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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Lianna Makuch Awarded \$25,000 “REACH Mentorship/Residency for the Arts”

Emerging Canadian theatre artist Lianna Makuch, of Edmonton, AB, is the 2020 beneficiary of the \$25,000 **REACH Mentorship/Residency for the Arts** grant program, a project of the Shevchenko Foundation in partnership with the Ihnatowycz Family Foundation.

The REACH program calls on emerging Canadian artists to reach for their career dreams by seeking opportunities for mentorship, residency, internship, training, workshop and research.

Lianna Makuch, a performer, producer and playwright, received the REACH funding for mentorship with multi-award-winning playwright and screenwriter Nicolas Billon. Ms. Makuch’s project spans an arc to adapt her acclaimed play *Blood of Our Soil*, which had 20 public theatre performances, into a feature-length screenplay. Her progressive mentorship includes the creation of a proof-of-concept short film to market the viability of a full-length feature film.

When notified about the REACH funding award, Lianna Makuch described *Blood of our Soil* as “a story very close to my heart. My history as a second-generation Ukrainian Canadian with a foot in two worlds – as similar as they are different – gives me a unique perspective that I bring to my work and hope to share, through film, with a broader and diverse audience. This award is an invaluable opportunity to expand my creative skills and take the next step in my career.”

The REACH 2020 competition attracted 17 applicants who met the requirements of being 40 years of age or younger; having a connection to Ukrainian heritage through background, art, culture and/or language (with no requirement to be Ukrainian Canadian); and working actively within the Ukrainian arts community in Canada and/or worldwide.

Applicants were also required to have practised at a peer-recognized advanced career level for a minimum of two years in visual, literary or performing arts, new media, or arts management.

The REACH adjudication panel included independent arts and entertainment producer **Michael Sulyma**; CBC broadcast journalist and producer **Marichka Melnyk**; and stage director, producer and librettist/director **Gordon Gordey**.

Mr. Sulyma noted Ms. Makuch's application demonstrated "evolutionary growth from the very first stages of the artistic work, showing successful accomplishment throughout every stage of the work, and confidently articulating needed support to achieve her next major growth."

Applications for REACH funding came from six Canadian provinces and one other country where applicants are currently working. "Each of the artists submitted inspiring and worthy requests that made choosing a top applicant challenging," said Marichka Melnyk.

Gordon Gordey described Lianna Makuch as "bold in expanding her creative career toolkit by seeking mentorship from senior artists to enable her to disseminate her storytelling through the film medium so her voice can be shared with a greater audience."

Andrew Hladyshevsky, Q.C., president of the Shevchenko Foundation, noted that "the Ukrainian Canadian arts community is flourishing. The REACH Mentorship/Residency for the Arts plays an essential role in accelerating the career of the recipient artist. Congratulations to Lianna Makuch, our wonderful donors and the volunteers who made this possible. We hope others are prompted to donate and help professionally develop our emerging career artists."

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