinary "Media and Epidemics" initiative (MEDEP), I published an essay in their blog series about how nineteenth-century Ukrainian writers connected epidemic disease with folklore, print culture, and European literary traditions. I also prepared a book chapter on Shevchenko's epidemic texts for the forthcoming Bloomsbury volume *Epidemics, Contagion, and Moral Health in Slavic and East European Studies* (2027). Another article, focused on Juliusz Słowacki's poem "The Father of the Plague-Stricken," was submitted for peer review.

My work with Kule Folklore Centre projects continues to influence my professional growth. Serving as Research Assistant and Project Coordinator within the Sustainable Ukrainian Canadian Heritage Network allowed me to work more closely with new community archives. In particular, my work with the archival collections of the Ukrainian Women's Association of Canada — especially letters and photographs related to displaced Ukrainians in postwar Europe — opened new possibilities for collaboration and dialogue with scholars in Canada and Europe, at a time when displacement issues have gained grave urgency after 2022.

My main goal in the next reporting period is to finalize the dissertation and prepare for defense. At the same time, I plan to complete three book-length projects in literary studies and Ukrainian Canadian scholarship, where I serve as editor or consultant. This year confirmed for me that research, grant writing, public engagement, and other academic responsibilities must all fit within limited time — but they can meaningfully support one another.



DMYTRO YESYPENKO

XI WORLD CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CENTRAL AND EAST EUROPEAN STUDIES, JULY 2025. L TO R: ANASTASSIYA ANDRIANOVA (NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY), ANNA ANTONOVA (U OF A), AND DMYTRO YESYPENKO (U OF A).



Brittany Dyck, PhD Candidate

As a fourth-year PhD student at the Kule Folklore Center, I have been working on my thesis, titled "How I found out: An exploration of personal narratives about diagnosis shared by late-diagnosed autistic adults in online communities." This thesis explores folkloristic traditions in digital communities founded by autistic adults, with a specific focus on storytelling traditions that are common among those who were late-diagnosed. These stories often revolve around the process of self-discovery that late-diagnosed people go through as they realize that they may be autistic and come to understand themselves. These stories are shared frequently and used as a tool for advocacy, also for forging connections with other autistic people and helping to guide newcomers through their own journeys. My research interests have always been drawn toward digital folklore and investigating how communities and traditions form in digital spaces. By researching in disabled communities, I hope to shine a light on areas of both folklore scholarship and disability studies that often go understudied.

I have found my work at the Kule Centre to be immensely rewarding, and I always look forward to my time there. I enjoy getting to work on so many different archival projects and knowing that I'm helping to preserve Ukrainian Canadian culture and make it accessible to the local community.

I also appreciate the little glimpses into parts of history and culture that are not always seen by others. I often find myself very taken with the little bits of ephemera that are often included in donations. Recently, I have been working with a collection of items related to the Ukrainian Book Store, and while the overall history of the store is fascinating, the item that will likely stay in my memory will be a copy of the "Ukrainian Primer" from the 1960s that has been visibly marked up by the child who learned from it.

Hopefully my research will soon be in a state where I can begin to present it at conferences. I am also hoping to have more opportunities within the classroom. I was lucky to serve as a TA for former KuFC Director Larisa Sembaliuk Cheladyn during several semesters, and I would love to continue helping in this way or perhaps even teaching a folklore class myself.



BRITTANY DYCK



Anna Olenenko, PhD Candidate

As a graduate student at the Kule Folklore Centre, I am conducting research for my doctoral dissertation, tentatively titled "Landscape and national identity: Changing narratives of the Dnipro wetlands." In this project, I argue that contemporary debates on the future of the Dnipro wetlands, known as *plavni* or the *Velykyi Luh* (Great Meadow), are shaped not only by ecological or economic considerations but also by historically constructed narratives that frame the wetlands as a symbolical landscape central to Ukrainian national identity.



ANNA OLENENKO

This past year was particularly significant for me as a graduate student. Most importantly, in June 2025 I completed all of my doctoral program requirements.

It was also an active year in terms of scholarly dissemination. I presented my research at conferences around the world, including major international meetings of ASEES and CAS, where I contributed environmental perspectives to Ukrainian studies and, more broadly, Eastern European and Eurasian studies, as well as of the European Society for Environmental History (ESEH), where I brought Ukrainian cases into broader conversations on environmental history. My paper, "Rethinking Ecocide: The Russo-Ukrainian War and Its Impact on the Humanities," was awarded the Canadian Association of Ukrainian Studies Graduate Student Conference Paper Prize for 2025.

Alongside my doctoral studies, I remained actively involved in advancing and popularizing the environmental history of Ukraine. During the fall semester, I co-taught, together with Oleksii Chebotariov, the course "Ukraine's environment: From imperial frontiers to ecocidal war" as part of the "Invisible University for Ukraine" initiative at the Central European University. The course was attended primarily by students from Ukraine and provided an important platform for integrating environmental history into Ukrainian-focused curricula.

In addition, I serve as the regional representative for Ukraine with the

ASEES 2026. PHOTO FROM THE LEFT: ANNA OLENENKO, SVITLANA ARABADZY, JULIA MALITSKA (CO-PANELISTS OF THE PANEL "AT THE VANGUARD OF MODERNIZATION: THE INTERTWINED HISTORIES OF ANIMALS AND EMPIRE IN UKRAINE")



ESEH. In this role, I see my mission as making Ukraine's environment more visible within international scholarship and emphasizing that Ukraine and its environment possess their own historical agency. Studying Ukrainian cases should mean studying them on their own terms, rather than treating them merely as appendices to Russian imperial or Soviet histories. I pursue this work both as Chair of the Council of Regional Representatives and as a member of the ESEH Board.

Looking ahead, my main goal for the coming year is to complete my dissertation. At the same time, I hope to continue thinking and writing more deeply about the Ukrainian environment, and also about the intersections of folklore and environment, within both Ukrainian and Ukrainian-Canadian contexts.

Emily Simon, MLIS Student

As a course-based student pursuing my Master's in Library and Information Studies, my research assistantship at the Kule Folklore Centre has given me invaluable experience in an archival setting. I have gained experience in metadata creation, digitization, preservation, and archival arrangement and description. I have also had the opportunity to work with the KuFC library collection, doing some cataloguing and sorting.

I began as a volunteer with the Kule Folklore Centre, working closely with the UCAMA photograph collection. I digitized and created metadata for these photographs, including writing English descriptions. This work inspired a research project that I undertook for an advanced course in LIS scholarship. This research project entailed content analysis

of photographic descriptions in Canadian archives, with a sample of 200 randomly selected photographic records from across the country. The project explores the scholarly conversation surrounding best practices for archival photograph content description, while comparing this conversation to the findings derived from the randomly selected dataset. This research will be presented at the 2026 Forum for Information Professionals conference at the University of Alberta.

The largest project I have worked on at the Kule Folklore Centre has been arranging, describing, and preserving a new collection that was donated at the end of 2025. This collection contains a range of materials — including fragile and stable documents, photographs, books, and CDs. Having the opportunity to work on this collection, from initial appraisal through to digitization, has been invaluable for me as a

future information professional. Knowing that my work will provide access to heritage and cultural documentation for future research has been an incredibly rewarding experience.

I am open to many different career paths in the information field, including archives, records management, or public libraries. Working at the Kule Folklore Centre has enhanced my ability to work independently and learn new skills quickly. I have a deeper understanding and appreciation for archival work for heritage and cultural preservation, and of how to work as a part of a team toward larger goals of community access and engagement.



EMILY SIMON

Hilary Warner-Evans, MLIS Student

In September 2025, I started the Master's in Library and Information Studies program at the University of Alberta, following my August 2025 completion of a PhD in Folklore and Ethnomusicology at Indiana University. I decided to enroll in the MLIS program to enhance my career prospects, particularly in the field of folklore archives.

Since the MLIS program here does not offer specializations, I have been fortunate to start a graduate assistantship with the Kule Folklore Centre last September as well, which is providing me with more specific archival training and experience. This has also been my first experience working primarily

with paper archival records (rather than digitized materials or analog sound recordings).

This year, my main task in the archives has been processing the papers of Dr. Andriy Nahachewsky, an expert on Ukrainian folk dance and former director of the KuFC. In this task, I have learned to make decisions about how to treat records based on principles of uniqueness and sensitivity of information. I have also had to make judgments about organization of folders within the collection and gained more familiarity with the arrangement scheme of collections in the Bohdan Medwidsky Ukrainian Folklore Archives.

Besides the archival training I have gained from my assistantship, working with the Nahachewsky fond in particular has benefited me as a researcher and early career folklorist, by alerting me to the existence of new sources or scholars related to my research interests and providing insight into the importance of scholarly correspondence, the teaching of folklore courses, and the role that

an academic can play in non-profit cultural organizations.

I have recently begun my second major task at the KuFC, working with the Medwidsky fond to improve the online finding aid and the collection's organization. This will provide me with more significant experience in archival organization and database familiarity.

In addition to my work at the Kule Folklore Centre, in the past year I have continued to pursue independent folklore research and disseminate it, primarily through conference presentations. I also had the opportunity to peer-review an article for the first time and, with the help of a committee of other folksong scholars, organized a series of events at this year's American Folklore Society Annual Meeting, marking the 200th anniversary of the birth of ballad scholar Francis James Child. In the next year, I plan to submit a journal article based on one of my dissertation chapters as well as continue research on new projects focused on the intersection of folklore and history.



HILARY WARNER-EVANS



Regis

Request

RTV

Rusalka

002 + 583

Ruta Records

Saga

Sage

Schur, Yaroslav

Shumka

Solovey Production

Sonart

Song of Ukraine

Mohyla Institute
Monitor

Multitone

Musa

Music Gallery Edition

Wykola Denysiuk
roduction

Nicole

Opus

Orion

Parliament Records

Pean Recording

Paranelychky Singe

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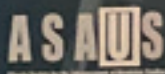
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ANNUAL BOHDAN MEDWIDSKY MEMORIAL LECTURE



Dr. Bohdan Medwidsky (1936-2021) was the founder of the Ukrainian Folklore Program, Kule Folklore Centre (KuFC), and the Ukrainian Folklore Archives at the University of Alberta. Without his foresight, perseverance, and wisdom, KuFC and many other Ukrainian-Canadian organizations would not be where they are today.



Kule Folklore Centre

Peter & Jeanne Kule Centre for Ukrainian & Canadian Studies

ANNUAL BOHDAN MEDWIDSKY MEMORIAL LECTURE

The Annual Bohdan Medwidsky Memorial Lecture was launched in 2022 in honour of Dr. Bohdan Medwidsky (1936–2021), founder of the Ukrainian Folklore Program, the Kule Folklore Centre, and the Ukrainian Folklore Archives at the University of Alberta. The lecture commemorates his vision of establishing a major research and resource centre in Canada dedicated to the study of Ukrainian folklore and ethnography. Without his foresight, perseverance, and wisdom, KuFC and many other Ukrainian Canadian organizations would not be where they are today.

On April 4, 2025, the Memorial Lecture was hosted by the Kule Folklore Centre in collaboration with the Alberta Society for the Advancement of Ukrainian Studies. The invited speaker, Shevchenko Foundation President Boris Balan, gave a talk titled "Building relationships for stronger cultural impact." He examined the contribution of the Ukrainian community in Canada to cultural preservation and development, as well as meeting the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

In his presentation, Mr. Balan highlighted the importance of expanding awareness of Ukrainian heritage beyond traditional community spaces. He outlined

the Shevchenko Foundation's four funding pillars and shared recent projects aimed at strengthening community connections and supporting Ukrainian Canadian arts, heritage, and education. The lecture

concluded with a discussion of institutions dedicated to preserving Ukrainian Canadian material culture and archives, emphasizing the urgent need for sustainable, long-term support to ensure their future.



Boris Balan is President of the Ukrainian Canadian Foundation of Taras Shevchenko, former Vice-President of Development at Northland Power, and a former staff editor with the Encyclopedia of Ukraine (5 vols, 1984–93); he was also involved in technical assistance and commercial projects in Ukraine, as well as in the Ukrainian community, including St. Volodymyr Institute and St. Volodymyr Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral in Toronto.



KULE FOLKLORE LECTURES

For over two decades, the KuFC has hosted lectures as part of the Kule Folklore Lunches, which aim to raise the profile of Ukrainian folklore and culture on campus and within the broader community. Guest speakers have presented on a wide range of topics, from Ukrainian rituals to contemporary war narratives. Speakers come from the academic community in Canada and Ukraine, as well as from the local community.

In 2025/26, in addition to the regular Kule Folklore Lunches, other lectures were held both on-site and via Zoom to ensure access for participants from around the world. We encourage you to view the recordings on our YouTube channel.

Ukrainian witchcraft
trials in the 17th–18th
centuries

Kateryna Dysa
Sept. 19, 2025

ONLINE

It Takes
Three To
Tango

Natalka Husar
Oct. 3, 2025

ART GALLERY OF ALBERTA

Heritage on the
table: Food and
Ukrainian identity

Yevhen Klopotenko
Oct. 17, 2025

ONLINE

A Photographic
Prairie Trilogy

Kyler Zeleny
Nov. 7, 2025

KAFFA ROASTER AND STUDIO, EDMONTON

Ukrainian winter
celebrations: Who
brings presents to
Ukrainian children?

Daria Antsybor
Dec. 12, 2025

ONLINE

Music & comics:
Exploring a music-
based graphic narrative

Illia Pokotylo
Jan. 23, 2026

OLD ARTS BUILDING, UOFA

When songs go to war:
Pop music, propaganda,
and digital soft power in
Russia's war on Ukraine

Olga Zaitseva-Herz
Mar. 20, 2026

OLD ARTS BUILDING, UOFA

"When I look at the work done by the Kule Folklore Centre, including the incredible list of events/activities that it hosts or co-sponsors, I am totally awe-struck. Innovative, far-ranging, daring, challenging, probing, inspiring, mind-opening, visionary, collaborative, powerful — these are just some of the adjectives that come to mind. The KuFC pushes the boundaries of *folklore studies* to new horizons. I am envious of the students who are enrolled. It's a gem to be highly valued! *Mnohaya Lita!*"

Olya Kuplowska, President of the Canadian Foundation for Ukrainian Studies



Ukrainian witchcraft trials in the 17th–18th centuries

Kateryna Dysa's talk opened the Kule Folklore Lunch series for 2025. During her presentation, Dysa

provided an accessible overview of witchcraft trials in early modern Ukraine, focusing on the legal frameworks and religious factors that shaped accusations and court responses. Drawing on court records, especially a detailed multi-generational case from Volhynia (early eighteenth century), she showed how witchcraft allegations often grew out of everyday conflicts among relatives, neighbors, and community members, and how reputations could persist across generations. She emphasized that, despite the use of legal codes comparable to those applied in parts of Central Europe, Ukrainian cases often involved limited investigation and relatively few executions, with outcomes shaped by local practice, social

hierarchy, and community belief systems. The lecture concluded with a moderated Q&A session that prompted further discussion of gender patterns, social status, and the domestic contexts in which accusations most commonly arose.

*Kateryna Dysa is an associate professor in the History Department of the National University of "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy". She has been a visiting fellow at Harvard, Stanford, Paris, and Oxford universities, as well as a visiting professor at the University of Basel. She is the author of *Ukrainian Witchcraft Trials: Volhynia, Podolia, and Ruthenia, 17th and 18th Centuries* (2023) and of numerous articles on the history of witchcraft, sexuality, and medicine in early modern Ukraine.*





THE
BEST
ATTENDED
EVENT IN
2025/26

It Takes Three To Tango

The Kule Folklore Centre co-hosted a special public event on October 3, 2025, at the Art Gallery of Alberta, presenting the art book *It Takes Three to Tango: The True Story of a Fictitious Romance; The Correspondence of Ivan Ostafiychuk and Natalka Husar*. The evening brought together scholars, artists, and members of the broader community for a discussion of art, archives, diaspora memory, and Cold War history.

The featured speaker was Natalka Husar, an internationally acclaimed Canadian artist. The conversation was moderated by KuFC Director Oleksandr Pankieiev, CIUS Director Natalia Khanenko-Friesen, and Andriy Kohut, Director of the Sectoral State Archive of the Security Service of Ukraine.

Thanks to the participation of Natalka Husar, the audience not only learned about the book but also heard the story firsthand. This story recounts a remarkable episode from the late 1960s and 1970s. During a visit to Soviet Ukraine, the young art student Natalka Husar met the established Lviv artist Ivan Ostafiychuk. Amid KGB surveillance, censorship, and political repression, the two engaged in a long-distance correspondence that was designed to appear as a romantic relationship. Encouraged by members of the Ukrainian diaspora, the staged

romance was intended to facilitate Ivan's potential emigration from the Soviet Union. Over several years, letters crossed the Atlantic, blending strategy, performance, and genuine artistic exchange.

The publication of this correspondence offers rare insight into the lived experience of artists under surveillance, the role of the diaspora in supporting cultural figures behind the Iron Curtain, and the ethical and emotional dimensions of solidarity.

Natalka Husar, a Toronto-based artist who has explored diasporic and post-Soviet Ukrainian identity over her 48-year career. Natalka's paintings are in many of Canada's foremost museums, including the National Gallery of Canada and the Art Gallery of Alberta, where her painting Edelweiss/Paradise is on view in the exhibition "Seeing and Being Seen."

"As an undergraduate student, the Kule Folklore Centre has provided an excellent platform for connecting with Ukrainian scholars across the University of Alberta and deepening my understanding of Ukrainian history and culture. I have especially enjoyed their workshops and lectures throughout the school year, which are both accessible and consistently feature engaging, thought-provoking topics."

Jonah Makowsky, UofA student



Heritage on the table: Food and Ukrainian identity

The event featured acclaimed Ukrainian chef, restaurateur, and culinary activist Yevhen Klopotenko. In his lecture, Klopotenko emphasized that food is far more than sustenance — it is a language, a song, and a marker of belonging. Dishes such as *borshch*, beet *kvas*, *shpundra*, and *teteria*, he argued, communicate as much

about Ukraine's history and culture as any written text. The discussion addressed common misconceptions about Ukrainian cuisine, highlighted regional variations of *borshch*, and examined the evolving role of traditional dishes in contemporary Ukraine.

A significant portion of the conversation addressed how the full-scale invasion has reshaped culinary practices, inspired new dishes, and intensified efforts to preserve and promote Ukrainian food both domestically and abroad. Klopotenko reflected on cultural diplomacy, educational initiatives to introduce cooking in Ukrainian schools, and strategies for elevating Ukrainian cuisine on the global stage.

The event also included an extended audience Q&A session, covering topics ranging from diaspora food traditions and comparisons between Ukrainian

and other national cuisines, to the influence of French culinary training on Klopotenko's work. The lecture concluded with a farewell recipe shared by the speaker, leaving the audience with both practical inspiration and a renewed appreciation for food as a vital expression of Ukrainian cultural identity.

Yevhen Klopotenko is a Ukrainian chef, restaurateur, and culinary activist. He rose to fame after winning MasterChef Ukraine in 2015 and later studied at Le Cordon Bleu in Paris. Klopotenko is best known for modernizing and reviving national Ukrainian cuisine. He co-founded the Kyiv restaurant 100 Rokiv Tomu Vpered, opened the bistro Inshi in Lviv, and spearheaded the Cult Food project to reform school meals. He also played a key role in having Ukrainian borscht recognized by UNESCO as intangible cultural heritage.

"I am deeply grateful for the Kule Folklore Centre's dedication to historical scholarship and ensuring that Alberta's local stories aren't lost to time. Their 'Photographic Prairie Trilogy' event was a moving experience for me, masterfully connecting our collective identity and personal memories to the enduring spirit of the Ukrainian-Canadian homeplace."

Luca Petryshyn, Treasurer, The Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Edmonton Branch



"A Photographic Prairie Trilogy" by Kyler Zeleny

The Kule Folklore Centre welcomed photographer and author Kyler Zeleny for a lecture reflecting on his decade-long exploration of life in the Canadian Prairies. The presentation focused on his "Prairie Trilogy," a body of work that documents the evolving histories of Western Canada's rural communities through three books: *Out West* (2014), *Crown Ditch and the Prairie Castle* (2020), and *Bury Me in the Back Forty* (2024/25).

Zeleny's trilogy blends evocative landscape photography, candid environmental portraits, found images, and interwoven texts to tell layered stories of resilience, heritage, and local identity. Centered in part on his hometown of Mundare, Alberta, a Ukrainian-settler community undergoing generational and cultural transition, the work captures both collective and personal memories from small towns shaped by urbanization, fading architecture, and shifting demographics.

With particular attention to *Bury Me in the Back Forty*, Zeleny explored themes of deviance and conformity, joy and tragedy, and the ethical complexities of representing one's own "homeplace." His talk considered how photography can honor the contradictions of prairie life without resorting to nostalgia or caricature. Drawing on specific

images and narrative sequences from across the trilogy, Zeleny offered a nuanced portrait of contemporary prairie communities and reflected on how Ukrainian prairie identities are continually negotiated — what is preserved, what is transformed, and how belonging becomes inscribed in landscape and everyday practice.

Kyler Zeleny is a Canadian photographer, educator, and author of "Out West" (2014), "Found Polaroids" (2017), "Crown Ditch & The Prairie Castle" (2020), and "Bury Me in the Back Forty" (2024). His work has been exhibited internationally in twelve countries and featured in numerous publications, including The Globe and Mail, The Guardian, The Washington Post, VICE, Maclean's, and The Independent. He is currently a sessional instructor at Grant MacEwan.



Ukrainian winter celebrations: Who brings presents to Ukrainian children?

In her lecture, Daria Antsybor examined the evolution of winter holiday traditions in Ukraine through the changing figures of magical gift-givers. Focusing on St. Nicholas (*Mykolai*), *Did Moroz*

(Grandfather Frost), and their relationship to Santa Claus, the presentation explored how and when the custom of bringing gifts to children emerged in Ukrainian lands and how these traditions differed regionally. Particular attention was given to the historical role of St. Nicholas in Ukrainian religious and cultural practice, as well as to the development and reinterpretation of *Did Moroz* during the Soviet period.

The talk also addressed the broader cultural and political contexts that shaped festive practices, including the Soviet transformation of Christmas into a secular New Year celebration and the ideological repurposing of holiday symbols such as the Christmas tree. In light of the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war, the lecture reflected on how these figures are being reconsidered today, asking what they represent in contemporary

Ukraine and how they function within processes of cultural decolonization and the search for authentic traditions.

Daria Antsybor is a research fellow at the State Scientific Center for the Protection of Cultural Heritage Against Man-Made Disasters in Kyiv, Ukraine. She specializes in wartime folklore, vernacular medicine, crisis humour and anthropology of dreams. She is the author of two non-fiction books "Under the pillow or under the tree: anthropological research of holidays" (Kyiv, Laboratoria 2023) and "Dreadlocks, battles and steels: two centuries of subcultures in Ukraine" (Kyiv, Laboratoria 2024). Currently she is examining the nature of crisis humour in Ukraine, vernacular healing practices on Polissia region and writing a new non-fiction book about Halloween and its connection to Ukrainian culture.



Music & Comics: exploring a music- based graphic narrative

Illia Pokotylo delivered a lecture-recital exploring the relationship between music and visual storytelling, with a particular focus on comics as a medium for translating musical ideas into

images and narrative structure. Drawing on a range of examples of how music can be represented in graphic narratives — from depictions of performers and lyric fragments to musical notation and page layout — he demonstrated the creative techniques artists use to convey sound, rhythm, and emotion in a non-auditory form. He also discussed his own interdisciplinary approach and the “research-creation” methodology that shaped the project.

The event centred on *Borys Liatoshynsky: A Life in Reflections* (2025), a graphic biography co-created by Pokotylo and visual artist Ihor Tvoronovych. Pokotylo spoke about the collaborative process behind the work, including research challenges, the use of archival and published sources, and the decision to build the narrative around Liatoshynsky’s piano cycle *Reflections* (1925) as a structural

and thematic foundation. The lecture concluded with a live piano performance: Pokotylo played excerpts from Liatoshynsky’s *Reflections* while the corresponding pages of the graphic narrative were shown to the audience, inviting participants to experience how musical form and imagery can operate together to shape interpretation and meaning.

Illia Pokotylo is a recent graduate of the Master’s program in Media and Cultural Studies at the University of Alberta. Originally from Kyiv, he completed his Bachelor’s degree in Ethnomusicology at the National Academy of Music of Ukraine. During his Master’s program at the University of Alberta, Illia examined the representation of music in graphic narratives such as comics and graphic novels, which led to the creation of Borys Liatoshynsky graphic narrative

"I do have a deep interest in folklore. The fact that I'm a bandura player, *banduryst*, puts me in a very specific genre of folklore, and it also challenges me to examine other aspects of folklore... Folklore is such a rich field that the opportunities it represents are huge... You people at the Kule, you ask, 'Do you realize that you are folk?'...Yes, we are folklore... It's like a huge ball of wax that can be examined, can be studied, can be enjoyed with great joy."

Dr. Andriy Hornjatkevyč, Associate Professor (retired)



When songs go to war: Pop music, propaganda, and digital soft power in Russia's war on Ukraine

The concluding Kule Folklore lecture was presented by Olga Zaitseva-Herz. Her talk examined

the role of popular music as a tool of propaganda and soft power during Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine. Moving beyond the idea of music as mere cultural background, it argued that songs function as active agents in contemporary information warfare, shaping emotions, legitimizing violence, mobilizing audiences, and normalizing political narratives.

Particular attention is paid to the use of irony, euphemism, and emotional framing in wartime music, as well as to the growing role of AI-generated and AI-assisted songs in propaganda and counter-propaganda. Situating these practices within broader debates on soft power, digital media, and cultural warfare, the talk showed how popular music has become a strategic resource in Russia's war against Ukraine — operating

alongside military force and shaping perception, memory, and political meaning on the global stage.

Dr. Olga Zaitseva-Herz is an ethnomusicologist and musicologist, and is currently a Post-doctoral Fellow at the Kule Folklore Centre. Originally from Dnipro, Ukraine, she received her Ph.D. at the University of Alberta in 2024 with a dissertation on Ukrainian songs in Canada, examining transcultural circulation, memory, and diaspora. Her current research focuses on the role of popular music in Russia's war against Ukraine, with particular attention to propaganda, digital platforms, and AI-mediated musical production and dissemination.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



International Perogy Day workshop

On October 8, 2025, the Kule Folklore Centre marked International Perogy Day with a hands-on varenyk or perogy-making workshop led by Joyce Sirski-Howell. The in-person event took place at St. Joseph's College (Newman Centre), University of Alberta, and welcomed participants from the university and the broader community.

During the workshop, Joyce guided attendees through each stage of the perogy-making process — from preparing and rolling the dough to shaping, filling, and sealing the perogies. All equipment and ingredients were provided, allowing participants to focus on learning traditional techniques and sharing stories connected to food and family traditions.

More than a cooking class, the workshop created a space for intergenerational exchange and

informal conversation about Ukrainian culinary heritage. As participants worked side by side, they discussed regional variations, family recipes, and the cultural meanings attached to this iconic dish. The event highlighted the Centre's ongoing commitment to experiential learning and community engagement through vernacular traditions.



Christmas carol sing-along

On December 13, 2025, despite extreme weather conditions, the Kule Folklore Centre held a successful Christmas carol sing-along, led by Olga Zaitseva-Herz. The in-person, family-friendly event took place at the Strathcona Community League Hall in Edmonton and gathered everyone to celebrate the season through song.

Under Olga's guidance, participants sang beloved Ukrainian Christmas carols (koliadky and shchedrivky), learned about their historical origins, regional variations, and cultural meanings. The event created a warm and inclusive atmosphere, encouraging intergenerational participation and community connection.



Exhibition of American and Ukrainian photographers

From February 20 to March 20, 2026, the Kule Folklore Centre co-organized a Canadian presentation of the traveling exhibition "Ukraine: War and Resistance," hosted at the Rutherford Library (South Foyer), University of Alberta.

Initiated by Fulbright Ukraine and the Institute of International Education Kyiv Office, the exhibition features photographs by American and Ukrainian Fulbright alumni who have lived and worked in Ukraine. Most images were taken after Russia's full-scale invasion on February 24, 2022, with some dating back to 2014. Together, they document everyday life during wartime — destruction and loss alongside resilience and solidarity.

The exhibition includes works by J.T. Blatty, Oleksii Furman, Brendan Hoffman, Serhii Korovayny, Joseph Sywenkyj, Emine Ziyatdinova, and Oksana Parafeniuk. First shown in Vinnytsia in 2022, it has since traveled internationally; its Edmonton presentation marked its first showing in Canada.

At the University of Alberta, the exhibition was curated by Dr. Oleksandr Pankieiev, Dmytro Yesypenko, Andriyka Reisdorf, and Illia Pokotylo.



Festival participation

In 2025, the Kule Folklore Centre participated in two major Ukrainian cultural festivals in Alberta: UFest — the Edmonton Ukrainian Festival (May 30–31, 2025) and the Vegreville Ukrainian Pysanka Festival (July 4–6, 2025). These events provided an opportunity to celebrate Ukrainian culture and strengthen connections with the wider community.

At both festivals, staff, students, and volunteers hosted the Kule Folklore Centre's portion of a shared tent together with colleagues from the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies. Visitors were introduced to the Centre's research, archives, and educational activities. The Society of Friends of the Ukrainian Folklore Centre generously provided T-shirts for staff and volunteers participating in the festivals. Through its presence at these events, the Kule Folklore Centre continued its outreach efforts, engaging with festival attendees and sharing information about its work in preserving and promoting Ukrainian folklore and cultural heritage.



Gushul Exhibit at Galt Museum

From February 15 to August 4, 2025, the travelling exhibition "Lena and Thomas Gushul: Life in front and behind the camera," prepared by the Kule Folklore Centre, was on display at the Galt Museum & Archives in Lethbridge, Alberta. The exhibition explores the life and work of Lena and Thomas Gushul and highlights their impact on the Crowsnest Pass during the early twentieth century.

Lena and Thomas Gushul immigrated to Canada at the beginning of the twentieth century and married in 1914. By 1917 or 1918 they opened their first photography studio in Coleman, Alberta. As Ukrainian Canadian photographers working during the golden age of photography, the Gushuls documented the everyday life of communities in the Crowsnest Pass and left an important visual legacy. Through photographs and archival materials, the exhibition presents their work both behind and in front of the camera, offering visitors insight into the cultural and social history of the region.

~1000
ATTENDEES
OF ALL EVENTS

3500+
SOCIAL MEDIA AND
YOUTUBE FOLLOWERS

8.5%
INCREASE IN SOCIAL
MEDIA AND YOUTUBE
FOLLOWERS

35,000+
WEBSITE VIEWS

200,000+
FACEBOOK VIEWS

500+
HOURS OF
YOUTUBE VIEWING

50,000+
EMAILS SENT

~150
YOUTUBE VIDEOS

A STITCH IN TIME SAVES NINE

SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE AND UKRAINIANS: KEY INITIATIVES

Russia's full-scale war on Ukraine has been met with disbelief, anger, and anguish by the staff and students of the Kule Folklore Centre. In response, KuFC has remained committed to supporting Ukraine and Ukrainians through concrete initiatives that protect scholarly work, sustain students, and safeguard cultural and research materials at risk.

KuFC supports scholars' freedom to speak, to inquire into the nature of the conflict, to create records of events, and to protect documentation and research from suppression or destruction through two key efforts: U-ART Project and the DUSS Initiative.

U-ART (Ukraine – Archives Rescue Team) is a Canadian emergency

response initiative coordinated at the University of Alberta by KuFC, CIUS, and the Kule Institute for Advanced Study (KIAS), with support from national partners. Led by Maryna Chernyavska, U-ART provides secure digital storage and data backups for Ukrainian archival institutions, research organizations, and individual scholars across disciplines. By offering free and secure electronic storage, U-ART helps protect critical records and research materials under threat.

In parallel, KuFC has played an active role in DUSS (Disrupted Ukrainian Scholars and Students), launched in March 2022 through a partnership among CIUS, KIAS, the Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies, the Department of History, Classics and Religion, and the Wirth Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies. With support from additional units across campus, DUSS has provided funding for over 50 scholars to continue their research (both in Ukraine and, for those able to travel, on the University of Alberta campus) and has assisted over 100 Ukrainian students facing financial hardship by contributing to tuition and living costs.

As part of DUSS, KuFC provided funding for two Ukrainian graduate students (one MA and one PhD) and will continue supporting them through graduate research assistantships each academic year until completion of their programs, with assistance in part from the Society of Friends of the Ukrainian Folklore Centre. KuFC also contributed funds to support senior scholars, including four displaced academics hired on a casual basis, and supported presentations by five speakers.



ACADEMIC
OUTPUT BY
KUFC STAFF
AND STUDENTS

40

CONFERENCE
PRESENTATIONS

5

WORKSHOPS

2

SEMINARS

17

PUBLICATIONS

13

GUEST LECTURES

29

OTHER
EVENTS



MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK



Oleksandr Pankiev

Director of the Centre, Kule
Chair in Ukrainian Ethnography

THE KUFC TEAM



Natalia Khanenko-Friesen

Huculak Chair in Ukrainian
Culture and Ethnography



Lynnien Pawluk

Kule Centre Coordinator



Nataliia Yesypenko

Archive's Assistant / Researcher



Eric Fincham

Archival Assistant



Jonathan Grossman

Archival Assistant



Sia Chernyavska

Library Assistant



Marta Dvuliat

Research Assistant (until Aug. 2025)



Dmytro Yesypenko

SUCH Project Coordinator

Communications Team



Andrea Reisdorf
Social Media and Graphic Design



Illia Pokotylo
Website Maintenance
and Design



Mariia Valiieva
Social Media Coordinator
(until Dec. 31, 2025)



Ksenia Maryniak
Editor

All staff and students



FRIENDS OF THE UKRAINIAN FOLKLORE CENTRE

The Society of Friends of the Ukrainian Folklore Centre is a non-profit organization established to support the work of the Ukrainian Folklore Centre at the University of Alberta. The Friends actively publicize the activities of the Centre, increase community awareness, and raise funds for future projects.

The Friends' mission is to: "Morally and financially support the Ukrainian Folklore Programme at the University of Alberta and to increase its capacity to study and communicate the complexities of the Ukrainian experience in the world. To facilitate the growth of Ukrainian ethnology, which is the discovery of knowledge about Ukrainian culture and identify through the study of arts, customs, beliefs, songs, crafts and other traditions, as well as the people who partake in them, by providing support to the Ukrainian Folklore Programme in public relations, communications, fundraising, administration, and special projects."

The Friends Society has also contributed financially to support student research scholarships, archival projects, infrastructure and publications. In addition, the Friends Society has successfully received grants from Canada's

Digital Collections Initiative grant through Industry Canada (the Ukrainian Folklore Photo Archives and the Ukrainian Wedding Web Exhibit), federal and provincial government grants for Local Culture and Diversity on the Prairies Research Project (Department of Multiculturalism and Community Initiatives Program).

The Friends continue to be an integral partner to KuFC and

provide support for the centre's projects and activities. This year, in the context of the ongoing war, we are particularly thankful for funding that increased our capacity to effect change through the U of A's DUSS program, via a graduate student's research assistantship. Our continued gratitude to the Friends, for their dedication, community spirit, as well as tireless and innovative efforts on our behalf!

Board of Directors 2025–2026

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