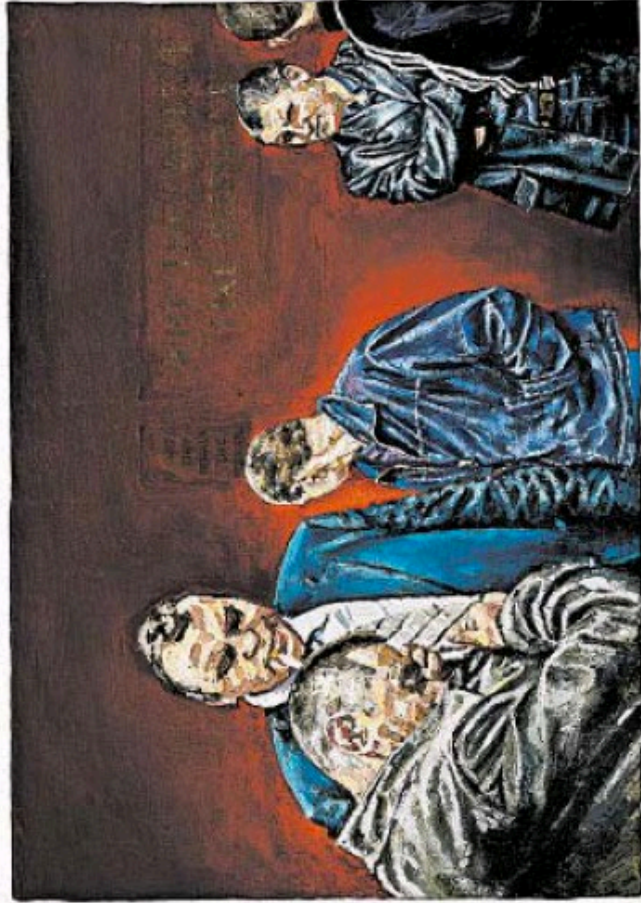


'Reality Check': Contemporary art in Ukraine since its independence

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Natalka Husar's "Why They Behave Like Russians" captures a trend among men in post-Soviet Ukraine.

The Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art is presenting an overview of art created in the 25 years since Ukraine broke away from the Soviet Union with the exhibition "Reality

Check: Directions in Contemporary Art Since Ukrainian Independence." "Reality Check" explores the work of eight contemporary artists affected by Ukraine's 1991 inde-

pendence: Lydia Bodnar-Balahutrak, Anna Bogatin, Yhelena and Michael Hall, Roman Hrab, Natalka Husar, Yulia Pinkusevich and Valya.

For artists in Ukraine, the collapse of the Soviet Union created an opportunity to learn and engage with current artistic developments occurring in the West, which had been off-limits to them under Soviet rule. Artists also found they had the opportunity to delve into art of the past from which they had also been excluded.

Several artists included in the exhibition are Ukrainian-American: Cleveland-born artist Bodnar-Balahutrak visited Ukraine for the first time in 1991. Her trip, and subsequent visits following, reignited the artist's concern for the human condition.

Husar was born in New Jersey to Ukrainian displaced persons, and she examines issues of persona in her work "Why They Behave Like Russians." She captures the trend among men in post-Soviet Ukraine to dress like Russian mobsters, reflecting a need to

intimidate to survive.

The exhibit is curated by Adrienne Kochman, a scholar of contemporary art of Ukraine and the Ukrainian diaspora. An opening reception for the exhibit will be held from 6 to 9 p.m. Friday.

Friday through November 27, Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art, 2320 W. Chicago Ave.; 773227-5522 or www.uima-chicago.org

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