

## Petro Smetana

### *Aftereffect: Landscapes and Still Lifes*

September 13 – October 6, 2019

Opening reception: Friday, September 13, 6:00 to 8:00 PM

The Ukrainian Institute of America 2 East 79th Street New York, NY 10075

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NEW YORK — **Art at the Institute** is pleased to open its sixty-fifth programming season with an exhibition of twenty-five paintings by Ukrainian artist **Petro Smetana**, titled *Aftereffect: Landscapes and Still Lifes*, exploring obverse notions of progress and regression, the postindustrial landscape and its ephemeral and transitory consequences on perception, memory and culture. The exhibition opens September 13, 2019 and will continue through October 6. Introduced and curated by **Walter Hoydysh, PhD**, director of Art at the Institute, this marks Smetana's first solo showing with The Ukrainian Institute of America. A public opening reception will take place on Friday, September 13 from 6:00 to 8:00 PM.

With only a suggestion of place, the man-made and the object, Petro Smetana's paintings are masterfully expansive and tend toward the impossible sum of the present moment, the past, and the future — what was manufactured, built and its far-reaching fall-out. He doesn't allow his work to be classified as either abstract or figurative. One moment he seems an abstract painter uniquely attuned to the physical world and another he seems an observational painter with a command of the abstract elements of painting. What he seeks is that which lies between the two.

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As a technically demanding artist, Smetana is just finding his way. What's distinctive about his paintings is their progressive appearance, with slabs of paint of natural and unnatural coloration that he often literally lays on with putty knives, spatulas and trowels. The lumps of colors are pleasing in themselves, showing subtle modulation, variety and an intrinsic feel for balance. Move one of them a little, and the effect is spoiled.

Of Smetana, art historian Dmytro Korsun remarks, "He paints only what has remained in his memory and what is greater than just a fragment of time and space. In case with Smetana's paintings we have caught the world on the verge of destruction — buildings are undermined, yards are in ruins, pipes of plants are passive; everything is ready to fall down just as scenery at the end of a theater play ... But, the artist doesn't turn a blind eye to something that is unworthy of art — concrete fences, soot of abandoned industrial areas, smut, various bits and pieces used in the course of life. When the painter thinks all this over, these objects become a brilliant material of art."

Petro Smetana studied design and graduated from the Lviv National Forest-Technical University (Ukraine). He is a member of the National Union of Artists of Ukraine and has exhibited actively since 2007 in Ukraine, Bulgaria, China, Cyprus, Poland, and the United States. Recent activity includes participation in "Painting 2019," the VIII All-Ukrainian Triennial in Kyiv (Ukraine) and an exhibition with Green Sofa Gallery in Lviv. He lives and works in Lviv.

**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](mailto:mail@ukrainianinstitute.org).

**Image:**

Petro Smetana, Untitled, 2019, mixed media on board, 8 x 14 inches.

**About Art at the Institute**

Celebrating its sixty-fifth year of activity, **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 postwar 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, modern and contemporary art, and topical stagings that have become well-received landmark events.

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