



The Cross of Peace

Sergey Melnikoff (MFF)

A Monument Composed of War Fragments

Exhibition Proposal

2026



The Cross of Peace

with the Golden Crucifix

Sergey Melnikoff (MFF) is an American artist working in collaboration with Ukrainian welder **Viktor Bielchyk**.

This work was created in Odesa, Ukraine, during a critical phase of the Russian–Ukrainian war in 2024.

Created from the “ashes of war,” this installation represents Ukraine within the realm of high art, transcending national and religious boundaries. *The Cross of Peace* unites the symbolism of Orthodoxy, Catholicism, and Protestantism, carrying special meaning in the context of church divisions dating back to the Great Schism of 1054.

Standing four meters tall and weighing nearly a ton, The Cross of Peace is unlike any crucifixion ever created. Its gilded figure of Christ, composed of 20,000 fragments of artillery shells and exploded munitions, is plated with 999.9 pure gold. Rather than expressing agony, the figure radiates serenity, embodying a quiet, unwavering triumph of good over evil. It stands as a spiritual manifesto forged in the fire of modern conflict.





Reclaiming Faith Amid Ruin

A Word from the Art Historian

By Dr. Miroslav Vantuch

The sculptural composition *The Cross of Peace* stands as one of the most significant and symbolically profound works of contemporary art. It embodies the eternal struggle between good and evil, life and death, and, above all, the unity of humankind in the pursuit of peace. Through bold artistic vision and exceptional craftsmanship, Sergey Melnikoff has created a work destined to enter the cultural heritage of both Ukraine and the wider world.

In an era when armed conflicts continue to devastate lives, *The Cross of Peace* serves as a powerful reminder that faith and art can act as catalysts for healing and reconciliation. Deeply resonant within the Christian tradition, the work carries a universal message that transcends national and religious boundaries.

The world gazes in awe at the Seventh Wonder—born in Ukraine.



A Sculpture with a Thousand Voices

Every element of *The Cross of Peace* carries meaning. The work speaks simultaneously to personal grief and collective memory, transforming the language of war into a visual testimony of resilience and faith.

Structure: Vertical and Horizontal Beams

Formed from salvaged pipes taken from destroyed residential buildings in Kharkiv and Odesa, the cross itself bears witness to civilian lives interrupted by war. These elements are not merely structural — they are vessels of remembrance.

The Figure of Christ

The central figure is composed of over 20,000 fragments of artillery shells and munitions, assembled without altering their original form. Electroplated with 999.9 pure gold, the figure radiates calm rather than suffering, embodying a quiet triumph of good over evil.

Symbolic Elements

A traditional Ukrainian *rushnyk* drapes across the crossbeam, linking the living with the dead. A suspended bell evokes both mourning and awakening — a call to memory, reflection, and conscience.



“What a kind and peaceful face.

This is the most moving image of Christ I have ever seen. It carries a quiet confidence in the victory of good over evil and brings a sense of peace and light.

In this face, there is no suffering — only serenity, strength of spirit, and the presence of life. It feels as though it speaks gently to the soul, reminding us of kindness and hope.

I am in awe”

— **Ludmila Leukhina**

Art Beauty Industry Biotech
Kharkiv, Ukraine



Before you lies a confession in images — a testimony of how pain becomes prayer.

They do not pray for themselves, but for those walking the razor's edge between life and death.

“Save and protect...” — these trembling words rest on their lips.

And if you still have tears left — look into these eyes.

And allow your soul to weep.

—MFF











He cannot see. He can feel.





A Sculpture That Travelled Across a Country at War

The journey of *The Cross of Peace* across Ukraine in 2025 was nothing short of extraordinary. Installed in city squares under the constant threat of air raid sirens and missile strikes, it became more than a cultural event — it became a place of gathering, reflection, and prayer.

In a time of destruction, the sculpture stood as a mobile sanctuary, drawing thousands of people who came not only to see, but to feel, to remember, and to hope.

“My people are still suffering,” says Academician Mykhailo Saliuta, one of Ukraine’s leading cultural scholars. “But this sculpture is a sign that the end of suffering is possible. It reminds us that faith is not abstract — it is forged in action.”

Explore the full tour online
<https://mff.name/the-cross-of-peace-winter-2025-tour>



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