



# DEBATES OF THE SENATE

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## **UKRAINE—RUSSIA'S ACTIONS**

Statement by:

The Honourable Patricia Bovey

Thursday, March 3, 2022

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### UKRAINE—RUSSIA'S ACTIONS

**Hon. Patricia Bovey:** Honourable senators, the consequences of Russia's invasion of Ukraine at home and throughout the Ukrainian diaspora are horrific. The strength, will and tenacity of the people of Ukraine in defending their country, culture and history is inspiring.

Headlines document the cultural devastation. *The Art Newspaper's* special introduction on Wednesday, March 2, 2022, stated:

We are shaken and deeply concerned by the latest events unfolding in Ukraine. . . . We feel that, at times like these, a means of cultural dialogue is especially valuable.

Colleagues, that cultural dialogue is multifold, domestically in museums, publications, concert halls, and theatres and through international cultural diplomacy.

Other headlines report, "Russian missile strike hits Holocaust memorial site in Kyiv." *ARTnews* on February 28 noting ". . . the country's art scene will be impacted," reported the burning of the Ivankiv Museum of Local History. Fifty miles north of Kiev, it housed works by Ukrainian folk artist Maria Prymachenko, who died in 1997. She was of the stature of Nova Scotia's Maud Lewis.

Artist Pavlo Makov and his curators were forced to cease work on Ukraine's Venice Biennale pavilion. Musicians have laid down their instruments and picked up rifles. The *Los Angeles Times* marked this destruction of Ukraine's cultural heritage "an unfolding . . . catastrophe."

Destroying artworks, archeological sites and historical monuments is likened to attacking fundamental principles of international peace and security.

Russian artists are protesting their government's actions by pulling out of the prestigious Venice Biennale. Russian musicians are posting billboards. Visual artists, writers and publishers are vociferously speaking out.

Global cultural boycotts of Russian exhibitions, concerts and publications are increasing. Ireland, for instance, cancelled all Russian performances, including dance and music by Russian composers and choreographers. Russian art exhibitions are being cancelled worldwide.

Decrying the devastation, Artnet News asked that countries share stories of successful Ukrainian cultural exchanges. Senator LaBoucane-Benson discussed the deep cultural connections between Ukrainian Canadians and First Nations. I herald Winnipeg's cultural exchanges, including those at Oseredok, Winnipeg's Ukrainian museum, and the Winnipeg Art Gallery's Ukrainian exhibitions. When I was director, we borrowed major historical and modern works from Ukraine. Our staff worked there with Ukrainian counterparts. That exhibition's significance is even greater now, as are the publication's articles and reproductions documenting the depth and development of Ukraine's visual art.

Colleagues, my heart and soul are with all Ukrainians. I call for the protection of the arts and cultural institutions which preserve their unique heritage. Thank you.