



# My **Fulbright** Year

U.S. Fulbright Scholars  
in Ukraine 2019-2020

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**Historic Preservation | *Historic Wooden Artifacts: Wood and Its Coatings***  
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**September 2019, 1.5 months; September 2020, 1.5 months**  
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A few days after my arrival in Lviv in October of 2019 on my Fulbright Fellow award, I accompanied Professor Mykola Bevez, Head of the Department of Architecture and Conservation at the Lviv Polytechnic National University (LP), and his team, to Subotiv, Cherkasy Oblast.

Subotiv is the home of the famed Illinska Church, built by Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky. Both the church and the village were the subjects of a watercolor and a moving poem by Ukraine's bard Taras Shevchenko, and they hold deep historical meaning for Ukrainians. My task was to determine the wooden balcony's authenticity in the restored church.



*Illinska Church, c. 1653, Subotiv, Ukraine*

For an American teaching wooden objects conservation at the Lviv Polytechnic National University, such a site visit provided a welcome opportunity to share my knowledge and expertise and uncover new insights into Ukraine's past. My Fulbright involvement with Ukraine began in 2016 when I was awarded Fulbright Specialist status, so returning to Ukraine, even on other occasions, has already started to feel in some ways like coming home. It started when Professor Bevez desired to expand his department's existing stone conservation program to include the conservation of wooden architecture and artifacts as well. His goal was to educate his students utilizing a Western model so that they would be able to preserve Ukraine's UNESCO World Heritage Site wooden tserkvas (or churches in Ukrainian).



*Balcony of the Illinska Church, c. 1653, Subotiv*



*Tserkva of the Descent of the Holy Spirit, c. 1598, Rohatyn*



*Tserkva of the Descent of the Holy Spirit, c. 1502, Potelych, Ukraine*

While this led to my advising on the preservation of these churches and their interiors, I soon realized that the issues were both much broader and deeper. For example, I viewed over 1,200 renaissance and baroque polychrome sculptures, many hundreds of icons and paintings on canvas at the art object repository of the Lviv Art Gallery in Olesko. They were all in dire need of conservation. When I toured the art conservation educational institutions, I discovered that chemistry was not on the curriculum, there were very few microscopes and that the students did not have access to art conservation labs. On one of my visits, I noticed a large graffiti in Lviv reading "Так нищать Львів" highlighting the disregard for historic preservation in Ukraine.



*Street graffiti in Lviv which reads "This is how the city of Lviv is being destroyed"*

These experiences led to my realization that what was truly needed was adopting a more scientific attitude toward art conservation, upgrading their conservation curriculum, formulating a code of ethics, and ultimately treating art conservation as a profession.

This situation led Myron Stachiw, former Head of the Fulbright Program in Ukraine and myself to organize a visit to the United States East Coast art conservation educational institutions and museums for Professor Bevez and his faculty. It also led to my colleagues at the University of Delaware Art Conservation Program to assist in the scientific analysis of the painted surfaces of the magnificent Assembly Hall at the LP, whose ceremonial opening will occur in late September 2020.



*Julian Oktawian Zachariewicz Assembly Hall at the Lviv Polytechnic National University during conservation*



Also that month, LP will add chemistry to its curriculum for art conservators. My students spent many engaging hours learning microscopic wood identification, an unknown subject I had introduced them to.



*Students using a loupe to examine wood anatomy features*



*Student preparing sample for microscopic wood identification*



*Students learning microscopic features of wood anatomy using a digital microscope*



*Yuri Yanchyshyn and students from the Lviv Polytechnic National University visiting Krakow, Poland to attend the International Student Conference for the Conservation and Restoration of Works of Art*

Later, we traveled to Krakow, Poland, to attend the International Student Conference for the Conservation and Restoration of Works of Art. Their perspectives were broadened when they listened to their peers from other European nations present academic papers in English, and later interacted with them.





*Yuri Yanchyshyn addressing Parliament on April 18, 2018*

When the LP decided to establish the first-ever university art conservation lab in Ukraine, I donated two of my firm's microscopes, and through the efforts of Myron Stachiw, Roger Williams University donated eight Zeiss microscopes. The reaction of both faculty and the students was very positive. They felt that actual change was taking place. My addressing Ukraine's Parliament, advocating for increased funding for historic preservation, made all concerned feel they are not alone in preserving Ukraine's past.

And all of this happened over many great vegan dinners and making many new friends.

Ukraine is an old nation, but relatively new as an independent and sovereign post-Soviet state. It chose the West during its Revolution of Dignity in 2014 and is redefining its identity, re-examining its history, re-assessing its cultural heritage, and how best to preserve it. The Fulbright Program permitted me to become aware of this process, to meet the faculty and students of the Lviv Polytechnic National University, and others, who are on the front lines of this process, and in a small way to become a part of it. It was a life-changing experience.



### **The Virtual Fulbright Ukraine:**

Don't forget to visit us on the website [www.fulbright.org.ua](http://www.fulbright.org.ua) to become aware of a wide range of events showcasing the accomplishments and contributions of Fulbrighters to Ukrainian and U.S. scholarly, cultural and social life.

For more information, subscribe to our YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/user/TheFulbrightUkraine> or LIKE us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/Fulbright>.

We encourage you to visit the Fulbright Program's Facebook page regularly to learn more about the program's many facets, read about Fulbrighters in the news, ask questions, and engage with fellow Fulbrighters and other interested in the Fulbright Program.

### **Save the Dates**

Please visit our website for updates, application guidelines, and program deadlines.

Fulbright Scholarships for Ukrainian Scholars, Junior Faculty and Researchers

**Fulbright Visiting Scholar Program: October 15, 2020**

**Fulbright Research and Development Program: November 1, 2020**

### **Share Your Own Fulbright Story**

If you would like to share your own Fulbright story, submit pictures from your time abroad or comment about the program, we invite you to take the time to tell us in your own words about your Fulbright experience. You may write about specific moments that you felt were meaningful or the overall experience. Please submit your stories with accompanying photos to [mluniv@iie.org](mailto:mluniv@iie.org).

We look forward to receiving your stories!

Letters to the Editor or Opinion Pieces are welcomed.  
Please send them to [valeksanych@iie.org](mailto:valeksanych@iie.org).

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