Building Bridges Through Theatre in Exile, Lithuania

Sector: Music & Performing Arts

Type of business / employment: Self-employed

Artistic profile

UA woman is a theatre director from Kharkiv, Ukraine, who fled her homeland at the very beginning of the war. Having worked internationally for over 20 years in Ukraine, Moldova, Denmark, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Lithuania, she brought her passion for documentary and movement theatre to her new place of residence.

Originally, she and her family thought they would stay in Lithuania only six months and then return home. Learning the Lithuanian language was not part of their plan.

However, life unfolded differently. Today, she and her colleagues create performances that merge Ukrainian, Lithuanian, and English, sometimes weaving in Russian as an unavoidable presence in their lived reality.

The Business Journey

In Lithuania, UA woman founded the “Lekuči Creative” theatre collective. The troupe combines Ukrainian and Lithuanian artists, producing innovative performances based on authentic stories of war refugees.

One of their most powerful productions, “Woman’s Diary. War”, was inspired by the testimonies of Ukrainian women who fled cities such as Odesa, Irpin, Mariupol, and Kremenchuk. Their words, movements, and emotions echo the ongoing war, touching audiences as though they themselves had lived through those moments.

The performances are staged in an immersive format, eliminating the boundary between audience and stage. Viewers walk alongside the actors, becoming part of the performance itself. This rare and bold approach in Lithuanian theatre allows for deeper engagement with stories of trauma, resilience, and survival.

In 2025, she also co-launched the international movement theatre project “Starting Point” at Vilnius University. This project brings together Ukrainian refugees and Lithuanian students to explore how personal narratives of war, displacement, and belonging can be transformed into performance.

Achievements and Impact

- Artistic Innovation. Pioneered immersive, multilingual theatre in Lithuania, blending Ukrainian and Lithuanian voices.
- Social Value. Created a platform for refugees to share their experiences, fostering empathy and dialogue in the host society.
- Community Engagement. Collaborated with Lithuanian artists, students, and cultural institutions to create cross-cultural projects.
- Recognition. Participated in projects supported by the EEA and Norway Grants and included in wider cultural initiatives such as “Faces of Ukraine.”

The play "A Woman's Diary. War"

It is like diving into the open pages of diaries written by women who experienced the horrors of war and had to flee from it. These are voices from Odessa, Irpin, Mariupol, Kremenchuk, and other Ukrainian cities. The performance is performed simultaneously in Lithuanian and Ukrainian, preserving the authenticity of both the stories and the emotions.

According to UA woman, the format of an immersive performance is not common for Lithuanian audiences. The audience and actors are together the entire time, changing the performance locations and set design, walking together – this eliminates the boundary between the troupe and the audience created by the stage and chairs, turning the audience itself into part of the performance. That is why this format was chosen.

Through her work, UA woman not only preserves Ukrainian voices in exile but also enriches the Lithuanian cultural landscape.

Social Innovation + Initiative

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Media Sources of the Story

Based on publicly available interviews and reports.

Self-Reflection Questions

1. How does UA woman's of the story use of immersive, multilingual theatre change the way audiences connect with refugee experiences?
2. What does her journey teach about the importance of preserving cultural identity while building bridges in a new society?
3. In what ways can creative collaboration between refugees and host communities strengthen empathy and dialogue?
4. How do personal stories of trauma and resilience gain new meaning when transformed into performance art?
5. If you were part of UA woman's of the story theatre collective, what story from your own life would you want to share on stage, and why?

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