

Ukrainian Institute of Modern Arts
and Yara Arts Group present:
Ukrainian-American Poets Respond

Introduction Virlana Tkacz

Olena Jennings reads Olena Jennings

Krystia Nora reads Krystia Nora

Valya Dudycz Lupescu read Valya Dudycz Lupescu

Virlana Tkacz reads Virlana Tkacz

Waldemart Klyuzko on the image on book cover
“Forces of Victory” by Serhiy Zhadan and Eugene Hutz
and Yara Arts Group’s “Radiot 477!” at La MaMa

Virlana Tkacz reads from
“Three Wooden Trunks” by Virlana Tkacz

Olena Jennings reads
“The Age of Secrets” by Olena Jennings

Acknowledgements

Event led by Virlana Tkacz
visual design: Waldemart Klyuzko

Special thanks to Terry and Mark Wyshnytsky for hosting the artists.

OLENA JENNINGS is a writer and translator. Her novel *Temporary Shelter* was released in 2021 from Cervena Barva Press. Her poetry collection, *The Age of Secrets*, was released in September from Lost Horse Press. Her translation with Oksana Lutsyshyna from Ukrainian of Kateryna

Kalytko’s *Nobody Knows Us Here, and We Don’t Know Anyone* was released in October from Lost Horse Press, and her translation of Vasyl Makhno’s poetry collection *Paper Bridge* is forthcoming from Plamen Press. She is the founder and curator of the Poets of Queens reading series and small press.

VALYA DUDYCHZ LUPESCU has been making magic with food and words for more than 20 years, incorporating folklore from her Ukrainian heritage with practices that honor the Earth. Valya earned her MFA in Writing from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her work has appeared in *The Year’s Best Dark Fantasy & Horror*, *Kenyon Review*, *Gargoyle Magazine*, *Strange Horizons*, *Mythic Delirium*, and others. Valya is the author of *The Silence of Trees*, and co-author of *Forking Good: An Unofficial Cookbook for Fans of The Good Place*; and *Geek Parenting*. Valya’s graphic novel, *Mother Christmas*, is forthcoming from Rosarium Publishing in 2022. You can read more on her website: www.vdlupescu.com

KRYSTIA NORA is a second-generation Ukrainian American with a PhD in composition and TESOL from Indiana University of Pennsylvania who has taught college writing for twenty years. She also studied classical voice at Dana School of Music, inspired by her grandmother and great-grandmother who sang in the L’viv Opera. She now lives near Milwaukee, WI with her husband, four children, and two cats. Her creative publications include the classical vocal CD *Ukrainian Dreams* published by Yevshan, the essay “A Ukrainian Sunset” in the Ukrainian American magazine *Our Life/Наше Життя*, and the poems “Foraging Light” in *Voices from the Attic*, Volume XXVII and “The body remembers” in *The Milwaukee Independent*.

VIRLANA TKACZ is the artistic director of Yara Arts Group, a resident company at La MaMa Experimental Theatre in New York and has created thirty-nine original productions that performed in New York, Lviv, Kyiv, Kharkiv, Bishkek, Ulan Ude, and Ulaanbaatar, as well as China. Virlana is the recipient of the NEA Poetry Translation Fellowship, three Fulbright Fellowships, the National Theatre Translation Award and numerous NYSCA grants for her translations with Wanda Phipps. In 2019, their translation of poems by Serhiy Zhadan, *What We Live For, What We Die For*, was published by Yale University Press. *Three Wooden Trunks* is a collection of poems about memory and Virlana’s family in America.

WALDEMART KLYUZKO (set & graphics) is an artist from Kyiv, Ukraine, who has collaborated with Yara Arts Group since 2010, most

recently creating the set for Opera GAZ. He was nominated twice for innovative theatre design for NYIT Awards, for Yara's Raven based on Oleh Lysheha's poetry (2011) and 1917-2017: Tychnyna, Zhadan and the Dogs (2017). He co-curated the Kurbas in Kyiv, Kurbas in Kharkiv and the Kurbas: New Worlds exhibition at the Mystetsky Arsenal in Kyiv. He took part in the workshop of "Radio 477!" in Kharkiv, researched the historical images and created the content for the projections.

EUGENE HUTZ was born outside of Kyiv and is the front man for the internationally acclaimed Gypsy Punk band -- Gogol Bordello. He created the group in 1999 playing clubs in the East Village. It was at that time that he worked with Yara appearing in Circle and Song Tree at La MaMa Experimental Theatre and heading the Nova Nomada project together with Julian Kytasty & Virlana Tkacz. Over the years Gogol Bordello expanded into ever large venues and festivals. Hutz's live performances with the band are legendary and have also electrified audiences the Whitney, Tate Modern and the Venice Biennale. His recent concerts have been benefits for Ukraine.

SERHIY ZHADAN was born in the Luhansk Region of Ukraine and educated in Kharkiv where he lives today. He is the author of twelve books of poetry. His prose works: *Voroshilovgrad*, *Mesopotamia* and *The Orphanage* were awarded the Angelus Central European Literature Award, the BBC Ukrainian Book of the Year Award, and the Brücke Berlin Prize. He is the front man for the band Zhadan & the Dogs and has collaborated with Yara Arts Group since 2002. Yale University Press published his selected poems as *What We Live For/What We Die For* translated by Virlana Tkacz and Wanda Phipps in 2019.

YARA ARTS GROUP, established in 1990, is a resident company at La MaMa, the acclaimed experimental theater in New York. Yara has created 40 theatre pieces based on extensive research in Eastern Europe, Siberia and Asia, in Yara's signature style of multilingual dialogue and songs supported by evocative visuals and documentation. Yara has also created numerous traditional music, poetry and events. **Yara Arts Group 306 East 11th St #3B, New York, NY 10003 yara@prodigy.net www.yaraartsgroup.net** This event was made possible by the Ukrainian Institute of Modern Arts and the friends of Yara Arts Group.

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