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Article abstract

Discussions about the issues of heritage and ownership of culture have become especially heated in the current political climate in Ukraine. In the process of re-writing the Soviet historical narrative and re-claiming their national and cultural identity, it is very important for Ukrainians to mark their geographical and cultural borders. Heritagization plays an extremely important role in this process. In this paper, I use the example of Petrykivka painting as a case study to illustrate the current tendencies and problems with claiming heritage. Deploying the tools of critical heritage studies, I want to explore two themes: 1) how the process of heritagization has been a political act, used both by the Soviets and in independent Ukraine, but with different agendas; and 2) the long-standing effects of such heritagization and involvement of international cultural organizations in it.

Petrykivka Painting

Political Implications of Cultural Heritage in Ukraine

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Petrykivka painting is a Ukrainian folk painting technique that originated in the town of Petrykivka, Dnipropetrovsk oblast. With roots in its place of origin in eastern Ukraine since perhaps the 18th century, it has become a hallmark of Ukrainian decorative folk art.

History of Petrykivka Painting

Contemporary Petrykivka artists say that this painting tradition is rooted deeply in pre-historic times, even as far back as in the Trypillian Culture.[1] Petrykivka painting did not only appear in Petrykivka as many might think, but it existed throughout the area in particular forms varying from one cultural centre to another. There are several reasons for Petrykivka specifically becoming the "home" of this tradition. First, the village boasted a significant market, which made it an economic hub, thus drawing in additional cultural attractions. Secondly, the School of Decorative Art in Petrykivka offered training in this art form as early as the mid 1930s, that contributed to associating the style to this specific locale. Finally, because of the construction of the Middle Dnipro Hydroelectric Power Plant in Kamyanske, Dnipropetrovsk oblast starting in 1956, many villages in the area were flooded, and people migrated to neighboring towns such as Petrykivka, bringing their traditional knowledge with them.

1. Trypillian culture is a neolithic culture on what is now Ukrainian, Moldovan, and Romanian territory. Sometimes called Cucuteni-Trypillian, the civilization dates from approx. 5800-3000 BC. Archaeological finds include elaborately decorated pottery with many forms. Trypillian culture has strong symbolic importance for people striving to emphasize the ancientness of Ukrainian culture.

Just like in other settlements in the area, people of Petrykivka decorated their living quarters, household belongings, and musical instruments with a style of ornamental painting that is characterized by fantastic flowers and other natural elements. According to vernacular belief, these paintings protect people from sorrow and evil. Many local people, and in particular women of all ages, were involved in this folk-art tradition. It is said that every family had at least one practitioner, making decorative painting an integral part of daily existence in the community. Later, some women became identified as more skillful painters than others, and other villagers started hiring them to decorate their houses. They obtained the name "*chepurushky*" (tidy/neat ones, чепурушки) in the community. They were respected and reimbursed with money, favors, or goods in exchange for their artistic contributions (Panko 2018).

Local artists emphasize the political environment that enhanced the development of this art. Describing her perception of the historical context in which Petrykivka painting started, in the 18th century, Olena Zinchouk said:

> People never knew serfdom here, and this played a very significant role in the history of our land. For people were not enslaved, they did not have to serve anyone. So, they painted little flowers on whatever and whenever they could. They embroidered, they sang, they just had a free life. (Zinchouk 2017)

Thus, according to Zinchouk and other consultants, Petrykivka soaked up and became the embodiment of the spirit of freedom – relative political independence – as well as freedom of mind and spirit.

Traditionally colorful Petrykivka painting was predominantly used to decorate the white walls of the houses, and sometimes dark-green, brown, blue, or red wooden chests (*skryni*, скрині) for storing clothes and other household items. When paper became more accessible to peasants in the early 20th century, artists expanded Petrykivka painting from the surfaces of walls and objects to paper. They were able to profit from their portable work by selling these paintings at fairs and local markets.

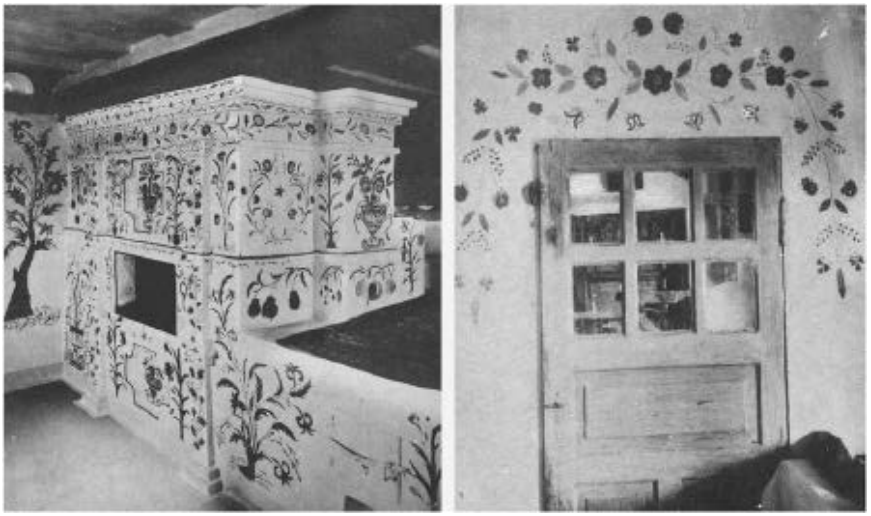

Figure 1. Early documented examples of interior and exterior Petrykivka painting decorations on the walls of houses. Source: Ihor Lisnyi, blog.

Institutionalization and Industrialization of Petrykivka Painting

In the 1920s, with the establishment of the USSR, Soviet authorities regarded selling art to be entrepreneurship and accumulation of private property. They officially banned the sale of Petrykivka paintings on paper. Contemporary Petrykivka artist Andriy Pikush remembers how Nadiya Bilokin', an older, highly respected artist in the community, shared her memories with him: "The artists had to hide in the reeds on the way to the markets, so that Soviet police didn't find them, otherwise they would have been arrested" (Pikush 2018). However, Moscow realized the dangers of implementing rapid changes and launched a project of indigenization, or *korenizatsiia* (коренізація, 1923 to February 1932). It aimed to encourage the use of national cultures to create favorable conditions for creative expressions of the local workers and introduce the concepts of building a communist and "protelarian" culture in local languages. Also, folk "proletarian" art was seen as a good emerging source of income to meet the ambitious economic needs of the newly established state. In 1936, the first Soviet exhibitions of folk art took place in Kyiv and Moscow, where folk artists were encouraged to bring their works, and a selection committee (often consisting of Party members who were sorely unqualified) chose the art styles they liked the best in order to incorporate them into the developing industries.

That same year Soviet officials opened a School of Decorative Art in Petrykivka, a project initiated by local artist and educator Oleksandr Statyva. Despite having only several classes of primary school education, folk artist Tetyana Pata became the first teacher of Petrykivka painting at the School of Decorative Art. To this day they are both seen as people in the community who institutionalized this art form. For the first time, by attending the Petrykivka School of Decorative Art, artists could become officially recognized as "professional" Petrykivka folk painting artists. In 1941, because of WWII, the school closed. It did not reopen after the war ended, as the state was recovering from great losses, both human and economic.

In 1956 the Soviet authorities initiated the founding of a souvenir factory "Druzhba" (Дружба, "Friendship"), referring to the friendship of all Soviet nations, and mass production of Petrykivka painting began. Many local artists, including some who had graduated from the School of Decorative Art, became workers of the factory. However, the idea of giving the artists full liberty to mass produce something that represented Ukrainian national identity did not align with the state ideology. Many changes were introduced to Petrykivka painting.

First, Petrykivka painting underwent some ideological changes, consistent with the Soviet political agenda. The drafts and sketches of the products – mostly decorated plates and little boxes made of pressed sawdust, and later, porcelain vases and china – were strictly censored and had to be approved in Kyiv by a council of artists and art historians. Again, these "experts" had rarely been to Petrykivka itself and had little knowledge about this specific kind of folk art. The approval process could take up to six months, despite numerous attempts by the artists to have their own "approval council" at the factory, rooted in their own mastery and connoisseurship (Pikush 2018). The authorities were content with turning Petrykivka painting into souvenir products that were successfully exported to some 40 countries and exhibited as Soviet folk art all over the world.

Figure 2. A Petrykivka artist, worker at the factory "Druzhba." Author unknown. Source: Ihor Lisnyi, blog.

The economic success of the factory was important. Souvenirs from the "Druzhba" factory met a huge demand for providing something that could represent Soviet proletarian art and became very popular. Demonstrating how the USSR supposedly supported national cultures, the orders at the factory grew greatly. Artists found themselves in conditions where the pressing demand for repetitive machine-like actions excluded any opportunity for creativity and individual artistic expression. On the other hand, the jobs at the factory were very well paid. For instance, if a highly qualified professional, like a teacher or an engineer, earned about 120 rubles a month on average, an artist at the factory could make 140 rubles a month after having simply graduated from the secondary School of Decorative Art or a two-year vocational training school. Quotas for orders grew every month to thousands upon thousands of items of the exact same type. Working conditions left much to be desired, and the work was monotonous and exhausting. Nataliia Rybak, a Petrykivka artist who used to work at the factory, shared, "As much as I liked the art, I thought I was going crazy [at the factory] and was even seriously considering changing my profession" (Rybak 2018).

Russian and Soviet Motifs in Petrykivka

In the 1960s, Soviet authorities commissioned founding of Zhostovo Factory of Decorative Painting (Moscow oblast, Russia), and Khokhloma

Painting factory (Nizhnii-Novgorod oblast, Russia), similar to the "Druzhba" factory in Petrykivka. Gzhel porcelain factories, also in Russia, had been set up as early as the 19th century. At the "Druzhba" factory, the traditional white background for Petrykivka paintings was almost totally replaced by a black background. The black background was not inherent to the Ukrainian tradition, and some art historians and artists trace the origins of the black background as an attempt to make it more similar to the Zhostovo and Khokhloma styles. Nataliia Rybak commented that, even if black color was used traditionally, it was just for details, but never as an accent (Rybak 2018). Enamel-like "sweet little roses," as Andriy Pikush calls them, and other floral motifs, alien to the tradition and very much resembling those used in Gzhel and Zhostovo, have also been used at the "Druzhba" factory in Petrykivka (Pikush 2018).

Petrykivka artists also remember organized "professional exchange" trips among these factories' employees, where those folk painting traditions were showcased, and the artists were implicitly encouraged to get inspiration from each other. Here is what artist Olena Zinchouk shared about professional exchanges with the Gzhel porcelain factory:

> Creative people learn from each other, and those girls [Petrykivka artists who were sent to Gzhel] started promoting what they saw. And it [the Russian influence] still lives there [in the Petrykivka painting]. I can easily recognize it and distinguish it from our old Petrykivka that was based on using traditional equipment – a finger, a little stick, a cat fur brush, even with any brush – the strokes looked particular. But there [in Russian style] the transition [in the strokes] is just different. I cannot say that Petrykivka suffered from it a lot, no – it got a new, modern element, but it became more industrialized, commercialized art, not the original folk art. With our old Petrykivka you could be on equal terms, but the new one had those pompous curves, when you look at that flower and you don't know whether it was made by a person or a machine. That's alien, that's not ours. (Zinchouk 2017)

> It was a mission ... to bring it [Gzhel style of painting] to Petrykivka, as if to re-do Petrykivka into a Russian style. It was planned, although obviously nobody spoke about it out loud, they [the artists] didn't even understand it themselves. But that was a political act to destroy our Ukrainianness. (Zinchouk 2017)

Not only the ornaments, the brush strokes, and the process of Petrykivka painting production had changed, but also the motifs. A fascinating wooden chest is presented in a collection of works edited by Nataliia Hlukhen'ka (1973). The sides of the chest are decorated with a

Cossack – an image of a Ukrainian Zaporizhzhian warrior from the 16th and 17th centuries – a symbol of the Ukrainian political and cultural grassroot resistance – trotting on a black horse, with his sword held down. The two other sides of the chest are decorated with paintings of a Soviet Red Army soldier, this time on a galloping white horse, his sword up, about to hit and probably decapitate a big snake or a dragon. Both figures are placed on a rich carpet of Petrykivka style flowers. Did the dragon symbolize the nationalist sentiments of the ethnic groups and minorities in the USSR? Was it a depiction of the "rotting capitalist West"? Or is this image simply presenting a new hero of the time, a Red Army soldier, as part of a well-known folk tale motif? All of the above? The lid of the chest featured an astonishing crescent of lavish flowers below a fully equipped astronaut, riding an unidentified beast and flying towards the moon! The last page of Hlukhen'ka's collection reproduces a painting of a man and a woman in folksy looking, but definitely not Ukrainian traditional outfits, that can be described as folkloresque (Foster 2016)[2], or folklorismus (Bendix 1997).[3] The woman holds a sickle in her hands, arms raised above her face. The man holds a hammer in one hand, and a giant molecule in the other.[4]

Vasyl Sokolenko was a prominent Petrykivka artist who became internationally famous for his political posters painted in Petrykivka style. When I asked Olena her opinion on these paintings, she replied, "Those motives in Petrykivka were pretty common in the Soviet times. No, nobody made us paint that. It was merely a way of self-defence, of giving what they [Soviet authorities] anticipated us to give, so that they could just leave us alone" (Zinchouk 2019). Using terminology from postcolonial theory, her comment is a good illustration of hegemonic influences on the Petrykivka community.

2. "Folkloresque," a term coined by M. D. Foster (2016), means that something looks or feels as if it is folklore, and often was created with this purpose, but in fact has no background in, does not belong to, or represent any tradition.
3. As R. Bendix (1997) defines it, "folklorismus" is "second-hand folklore" in German literature, as opposed to "real folklore."
4. The hammer and sickle were established communist symbols and were featured on the coat of arms and flag of the USSR. The molecule represents the progressiveness of Soviet science.

Figure 3. A painting of a man and a woman holding Soviet regalia.
Source: Natalia Hlukhen'ka (ed.). *Petrykivs'ki Rozpysy*. Kyiv: Mystetstvo, 1973, final page.

Experimental workshop

Suffocating in their inability to create their local folk art, tired from the unbalanced power relations at the factory, and feeling that they were losing control over their tradition, Petrykivka artists initiated an alternative project, an experimental workshop (експериментальний цех), led by Fedir Panko. From 1956 to 1970 Fedir Panko was a lead artist at the "Druzhba" factory. He was born in Petrykivka and graduated from the local School of Decorative Art. He then fought in the Great Patriotic War (WWII) and was captured in Germany, where he was forced to work as an *Ostarbeiter*. After coming back home and winning a competition among the local artists, he was appointed to lead a team of artist-workers (художники-виконавці) at the factory. Even today people in the community characterize Panko as a gifted manager, who was able to negotiate well with the Soviet authorities on the sensitive issue of folk art. However, while he was holding the

position, a number of changes were introduced to Petrykivka painting due to orders "from above." For several reasons, in 1970 Fedir Panko left the factory. He found a loophole in the legislation, and with the support of the National Union of Artists of Ukraine (Національна спілка художників України) started a new project in the village, an experimental shop. Here, in contrast to the factory, distinguished artists from the community – not just artist-workers, but those who had developed their own style and vision of the art and had earned recognition – were offered much more freedom for creative expression. Unlike the factory, the experimental shop was to become a space for encouraging development, mutual support, and most importantly, the creation of products of a much higher artistic quality. The strategy was to produce no more than 10 items with the same pattern. All the works were authored pieces with a signature.

Through the National Union of Artists of Ukraine, artisans exhibited their works at art fairs and festivals of different scopes, and produced their works not for a mass consumer, but for art salons and private or small collections. Every artist had their own working plan for a year and a flexible schedule. With a team of approximately 10 people, they established an extensive network and produced unique works of art. An artist could make as much as 350-500 rubles a month, and sometimes even more, which was very exceptional.

Roots and Modernity

Artists of the experimental workshop had relative freedom of expression and were not bound by someone else's sketches or color palettes. To an extent, such "cultural liberation" became possible in the 1970s due to the movement of the Sixtiers in Ukraine.[5] In the early 1970s several Petrykivka artists under the aegis of art historian Victor Solovyov launched an underground project of going back to the origins of Petrykivka painting in the highly politicized environment at the factory. They collected works from the old artists in the community and compared them with the later, factory produced Petrykivka. To demonstrate the drastic differences that Petrykivka went through over a span of just 50 years, they put together an

5. Sixtiers were representatives of a new generation of the Soviet and Ukrainian intelligentsia, who entered the culture (literature, arts, and other genres) and politics of the USSR in the late 1950s and 1960s, during a temporary weakening of communist-Bolshevik totalitarianism after Stalin's death in 1956 and during the Khrushchev Thaw.

exhibition "Petrykivka Painting: Roots and Modernity." For the Soviet authorities it was a testimony of progress and modernity. For the local community however, it was supposed to serve an educational purpose. This inspired some artists to revise their style of painting and to come back to the "true" Petrykivka, not affected by Soviet politics. Olena Zinchouk said:

> An already established artist Andriy Pikush, another young folk artist from Petrykivka, Natalka Rybak, a couple of other artists, and myself, started to revive the old Petrykivka, in order to bring back those ancient traditions, our roots, to get rid of all that Russian [influence] that came later. We started giving absolutely different works to the exhibitions. We also collaborated with a prominent art historian Victor Solovyov, a very intelligent man who cared about Ukraine a lot. He explained: look at what we used to have, and what we have now. So, we started that wave of 'cleansing,' and it was all for good. I haven't been to Ukraine for many years now, but I follow Petrykivka artists who exhibit their works, and I see that our wave was very powerful, they caught it. All that Moscovian [influence] is much weaker, it doesn't work anymore. (Zinchouk 2017)

This underground movement percolated until the early 1990s when Ukraine became independent. The collapse of the USSR led to an economic crisis in many former Soviet republics, including Ukraine. The factory fell apart, and currently lies in ruins.

The institutions that function and employ Petrykivka artists today are the Folk Art Center "Petrykivka," the children's art school, and the vocational college #79, where Petrykivka painting is taught. In the current state of war with Russia that started in 2014, and especially after the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, the cultural sphere in Ukraine is severely underfunded. Financial support of the Center by the government is minimal, and artists mostly work based on their own enthusiasm. However, the shift toward viewing Petrykivka painting as an inherently Ukrainian folk art, not Soviet, is undeniable.

"True" Petrykivka

Folklore scholars have long agreed that traditional expressions always adapt to the reality of the community where they are practiced, to its needs and conditions at given times. Indeed, this is one of the key innovations of the 2003 Convention on Intangible Heritage in comparison with previous heritage initiatives. In other words, tradition never stays the same, and innovation is always a part of tradition. Attempts to conserve any particular cultural phenomenon in the form in which it was practiced a long time

ago, or most likely, how it is imagined to have been practiced, with the rationale of preservation of its truthfulness, can be misleading and lead to over-romanticizing of the past. The reasons for this approach may vary, from heritage preservation initiatives to so-called authentication of a cultural phenomenon with a purpose to make it more attractive for the consumers (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1995: 373).

Although many scholars agree that "authenticity" is a construct, there is still some intuitive response when we look at certain objects; some aura of being "true," whether it be handmade or appear so, made from natural materials, look old-style or rough, or remind us about something familiar, even if we do not necessarily know or remember it. This sentiment, with an urge to "seize the lost culture" in a material object, sometimes becomes a powerful tool that artists use to attract and engage consumers.

The heritage value of Petrykivka painting is an extremely important issue. Every artist I interviewed had very strong opinions about what "true" Petrykivka is (справжне, the word "authentic" [автентичне] is hardly ever used). Each of them has their own set of criteria for its "truth" and correctness, and this has generated a great deal of discussion as well as disagreement in the community.

For instance, some artists consider a black background for Petrykivka as "better looking" than white or natural wood color, while others reject the black; others see nothing controversial in the famous political posters by Vasyl Sokolenko and admire his style, while others distain their Sovietness; some criticize those artists who emigrated or moved on to another job and are not involved in the movement of reclaiming Ukrainian national identity by means of the folk art. However, most or all agree on a simple, core list of elements that make Petrykivka "true":

a) the use of simple tools like fingers and a cat fur brush, a traditional local invention that the artists are particularly proud of, that enable paintings be accessible but graceful and eloquent at the same time. The painters perceive that cat fur brushes allow the work to be "weightless" and "airy."

b) two types of flowers make Petrykivka recognizable; one is called a "little onion" (*tsybul'ka*, цибулька) because it resembles an imprint of an onion half, and the other is "curly flower" (*kucheryavka*, кучерявка), featuring a curly crest on its top. Importantly, all the flowers in Petrykivka painting are imaginary: They may vaguely look like flowers existing in nature, but never repeat them (Panko 2018). Both *tsybul'ka* and *kucheryavka* are imaginary flowers.

c) Nataliia Rybak argues that flowers are not the only core Petrykivka motifs, but birds, horses, and fish are also integral, even if they are often unjustly forgotten. Human figures also appear on some paintings, but they were an innovation brought to Petrykivka by artist Nadiya Bilokin', whose works inspired Nataliia to experiment with incorporating people into her compositions. "A Ukrainian woman should look like a mountain, able to dig soil in the field, bring water from the well, and such. These modern Barbie dolls, like some (Petrykivka artists) paint them, skinny and sad, because they are always on a diet, nah, that doesn't work" (Rybak 2018). She depicts scenes of local life with a historical perspective: a family carrying Easter bread (*paska*, паска) or Easter eggs (*pysanky*, писанки) in their baskets and going to church for Easter service; a fisherman with a fishing rod; and young girls participating in spring festivities. In other works, she portrays national epic heroes such as Cossack Mamai playing a *kobza*, and Petro Kalnyshevskyi riding a horse. Halyna Nazarenko created a painting "Wedding train" ("Весільний поїзд») depicting the moment when the bride arrives the house of the groom, bringing a wagon full of her dowry (*prydane*, придане).

d) Several artists point out that a floral frame around the central part of the painting, called a *bihunets'* (бігунець, a runner) is integral to the style. Pikush, Rybak, and Nazarenko all agree that it has a deep symbolic meaning, similar to the Greek symbol of eternity. Rybak connects the rhythmic structure of the runner with the repetitiveness of natural cycles, like seasons of a year, or the succession of life and death. Zinchouk claims that this is a symbol of eternal life. These senior artists complained that young painters usually omit this element of the image, because it takes a lot of work, but then a painting can lose a lot of its potential meaning.

Although these elements are highly desired, they remain negotiable. For instance, not all Petrykivka works are painted with cat fur brushes. Sometimes they are created with classic squirrel fur or other brushes, or simply fingers. With the arrival of modern technologies, Petrykivka paintings are sometimes composed on digital tablets, the strokes and techniques are imitated using graphic software tools. Zoomorphic and anthropomorphic figures are not commonly used and are more often associated with the personal style of certain individual artists. The absence of these elements does not lessen the quality or value of the painting.

Petrykivka today

With the collapse of the USSR, the "Druzhba" factory, a state-owned enterprise, was left unattended. It was not taken up during the wave of privatization, and after a period of decay, it fell into complete ruin. The

experimental shop, on the other hand, was repurposed into the "Petrykivka" Folk Arts Center, led by Andrii Pikush, an institution that hires artists and produces Petrykivka painting souvenirs. The Center also offers tours and workshops for groups and individuals. It features a large gallery of Petrykivka art demonstrating its historical development.

Since the artists now make most of their income from selling their handmade souvenirs, they have no choice but to shift to smaller, less expensive objects, like pens, fridge magnets, tops, and pendants, rather than larger pieces of art. During one of our interviews, Nataliia Rybak was finishing up a batch of wooden pens she had decorated earlier, for the paint to have enough time to dry out, so that she could have them ready for a school field trip the next day (Rybak 2018). Observing this situation, I could not help but see the similarities with the situation in the factory during Soviet times, when the quantity of produced souvenirs was prioritized rather than quality. The message an artist might like to convey through their work of art, if things were different, was diminished.

Many changes have taken place to expand and recontextualize the tradition. Petrykivka art has migrated from its locus of origin, and now lives separately in many other places. Some artists, mostly of the younger generation, tend to experiment with it and present their art through newer non-conventional media, like Facebook groups, Instagram accounts, or personal websites, where they sell their products. Petrykivka ornaments now decorate china objects like mugs and plates, which are marketed to offer a folksy look to the owners' dining tables. A number of newly established clothing brands offer Petrykivka painting prints on T-shirts, sweatshirts, and backpacks, which actually enjoy great popularity and are sold to men and women across Ukraine (Prom.ua). It seems that, by attaching a little badge with Petrykivka to their backpack, a person publicly displays their Ukrainian identity. Online, there are even examples of Petrykivka tattoos as a way to demonstrate pride for Ukrainian folk culture (Petrykivka 2015).

Since 2014, due to the war in Ukraine, many nationalist-minded people volunteered to serve in the armed forces. Some went to the frontline to offer humanitarian help to those fighting on the frontlines. Many have interests in traditional Ukrainian culture or share traditional cultural views, either by being actively engaged in and practicing traditional forms or paying respect to their value. This is especially significant in this moment of intensified cultural and national self- identification. Halyna Nazarenko told me a story about her friend, a potter, who volunteered to join the

army. One day during a phone conversation with her, he asked Halyna to send him a painting of Cossack Mamai she had recently painted. In the Ukrainian ethos, Mamai is a mysterious figure, and has been the subject of much conjecture. It is unknown whether such a person really existed, but he has become an embodiment of Ukrainian national pride – a warrior, with his sword down, smoking a pipe, sitting under an oak tree with his devoted horse grazing in the background, playing a traditional Ukrainian instrument, the *kobza*. Such combination of braveness and sensitivity, strength and vulnerability, individuality, and representation of community was reflected in many variations on this image in Ukrainian traditional culture. Halyna sent the painting to her friend. Nine months later, when her friend came back from the front line, he revealed that during the time they had her painting of Cossack Mamai hanging up, no one died in their battalion. This comment deeply touched Halyna and instantly inspired her for another project, to create another Cossack Mamai, but using bullet shells collected by soldiers at the front line.

Figure 4. "Cossack Mamai" by contemporary Petrykivka artist Halyna Nazarenko. (With permission of the artist).

The idea to create art physically on artifacts from military conflicts is not new. Helmets of the participants at the Revolution of Dignity on the

Maidan were painted in light blue, and later became a mark of the heroic Heavenly Hundred.[6] Other helmets of the revolution participants ended up at a pop-up art exhibition on the Maidan right after the bloody massacres, as a sign of hope for peace and stability.

Additional war artifacts keep arriving from the front lines, and artists take this as an opportunity to keep expressing themselves about the current political situation in the country. The Facebook group "Military Art" (Військово-польовий арт) posts many examples of Petrykivka painting on shells and metal boxes for storing weapons (Rotar and Shvets' 2015). Keeping in mind that Petrykivka painting was initially used not only as decoration, but also as symbolic protection near the household's entrances, around doors and windows, we can recognize the same intentions in decorating objects from the dangerous borderland of the country adjacent to Russia. Deliberately or not, artists and warriors reach out to the same old protective images, innocent colorful flowers. Since the beginning of the full-scale Russian war against Ukraine, Petrykivka painting classes are included in art therapy programs for wounded soldiers and displaced adults and children. The art is also used to raise money for the humanitarian aid, and to raise awareness in the world about the ingoing horrific war on Ukraine.

Heritage(ization)

Issues related to preservation of cultural heritage are incredibly pressing today, given the growing popularity of cultural tourism, ethnotourism, in the world. In Ukraine, one of the most influential assets for achieving international recognition of a particular Ukrainian folk art is inscription on an Intangible Cultural Heritage list. Estonian folklorist and heritage scholar Kristin Kuutma aptly states that in some places, especially in post-communist Eastern European countries, with the recent nation-building processes and post-colonial nationalist programs, it has become a priority to secure the symbolic cultural traditions. Obtaining UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage status has become an official, internationally recognized tool to do so (Kuutma 2021).

6. The Heavenly Hundred (*Nebesnia Sotnia*, Небесна сотня) is a collective name for the people who were killed during the Revolution for Dignity around the Maidan in Kyiv from November 2013 to February 2014. These protests and the brutal government reactions led directly to the ouster of Russophile President Viktor Yanukovych. They were followed immediately by the Russian invasion of Crimea and the start of the war in eastern Ukraine in 2014.

Figure 5. "Bouquet" by contemporary Petrykivka artist Halyna Nazarenko.
(With permission of the artist).

Petrykivka painting was inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2013 as a phenomenon of Ukrainian decorative art, becoming the first cultural phenomenon representing Ukraine (UNESCO 2013, Decision 8.COM 8.29).

In her essay "The Judgment of Solomon: Global Protections for Traditions and the Problem of Community Ownership," Dorothy Noyes raises questions of ownership that are extremely relevant to Petrykivka (Noyes 2006). Although it is unclear and confusing to the artists what exactly UNESCO's recognition does in practice, they all agree that at least Petrykivka painting will not disappear now (Zinchouk 2019). As Noyes points out, "tradition, folklore, or intangible heritage, as one prefers, is assumed to stem from and therefore to belong to the 'communities'" (2006: 29). Consistent with this, the inscription is viewed by the Petrykivka artists as a form of international legal protection of their heritage. Despite controversies around UNESCO's recognition, the village is very proud to be honoured so highly. Copies of the certificate of recognition are proudly framed in the Museum of Fedir Panko, the Petrykivka Museum of Ethnography, Household, and Art, and other places. In the centre of the

village, one can also find a separate banner about this prestigious status. For the artists, as well as the general population of Ukraine, the inscription of Petrykivka painting on the ICH Representative List has become a moment of national pride: this was the first time that Ukrainian folk art received such a high formal recognition.

While the feeling of national honour remains aroused in the decade that has passed since its inscription and its skyrocketing prestige, many local Petrykivka artists claim that the greatly increased profile has also actually brought a lot of damage to the tradition. In the era of YouTube, there is no restriction to distributing and popularizing information on the basics of Petrykivka painting technique. Many beginning artists in Ukraine and beyond have taught themselves to paint in Petrykivka style and started mass producing "low quality" products (quoting the artists in Petrykivka), that just vaguely resemble the *true* Petrykivka painting. Counting on a twisted understanding of the art by general audiences, or sometimes lacking deep cultural knowledge about this type of art, these "bootleg artists" play on the stereotypical image of the art, with a black background as opposed to the traditionally white background, "sweet whitened little flowers," and mass-produced cheap souvenir products. The Petrykivka artists criticize these features heavily, and they have been working hard to erase them for a long time. Moreover, these imitations suppress the prices for the Petrykivka painting produced in its area or origin. The artists are extremely unhappy about this since it affects their income heavily.

Kristin Kuutma argues that, with a previous system of cultural management and creative constrains crumbling, outreach to the international arena with prospective symbolic and capital revenue made ICH particularly appealing (Kuutma 2021). Since 2013, Petrykivka painting became recognizable and practiced internationally. In 2019, Ukraine was represented at the Burning Man festival in the United States by an installation entitled "Catharsis." This installation was a giant figure of a butterfly, painted in Petrykivka style by a Ukrainian designer, Maryna Malyarenko. Importantly for Petrykivka villagers, Malyarenko is not from the Petrykivka and learned to paint in the Petrykivka technique elsewhere.

"Catharsis" was featured by Forbes magazine among "outrageous art installations" that year (Dobson 2019). News about the installation referencing Petrykivka technique at Burning Man was shared in the Petrykivka community's website, but with an emphasis on *style*, meaning that this is not authentic, or real Petrykivka.

Another important moment in the history of recontextualized Petrykivka painting took place in 2016, when it almost became the official logo of the Eurovision Song Contest 2017, an international event held in Ukraine after the victory of Ukrainian-Crimean pop singer Jamala the previous year. The organizing committee started preparations for the following year's event, including choosing a logo.

Figure 6. "Purple Flower," a logo design proposed (but not selected) for the Eurovision 2017 Song Contest, by Oleksandr Opariy and Ihor Lisnyi. (With permission of the artists).

At that time, Ihor Lisnyi, an art management student at Lviv National Academy of Arts, and a Petrykivka native, was working on his school project for the promotion of Petrykivka painting. At the Academy, he met Oleksandr Opariy, an artist and a professor of textile art there. Born in Sumy oblast, he taught himself the Petrykivka style, and occasionally received minor advice from Petrykivka artists, though not directly from any of the artists in the village (Opariy 2023). In 2016 he created a series of postcards with Petrykivka flowers on them. With Opariy's permission, Ihor Lisnyi posted one of the flower cards on his Facebook page, saying "This could be the logo for the next Eurovision contest." It was unconventional in terms of the color choice (bright purple is rarely used in Petrykivka tradition), and it was not a part of a bigger painting, but merely a decorative

element. Very quickly, his post was shared by several thousand people and received huge public support. People on social media agreed that the purple flower could indeed become the official logo and represent the Ukrainian cultural and art scene. It became so popular that at one point many people thought it had already been approved as the official logo. Lisnyi said that during one of the press conferences, the Minister of Culture of Ukraine Yevhen Nyshchuk expressed his personal support for the flower as the logo. However, the procedure of submitting a sketch for consideration was far more complicated and formal than posting something on social media. According to the rules, a logo could not be submitted by an individual artist or designer, only by a design studio. As a result, an illustration with a Ukrainian folk style necklace, created by a design studio, was finally chosen. The public reaction to this choice was rather mixed, leaning towards the critical side. Eurovision identifies itself as a non-political contest, and their logo should not have any political implications. That is why, according to rumors, the Petrykivka purple flower was not included in the official list of logo candidates and not offered to the selection committee. Lisnyi expressed the view that the folk style necklace was just as political as the Petrykivka flower (Lisnyi 2018). Moreover, Eurovision has always been very political, especially visible when certain countries support each other, while other countries boycott each other during the voting. It is not particularly important for this analysis whether the Petrykivka flower became the official logo of Eurovision 2017 or not. What really interests me is that in public opinion, it deserved to be chosen. If it had, the contemporary Ukrainian music scene might have been illustrated by a modified Petrykivka flower, an experiment based on a traditional folk art from a small settlement in eastern Ukraine.

This case documents how Petrykivka painting, a Ukrainian folk painting technique, was used both in the USSR and in independent Ukraine to (re-)create the state's cultural identity, capitalizing on cultural heritage. Originally, Petrykivka painting existed as traditional knowledge for decorating houses, reflecting aesthetic values of people in the region. In the time of the USSR, it developed into a lucrative financial opportunity for a fast-growing state economy, severely affected by WWII. A souvenir factory "Druzhba" was founded in 1956 in the village of Petrykivka. On the one hand, it provided employment opportunities for the local artists. On the other hand, it turned the local folk art tradition into mass production, robbing the artists of any agency or control over their folk art tradition. There were also political implications to it, as the souvenirs were exported to

over 40 countries labeled as Soviet folk art, the art of the working class, and downplaying its Ukrainian origin. In the 1970s, an experimental workshop in the village became a space for artistic expression for Petrykivka artists, pushing back against mass production.

Conclusion

In 2013, Petrykivka decorative painting was inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The inscription valorized the efforts of Petrykivka artists, gave them a sense of pride, as well as national and international recognition. The prestige that came with this recognition also brought a lot of interest in the art form. People everywhere started teaching themselves Petrykivka painting, and often charging money for their classes and selling their artwork. Petrykivka painters in the village feel that they have lost much of the control over their local art, as well as much of the potential income derived from it.

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett called heritage a "value added industry," that "produces local for export" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1995: 369). In 2016, a Petrykivka floral design almost became the logo for the Eurovision Song Contest that was held in Ukraine in 2017. Because of technical and possibly ideological issues, it was not selected. In 2019, an installation called "Catharsis," inspired by Petrykivka design, was featured at the "Burning Man" festival in the Unites States of America.

Petrykivka artists often engage in conversations regarding bringing back the ownership over the art form to the community. By giving local communities of artists more control over their cultural practices and legal protection of the traditional knowledge, it is possible, I argue, to avoid some of the negative outcomes of labeling something as heritage.

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