

A GUIDEBOOK TO LIFE ELSEWHERE



C.A.T. CONTENT

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ORNAMENT

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Frédérique Neuts



ORNAMENTAL PAINTINGS IN TRANSCARPATHIA

Initial drawings and photographs of ornamental paintings on Transcarpathian houses were made during a study trip to Transcarpathia in 2017.

Ornamentation walls have existed since the 19th century and are related to nature, especially flowers as in Petrykivka paintings. The collection of the 1950s and 1960s ornamentations seemed to demonstrate another orientation and provide information regarding the traditional practice of the art of painting on house walls.

The data have been collected from the street directly in front of every house without interviewing the painter or occupant.

START OF THE RESEARCH

When we travelled through the region of Transcarpathia during summer 2017, I started to explore it with all my senses. In the countryside, I perceived some new, rich and varied information. It came from the food made by Olga, from the bell of the church every hour or from the green colours all around us. Except for a visit to a botanical garden, I had never seen so many different greens

in my life. In the forest region of Transcarpathia, this palette is truly magnificent. As a painter I finally understood *Les Coquelicots*, the famous painting of Monet, and what it means to paint in 'plein air'. This observation of the field is only possible from outside.

Our guide Bogdan explained to us the specificity of the Ukrainian environment and so many other aspects of life in Ukraine. In his discourse he sometimes used the past (events, historical facts, observations of culture) to explain how the situation is today. This regular reference to the past was a kind of justification about why we could find so many varieties of cultures in Ukraine. But one moment was particularly memorable on the road. When we passed by a village near a river in the Transcarpathian forest, with an emotional voice he described the houses near the road; the architecture was clearly different from the other old houses and it was referring to the German colony in this part of the countryside. This village was a 'villégiature', a place where some king or members of aristocratic society came for a cure and to benefit from the air of the mountain.

Then I started to question myself about Bogdan's nostalgic talk. What is this feeling? Does it seem we are always regretting the past? What is this ideal past? What gives us this feeling that things were better in the past?

As an anthropologist, I found it very interesting to be confronted with this feeling as an illustration of the historical and cultural changes lived through in Ukraine in the last century.

I decided to observe one street: Vul. Ivana Franka, Nyzhnje Selyshche, Zakarpats'ka oblast, Ukraine, 90440. It is a street between the main street of the village called Nyzhnje Selyshche and it goes directly to the forest. I passed by one day and I noticed quickly the same style of houses built between the 1950s and 1960s, the same building structure and also mural decoration on the facade of each one. Of course, my background as an anthropologist influences the way I collect my information.

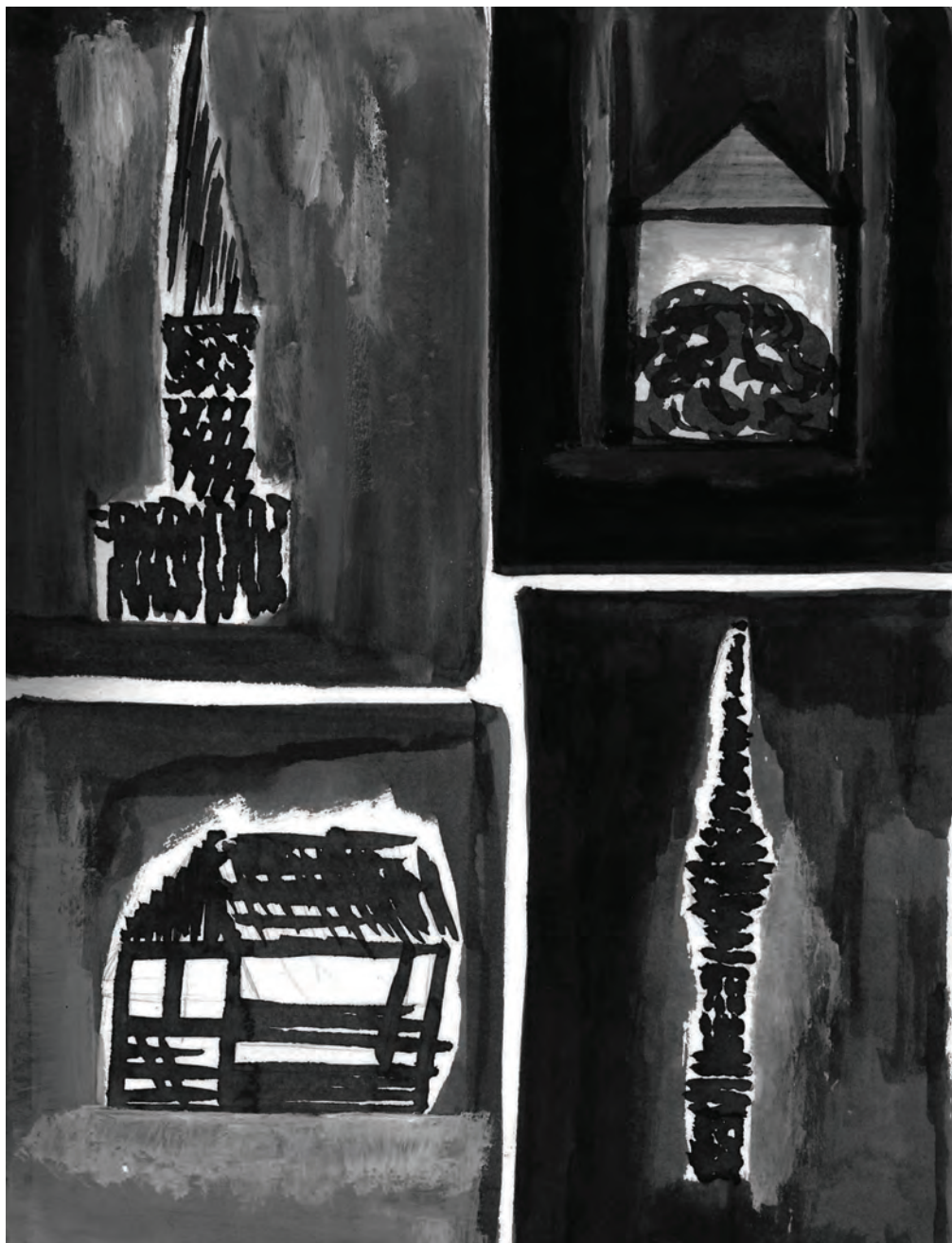
THE PRACTICE OF THIS ART

The decoration of the facades of village houses had a strong tradition in Ukraine. Painted wall decorations were prevalent in many parts of Ukraine, and different regions had their own characteristic styles.

It was traditional for the painting to be restored once or twice each year. In addition to murals, household items made of wood and other materials were also decorated, particularly chests (and especially wedding chests).

They decorated most of the houses with floral designs in central Ukraine. Using the primary colours and green with dominant red, the very colourful facades, reminiscent of the 'broderies' of every woman in the countryside, are called Petrykivka style. From the middle of the 20th century, this style became more and more famous until UNESCO inscribed it in 2013 on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

When I observed many houses with decoration on the walls, I asked myself if I could find a relation between the plants around and the motif of mural decoration in this village.



About Nostalgia, Houses in Ukraine, ink on paper, A5, first trip 2017

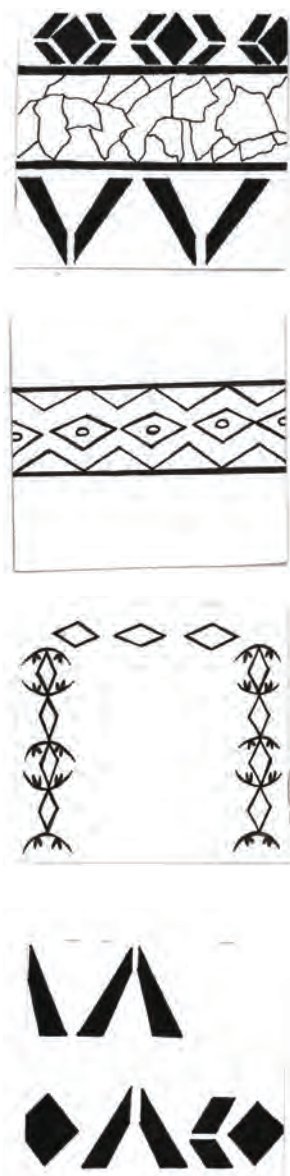


fig 1. Small 'identity' card for each house

METHOD OF COLLECTING

I had to invent a drawing system to collect all the motifs and to synthesise these in a glossary. For each house, I collected all the decorations on a small card. Then I mapped the houses and added to each its mural motifs. Finally, I compiled all the motifs into a glossary. Most of the motifs were geometrical and very often featured a diamond. So there was no reference to the vegetation around the village because I did not find any motif with a plant or floral reference. Also, most of them did not use any colours, except the colour in reference to the facade (brown). They were painted in white or black around the windows or the door or on the wall.

DRAWING

I drew a lot during the two trips. I keep my notes, sketches and other final drawings without order, but for the facade project, I collected every drawing in the same folder. Sketches, visual notes, mandala, postcards or 'fresques' follow the same direction in my drawing research. Black and white on paper or wall, for each series I had more than 20 unfinished drawings. As well as for training purposes,

I draw to relax myself and don't push my technique in any direction. One can see it as a meditative gesture. Finally, it is how the idea of mandala came about, as a distraction, and it exercises me to remember the geometrical form. I also developed this drawing when I prepared the postcard project, and it became a new way to draw for me.

* * *

The postcard project is a collective project we did during last year, 2018. The main idea was to keep in contact with people we met and to send them some pictures, drawings, collage ... and we did. As Jürgen, our second guide, said, the people from NS did not understand why we sent postcards to them. They received the postcards more with scepticism and questioning than joy or pleasure. It was not really the purpose we expected but we tried ... The purpose we had intended was to establish maybe a correspondence and continue the relationship we had through the old version of communication, which is writing on paper.

* * *

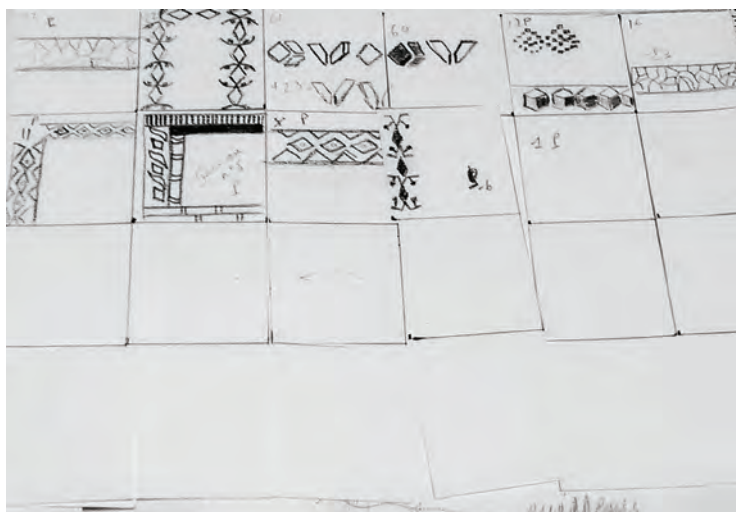


fig 2. Mapping

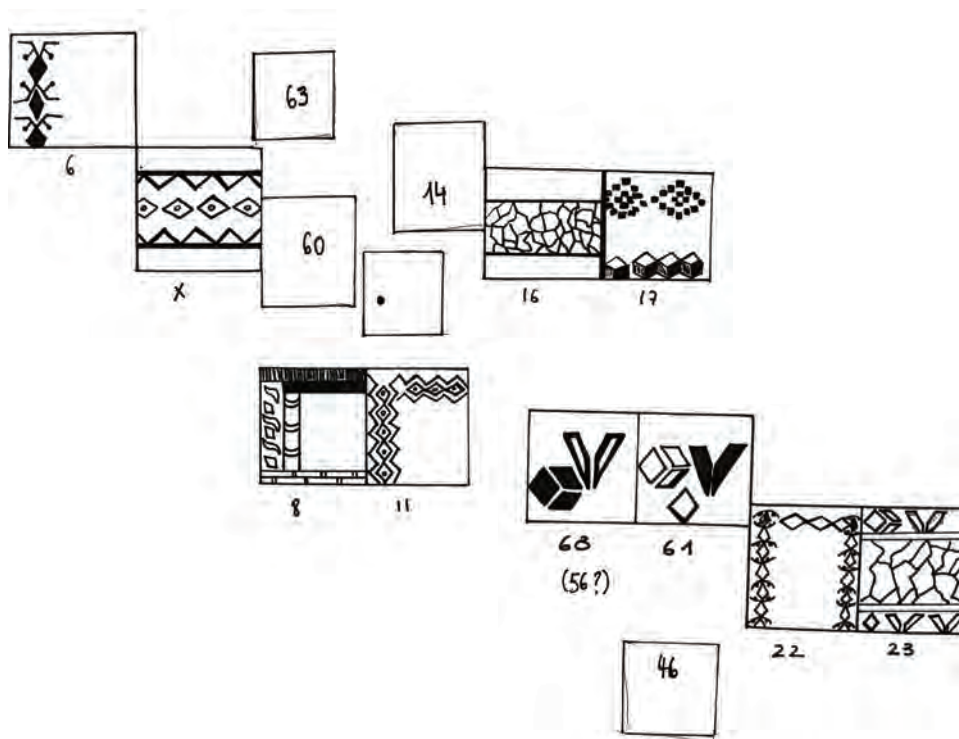


fig 3. Collecting ornamentation, NS, Ukraine, 2017

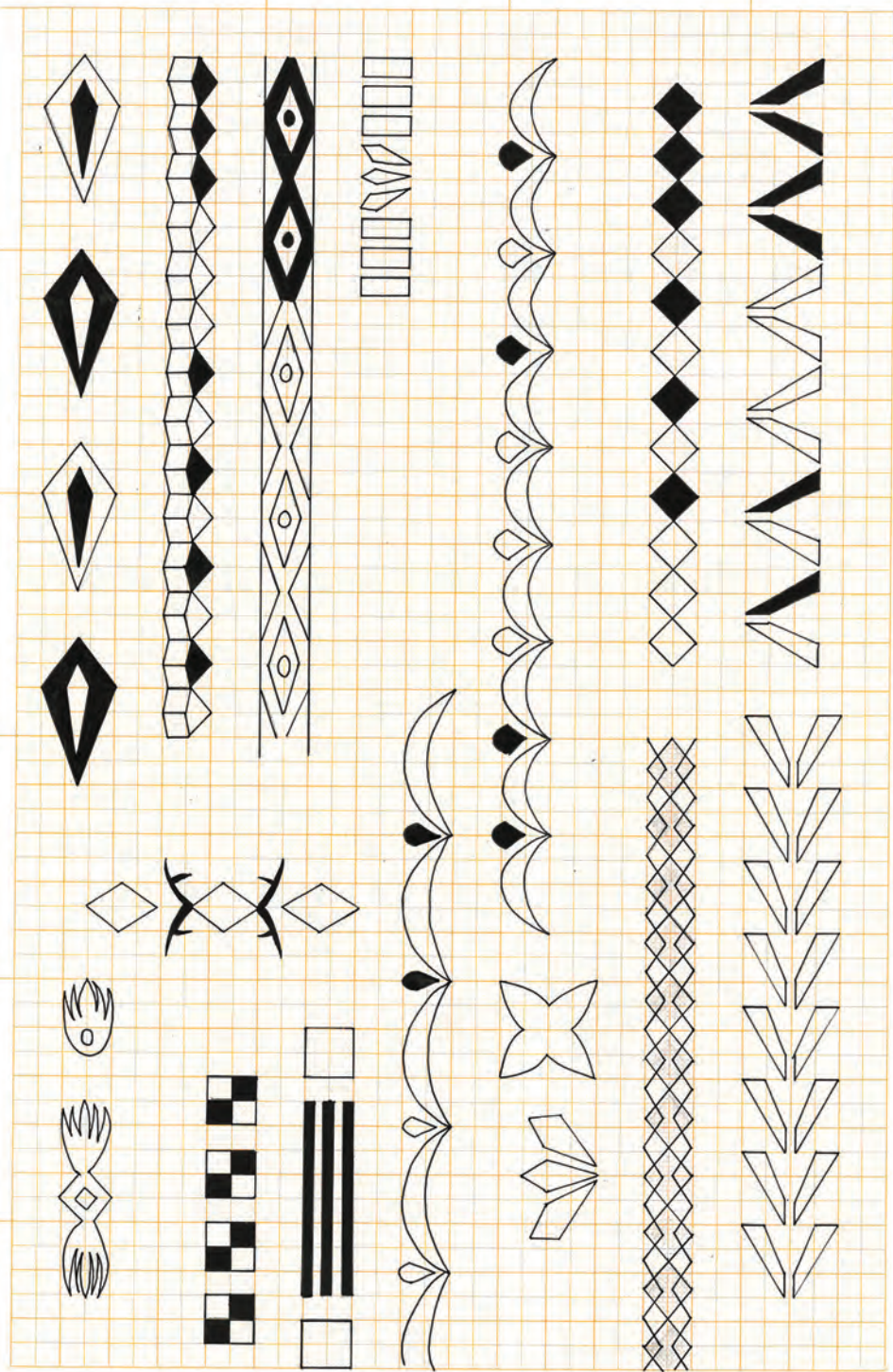
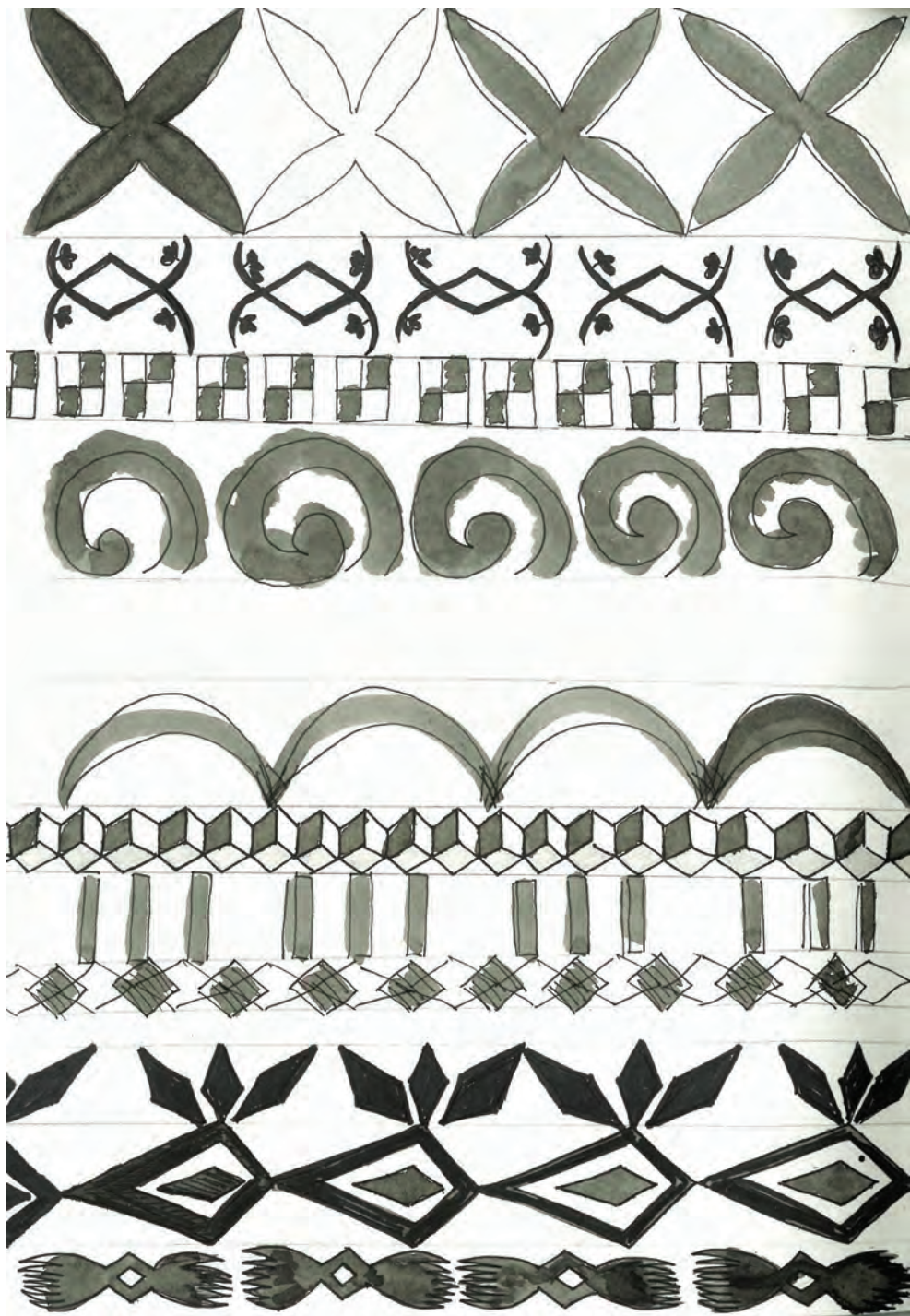


fig 4. Glossary 1, NS, Ukraine, ink on paper, 2017



Mandala, NS, Ukraine, ink on paper, A5, first trip 2017



Mandala, NS, Ukraine, ink on paper, A5, first trip 2017

Шановний!

Я був у вашому селі
минулого літа, і я
зробив малюнки вашого
будинку.

Будь ласка, візьміть цей
малюнок як сувенір мого
візиту.

З найкращими побажаннями
Фредіе.

[Universität Die Angewandte
Plaster Art & Science - [Fredie]
Oskar Kokoschka-Platz 2
1010 WIEN ÖSTERREICH]

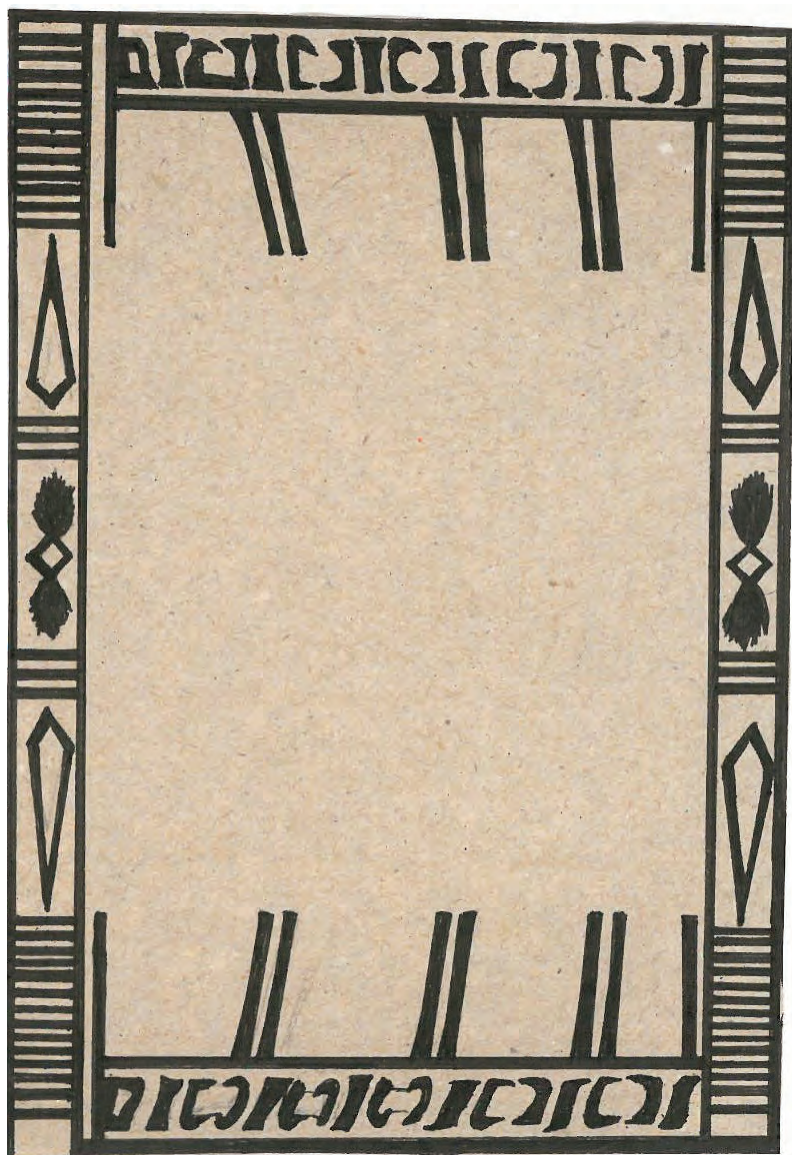
Вул Тиха, 23 / Вчм

Івана Франка

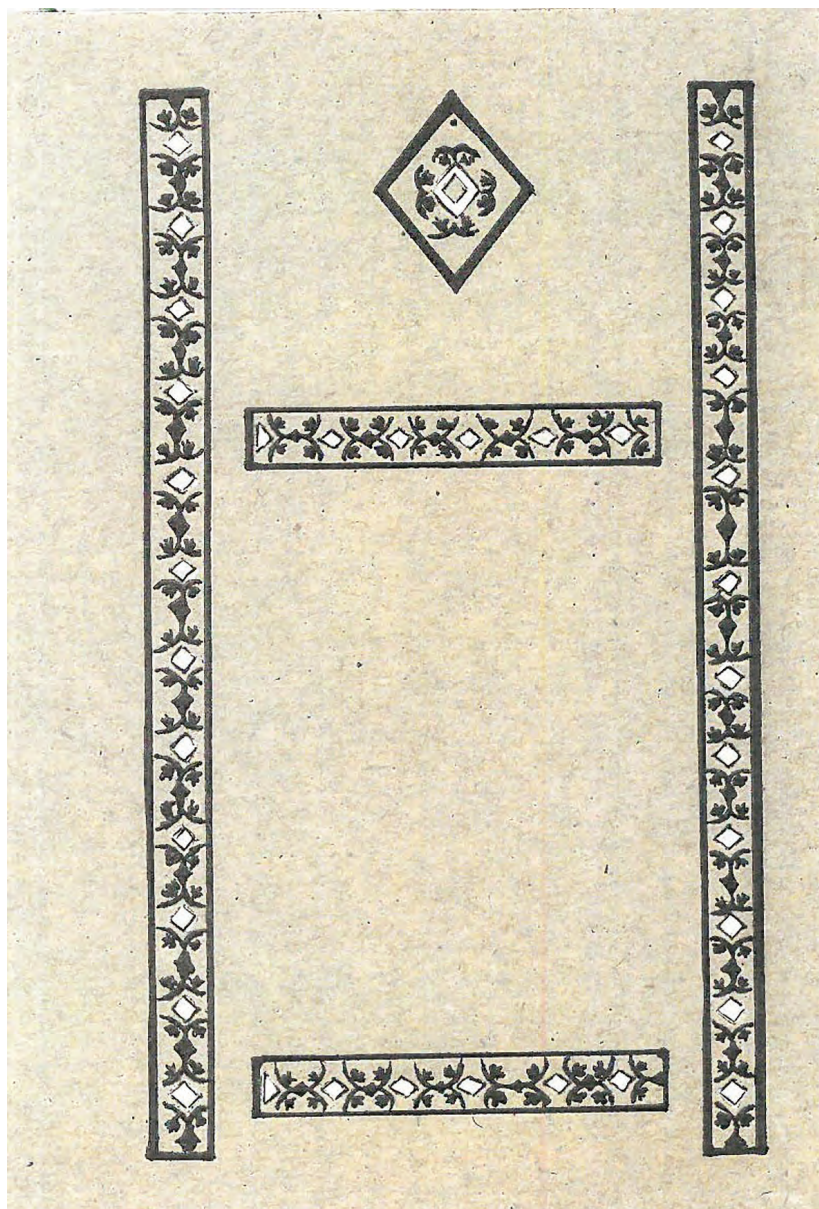
Nyzhnye Selyshche

Zakarpats'ka Oblast

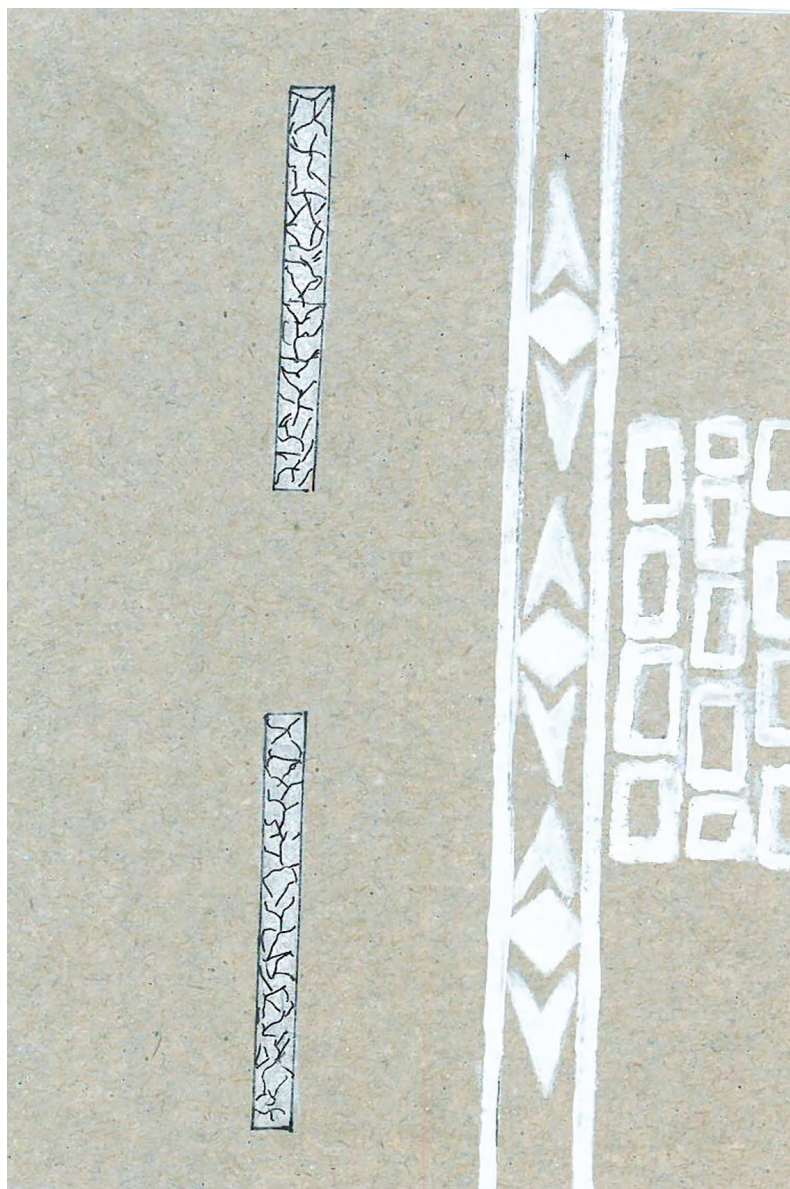
UKRAINE 90440



House n°8, NS, Ukraine, ink on paper, A6, postcard project 2018



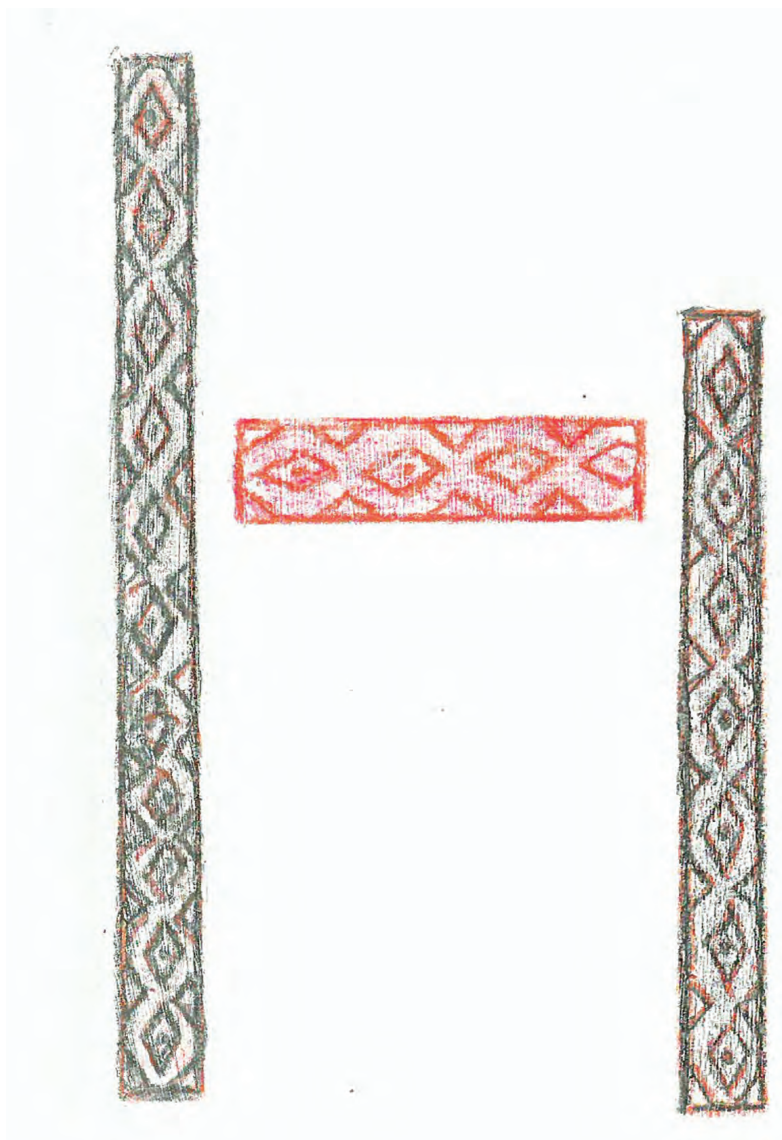
House n°22, NS, Ukraine, ink on paper, A6, postcard project 2018



House n°23, NS, Ukraine, ink on paper, A6, postcard project 2018



House n°44, NS, Ukraine, ink on paper, A6, postcard project 2018



House n°46, NS, Ukraine, ink on paper, A6, postcard project 2018

LANDING IS ON FRIDAY

The fresque was a project I took part in during the second trip. We as alien decided to investigate a part of the forest and to do a long weekend's event called 'Landing is on Friday'. We camped near the forest and on this part of land there were some abandoned small houses that were no longer of any use and were to be demolished. I decided to use the wall of one to draw a big fresque that was a kind of compilation of all the motifs I had already collected during the first trip. In using the wall as a mark of our invasion, I also considered the identity work that is found in contemporary murals of the urban world.

I was not aware of the poetry of the motifs during our trip. After we returned, we exhibited some of the pics and I realised then how enjoyable it had been to prepare this research and to draw in Ukraine.

SHARING

I did a workshop with the kids, and I really enjoyed this moment of sharing and making a marathon drawing with them. So more than ten kids gathered around the table, having collected some objects in the forest, and laid them out on the

table, and then on black or white paper in five minutes they drew what they saw in front of them. Every five minutes they changed position and continued the drawing or made a new one ...

I dedicate this research to all of them and Sophia.

SOURCES

<<https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/petrkivka-decorative-painting-as-a-phenomenon-of-the-ukrainian-ornamental-folk-art-00893>>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petrykivka_painting>





Photograph by Marina Rebhandl, 2018



Fresque on the wall, NS, Ukraine, for the collective project 'Landing is on Friday', acrylic on cardboard wall, 2018

BRISHTY ALAM, GUADALUPE ALDRETE, GOLNAZ BASHIRI, ROSIE BENN, MARGIT BUSCH, VALERIE DEIFEL,
JOHANNA FOLKMANN, MAXIMILIAN GALLO, ATHANASIOS GRAMOSIS, MATILDE IGUAL CAPDEVILA,
BERND KRÄFTNER, RAFAEL LIPPUNER, MARKO MARKOVIĆ, FRÉDÉRIQUE NEUTS, MARINA REBHANDL

