

ART

# 'The Paradoxical Nature of the Ukrainian Identity'

Students Natalia Boyko (Economics and International Relations) and Bohdanna Cherstylo (Computer Science) shot photos in various cities of Ukraine during the summer of 2017. Their project is on exhibit at the Ukrainian American Archives and Museum of Detroit.



Kovalivka (village), Ukraine (View of the Carpathian Mountains) Click side arrows to vi

 August 21, 2018

---

#### SHARE THIS STORY

A photography project by two Oakland University students is currently on exhibit at the [Ukrainian American Archives and Museum of Detroit](#), in Hamtramck.

The exhibit, titled “The Paradoxical Nature of the Ukrainian Identity” is the work of seniors Natalia Boyko and Bohdanna Cherstylo. It depicts the detachment from tradition some Ukrainians feel in the midst of deeply held beliefs about culture, gender roles and identity with the land.

“Some Ukrainians feel hesitant and conflicted at the crossroad between modernization and tradition, but many have discovered that there are numerous benefits to the acceptance of change and balance of the old and new which compete, coexist, and complement each other,” they wrote in a statement.

“In addition, the decline of traditions under pressure from modern influences is alleviated in the Ukrainian culture through its solid foundation in agriculture which fostered the veneration of land and home, gender roles and social relationships, and spiritual beliefs.”

Boyko and Cherstylo, who are both children of Ukrainian immigrants, shot the photos while visiting various cities of Ukraine during summer of 2017. They also wrote a research paper about their project, which they presented at the Meeting of Minds Conference at the University of Michigan-Dearborn in May 2018. It has also been submitted for publication in the “Meeting of Minds Journal.”

The pair also said the project is intended to raise awareness of political, economic, and social changes unfolding in Ukraine due to the military conflict between Ukraine and Russia.

“The goal of the project is to initiate a conversation that is unique and important to us because Ukraine is currently undergoing drastic political, economic, and social changes that affect the global community,” they wrote. “However, the underlying issues are not adequately recognized or covered by the media. We wanted to become even more well informed about the events in Ukraine and to share our firsthand experience with others during a time when there are many opposing views presented by the media.”

The exhibit will be on display through August 31. The museum is located at 9630 Joseph Campau, Ave., Hamtramck, Michigan. Hours are Thursday and Friday from 10 a.m.- 4 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m.- 2 p.m. Admission is free.



From left, Bohdanna Cherstylo, Donna Voronovich and Natalia Boyko at the photo exhibit, which is on display at the Ukrainian American Archives and Museum of Detroit.

This independent project was approved by Political Science Professor Paul Kubicek and funded by the R.F. and Robert C. Howes Slavic Studies Fund at Oakland University. Art History Special Lecturer Donna Voronovich served as faculty advisor for the project.