



Petro Bevza, *Domus Aurea IV*, 2015, oil on canvas,
29.5 x 23.6 inches

Petro Bevza: *Jordan*

March 18 – April 13, 2016

Reception for the artist:

Friday, March 18 from 6:00 to 8:00pm

The Ukrainian Institute of America

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NEW YORK — Art at the Institute is pleased to announce an exhibition of new paintings by Ukrainian artist **Petro Bevza**, entitled *Jordan*. Organized in New York by Walter Hoydysh, PhD, director of Art at the Institute, the exhibition will open on March 18 and remain on view through April 13, 2016. Mr. Bevza's visionary artworks explore the ethereal metaphysical imagery straddling the spiritual and real worlds in which all humankind deliberates, lives and breathes. The River Jordan is a frequent symbol in art, music, and literature, and after an extended visit to the source, the artist's latest project investigates the diurnal grasp of life's celebration of the here and now and in the realm of the sublime. Subsequent to two previous collaborative art projects, this is Petro Bevza's first solo exhibition with The Ukrainian Institute of America. A fully-illustrated catalog published in conjunction with the exhibition will be available. An opening reception for the artist will be held on Friday, March 18, from 6:00-8:00pm.

Petro Bevza's career-long interest has been in decoding reality as a place of constant and inevitable change, and in realizing abstract ideas through the exploration of sometimes everyday, at other times mythical objects and situations. Instead of depicting stable, conventional physical spaces, he often sets up specifically-defined formal situations that play

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with the viewer's sense of surface and depth, instructing one to see beyond the under-examined aspects of everyday and ethereal surroundings in startling new ways. His depiction of an immediate, often intimate spiritual moment, or figure's or object's presence, laced with an implied yet open-ended narrative, leads to a transcendent idea in spite of the intended rendering of his imagery.

Horses, goats, peasants, angels and saints, fountains, vines and flora all emanate from a field of the Hegelian "other," and play to the artist's self-understanding of this bridge from the material to the divine. With *Jordan*, one is offered the gift of Petro Bevza's profoundly crafted exploration and understanding of the one of the most impressive ceremonies of the Byzantine Rite: the Solemn Blessing of the Water on the Feast of the Epiphany commemorating Christ's baptism in the River Jordan. Water, the central theme, is the everyday element, the essence, through which faith is always present, manifested by inner spiritual renewal. For the artist, this holds true to be a direct meditation on what it is aspire to being fully human.

In the accompanying exhibition catalog essay, art historian Volodymyr Gorbatenko reasons, "Water is a symbol of salvation; life-giving energy and cycled self-reproduction appear in Petro Bevza's new [series] *Fountains*. The dynamic image of [flowing] water — as a love, which runs from heart to heart, as a mutual flow of the illusive to the real, and vice versa — attracts the artist. According to the teachings of feng shui, in water you can see your image the best. But, the moving water has a memory, spiritual energy, and new-life strengths. Not without reason, water signifies cleansing and purifying in Ukrainian folk traditions. It is the symbol of longevity, new feelings and emotions — irresistible force. Our artist understands it and reflects in his paintings originality and endlessness of the source of all which is alive on our planet."

Born in the Kyiv region of Ukraine, Petro Bevza studied at and graduated from the Kyiv State Art Academy. Since 1990, he has been a member of the National Union of Artists, and a member of the all-Ukrainian creative collective "BZH-ART." Selected recent solo exhibitions of his artworks were held at N2N Gallery (Abu Dhabi), Nest Gallery (Geneva), Bezpala Brown Gallery (Toronto),



Petro Bevza, *Domus Aurea II*, 2015, oil on canvas, 29.5 x 23.6 inches

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Galleri Gamla Vaster (Malme, Sweden), and Bottega Gallery (Kyiv). Petro Bevza lives and works in Kyiv and Vyshneve, Ukraine.

Following its New York debut run at The Ukrainian Institute of America, *Jordan* will travel — through 2017 — to The White World Contemporary Art Center (Kyiv, Ukraine), Odesa Art Museum (Odesa, Ukraine), The National Museum of Ukrainian Folk and Decorative Art (Kyiv, Ukraine), and The Andrey Sheptytsky National Museum (Lviv, Ukraine).

About Art at the Institute

Celebrating its sixty-first year, Art at the Institute is the 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, 12-6pm, or by appointment.

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

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