

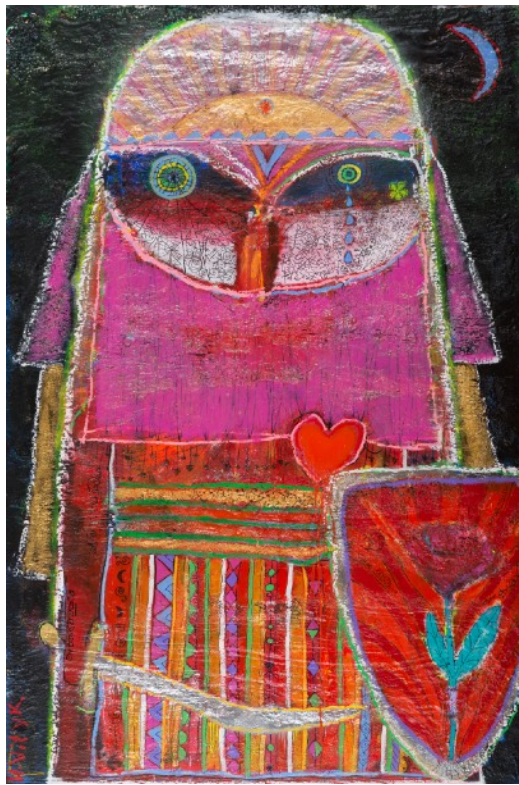
Max Vityk: *The Warriors of Light / Outcrops*

May 12 – June 1, 2017

Artist reception and book signing: Friday, May 12, 6:00 to 8:00 PM

The Ukrainian Institute of America

2 East 79th Street New York, NY 10075 | tel (212) 288-8660 | www.ukrainianinstitute.org



NEW YORK — Art at the Institute is pleased to present an exhibition of paintings by Cairo-based artist Max Vityk, opening at The Ukrainian Institute of America on May 12, 2017, continuing through April 2. Curated by Walter Hoydysh, PhD, Director of Art at the Institute, it features two major series by the artist: the monumental *The Warriors of Light* and *Outcrops*. The former group represents the artist's innate responses to critical events surrounding the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings and 2014 Euromaidan protests and bloodshed in Kyiv, Ukraine. The latter group of paintings demonstrates an abstract yet technically calculated approach to depicting and reconstructing the geological aging and forming of the earth's crust. This marks Mr. Vityk's second solo exhibition with the UIA in New York.

An opening reception will be held on Friday, May 12, from 6:00 to 8:00 PM. Also, that evening, the artist will be presenting and signing his monograph, *The Warriors of Light*, published by Rodovid Press (Kyiv: 2016).

Max Vityk's cycle of 12 large paintings, *The Warriors of Light*, expresses his visceral observations and epic interpretations consequent to the tumultuous civil movements that gripped the nations of Egypt and Ukraine from 2011 to 2014. The first six paintings in the series affirm the heroism of ordinary citizens in Kyiv, Ukraine during the Euromaidan protests and its ensuing violence. The latter six paintings echo the trajectories of the Arab Spring uprisings—commencing in Tunisia, later spreading to Libya, Egypt, Yemen, and Syria—particularly the developments in Cairo, as manifested by Mr. Vityk's densely elaborate and imposing character accounts.

The paintings that make up the *Warriors* series are numbered in order of their creation. The first six paintings, executed in Mr. Vityk's studio in The Netherlands, signify the protectors and protectresses

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roused from the deadly eruptions in the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv. The latter six works reverberate on the emotions and heroic sacrifices witnessed in the central square of Tahrir, in Cairo. Starting production in mid-2014 and completing the last of the cycle in January 2016, the group feverishly conjures motifs and symbols from ancient folk tales and myths to Jungian archetypal patterns of the collective unconscious.

In Mr. Vityk's monograph, Nahla Samaha writes, "From within the upheaval steadily emerged a determined ray of light ... and as the ray of light intensified, vague shapes began taking form, mirage-like figures danced and quivered. The closer they came, the more defined their shape; until, their faces and eyes became as clear as the sun. They were the 'Warriors of Light' ... Max Vityk, an artist by heart and a Ukrainian by soul, captures the 'Warriors of Light' as they are truly meant to be—childlike, hopeful, positive, vibrant, naive, and ingenuous." The artist spontaneously molds his ground and releases bursts of color and graphic purpose to generate a heroic narrative field in the eternal struggle between good and evil. With youthful faith, only good can emerge victorious.

Also on view, Max Vityk's series of sculptural paintings, *Outcrops* is based on the most concrete of subjects—Earth's geological formations. Designated by geologists to describe an exposed section of bedrock on the Earth's surface, outcrops are invaluable to research scientists as they reveal hundreds, thousands and even millions of years of geologic evolution. Trained as a PhD in geology, Vityk exhibits his fascination with these formations through a self-developed technique, experimenting with the application of foam and enamel that creates the textures reminiscent of living rock structures, and the symbolic layering of geologic time.

Jennifer Cahn, Head Curator of the International Museum of Art and Science (McAllen, Texas), reflects, "For the contemporary viewer, [Vityk's] *Outcrops* may serve as a meditative or decorative agenda, or may inspire rhythmic movement like bodies buoyed on waves."



Born in Lviv, Ukraine, Max Vityk began painting in the late 1990s, after earning a doctorate in Earth Sciences. He has lived, worked and exhibited in the United States, Ukraine, and The Netherlands, and since 2015, lives and works in Cairo, Egypt. Mr. Vityk's artworks can be found in private, corporate and institutional collections worldwide.

Max Vityk's artworks are featured in Tauvers Gallery International's booth in this season's running of CONTEXT New York, at Pier 94, May 3-7.

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About Art at the Institute

Celebrating its sixty-third year, Art at the Institute is the visual arts programming division of The Ukrainian Institute of America. Since its establishment in 1955, Art at the Institute organizes projects and exhibitions with the aim of providing post-war and contemporary Ukrainian artists a platform for their creative output, presenting it to the broader public on New York's Museum Mile. These heritage projects have included numerous exhibitions of traditional and contemporary art and topical stagings that have become well-received landmark events.

The Ukrainian Institute of America, Inc. is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the art, music and literature of Ukraine and the Ukrainian diaspora. It serves both as a center for the Ukrainian-American community and as America's "Window on Ukraine," hosting art exhibits, concerts, film screenings, poetry readings, literary evenings, children's programs, lectures, symposia, and full educational programs, all open to the public. Founded in 1948 by William Dzus, inventor, industrialist, and philanthropist, The Ukrainian Institute is permanently housed in the Fletcher-Sinclair mansion at 2 East 79th Street and Fifth Avenue. The building is designated as a National Historic Landmark and protected as a contributing element of the New York Metropolitan Museum Historic District.

Exhibition hours: Tuesday to Sunday, 12:00-6:00 PM, or by appointment.

For further information: Please contact Olena Sidlovych, Executive Director, at (212) 288-8660, or mail@ukrainianinstitute.org.

Images:

Page 1 – Max Vityk, *Desert Guardian* (no. 12), 2016, acrylic, enamel, spray paint, oil bar, foam on canvas, 118 x 78 inches.

Page 2 – Max Vityk, *The Archean Eon* (3.8-2.5 billion years ago), 2016, enamel and foam on canvas, 78 x 59 inches.

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