
THRESHOLDS

Lydia Bodnar-Balahutrak

August 27 - December 18, 2011

Regarding *Thresholds*

Threshold is both place and process. It marks the place of transition from one place to another, one state to another, from light to darkness.

Thresholds are the passages from the inner sacred and the outer profane, entering a new world. As a boundary symbol, a threshold marks the line of meeting rather than of separation. It holds together duality; it ameliorates opposites.

Gates, doors, and portals have a role in initiation. When you enter and cross over the threshold, you confront the unknown and your familiar horizon is enlarged.

Open gates attract. Because they signify a welcome, they invite discovery. Closed gates suggest secretiveness, a guarded protectiveness. The acts of opening, entering, and closing parallel our life-long striving for identity, providing opportunity, knowledge, and liberation.

At its essence a threshold is the stable center that mediates between and holds tension of differences. Thresholds are placed of intersection, of potential and new possibilities, where energy can flow in either direction.

—Lydia Bodnar Balahutrak

About the Exhibition

The Pearl Fincher Museum of Fine Arts is pleased to present an exhibition featuring the work of Lydia Bodnar-Balahutrak in the Rebecca Cole Gallery. Bodnar-Balahutrak is a first-generation American whose parents emigrated from Ukraine to the United States after World War II. Since 1991, she has received awards that have allowed her to travel and work in Ukraine. These extended stays opened her eyes and soul to a land beautiful, but ravaged by its weighty history.

In her first visit in the spring of 1991, she experienced the nation's re-awakening to its hidden tragedies, including the Holodomor – the 1932-33 famine artificially induced by Stalin's collectivization policy. Later that same year, with the unraveling of the Soviet Union, she shared in the hopeful and exuberant elation of Ukraine's shift from a totalitarian dictatorship to sovereignty and independence. Two years later, she travelled through the area of Ukraine that was once ancient Scythia, and toured historic archeological sites. In 1996, she visited the Chernobyl Zone of the 1986 nuclear plant explosion.

Each experience deeply influenced the artist and launched a more visceral creative approach to content and media.

The ensuing creative processes and images, which continue to inform her work today, became layered in material and time, combining seemingly disparate elements and resulting in mixed media drawings, paintings and assemblages. Compositions on canvas, wood, and paper incorporated collage elements—documentary text and literary writings, photocopies, mementoes, and bits and pieces of Ukrainian handiwork and memorabilia.

About the Artist

Lydia Bodnar-Balahutrak was born in Cleveland, Ohio. She studied art at Kent State University, Ohio, and received her Master of Fine Arts degree in painting from George Washington University, Washington, D.C. Since moving to Houston in 1977 with her husband Michael, she has taught studio art at area colleges, including the University of Houston-Clear Lake, and is currently on the Studio Faculty of the Glassell School of Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. The artist's work has been featured in numerous exhibitions and is included in private and public collection in the U.S.A., Canada, and Europe.