

The Art of MFF

THE CROSS of PEACE &

THE GOLDEN CRUCIFIX

by

Sergey MELNIKOFF

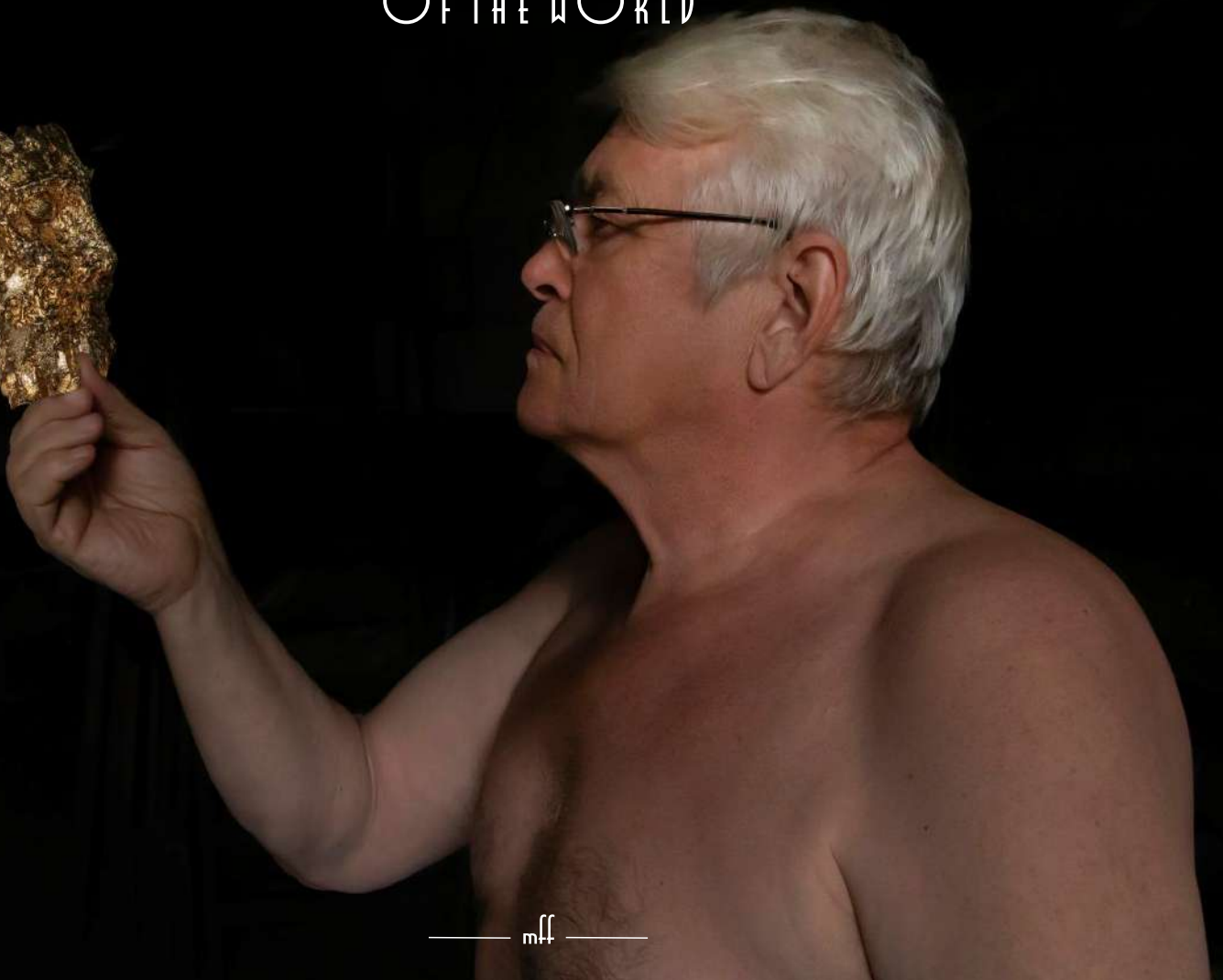
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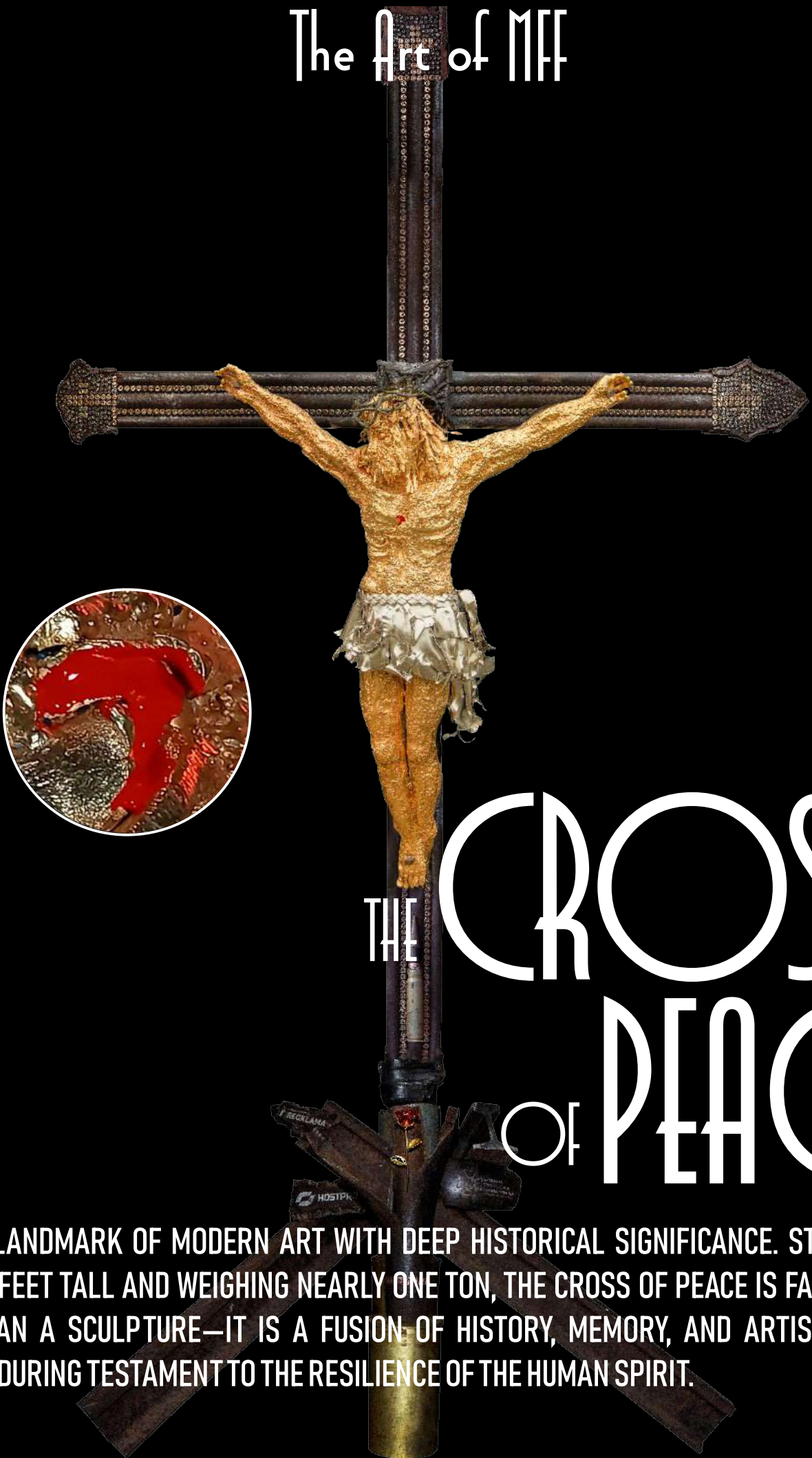
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THE GOLDEN STATUE OF CHRIST THE SAVIOR

CRAFTED IN UKRAINE FROM 20,000 PIECES
OF ARTILLERY MINES AND SHELLS BY
SERGEY MELNIKOFF
AN AMERICAN ARTIST WITH COSSACK ROOTS
HAS BEEN UNOFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED
AS ONE OF THE NEW SEVEN WONDERS
OF THE WORLD



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THE CROSS OF PEACE

A LANDMARK OF MODERN ART WITH DEEP HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE. STANDING 13 FEET TALL AND WEIGHING NEARLY ONE TON, THE CROSS OF PEACE IS FAR MORE THAN A SCULPTURE—IT IS A FUSION OF HISTORY, MEMORY, AND ARTISTRY, AN ENDURING TESTAMENT TO THE RESILIENCE OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT.

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THE GOLDEN SAVIOR



THE FIGURE OF JESUS CHRIST IS FORMED FROM 20,000 MINIATURE FRAGMENTS OF ARTILLERY MINES AND SHELLS, SOME NO LARGER THAN A CHILD'S FINGERNAIL. COVERED IN PURE GOLD THROUGH ELECTROPLATING, THIS RADIANT SURFACE ELEVATES THE SCULPTURE'S AESTHETIC POWER WHILE TRANSFORMING REMNANTS OF DESTRUCTION INTO A SYMBOL OF DIVINE LIGHT AND HOPE.

A man with a beard and long hair, wearing a green t-shirt, is holding a large, ornate golden crucifix. He is standing next to a large, rusted metal structure that resembles a tree trunk. The background is dark and industrial.

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IN RECENT CENTURIES
NO OTHER RELIGION HAS
POSSESSED SUCH RELICS

RECOGNIZED FOR ITS PROFOUND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE TO THE CHRISTIAN WORLD, THE GOLDEN CRUCIFIX IS REGARDED BY UKRAINIAN ART HISTORIANS AS A MODERN COUNTERPART TO THE MASTERPIECES OF THE RENAISSANCE.



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A CROSS OF UNITY

THE CROSS OF PEACE UNIQUELY EMBODIES THE SYMBOLS OF ORTHODOXY, CATHOLICISM, AND PROTESTANTISM, RESONATING DEEPLY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CHURCH DIVISIONS THAT BEGAN WITH THE GREAT SCHISM OF 1054. DESIGNED BY SERGEY MELNIKOFF, EACH ARM OF THE CROSS REFLECTS THE TRADITIONS OF A DIFFERENT CHRISTIAN DENOMINATION: THE LEFT ARM FOLLOWS ORTHODOX CANONS, THE RIGHT ARM EMBRACES PROTESTANT PRINCIPLES, AND THE UPPER ARM HONORS CATHOLIC TRADITIONS.

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THE POWERFUL SYMBOLISM

- 20,000 FRAGMENTS OF ARTILLERY SHELLS
- 3,000 MACHINE GUN CARTRIDGES
- 50 FEET OF PIPES
- 27 LBS OF WELDING WIRE
- 3 OXYGEN CYLINDERS
- 9.1 OUNCES OF 999.9 PURE GOLD
- 180 DAYS OF DEDICATED CRAFTSMANSHIP

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THE 13-FOOT-HIGH CROSS WAS CONSTRUCTED FROM PIPES SALVAGED BY THE KHARKIV EMERGENCY SERVICE DURING THE DISMANTLING OF A BUILDING AT 82 NATALIA UZHVIY STREET. IN AUGUST 2022, THIS BUILDING WAS STRUCK AT NIGHT BY A RUSSIAN S-300 BALLISTIC MISSILE, CLAIMING THE LIVES OF RESIDENTS ACROSS MULTIPLE APARTMENTS. THE CROSSPIECE WAS CRAFTED FROM PIPES RECOVERED FROM A MULTI-STORY BUILDING AT 134 DOBROVOLSKOHO AVENUE IN ODESA. ON THE NIGHT OF MARCH 2, 2024, A BRUTAL RUSSIAN ATTACK ON THIS BUILDING KILLED 12 PEOPLE, INCLUDING FIVE CHILDREN.



HISTORY FORGED IN STEEL

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THE INTRICATE ORNAMENTATION ALONG THE CROSS'S PIPES IS COMPOSED OF METICULOUSLY CUT MACHINE GUN AND AUTOMATIC RIFLE SHELLS, WITH THE TOTAL NUMBER ON THE INSTALLATION EXCEEDING 3,000. BENEATH THE FEET OF THE CRUCIFIED FIGURE OF JESUS CHRIST, THE ARTIST PLACED AN ARTILLERY SHELL, SERVING AS A POWERFUL SYMBOL OF ABSOLUTE EVIL.

FRAGMENTS of CONFLICT, SYMBOLS of HOPE

A photograph of two men in a workshop setting. The man on the left is wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt, blue jeans, a blue and red patterned headscarf, and white work gloves. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. The man on the right is wearing a blue short-sleeved button-down shirt, khaki pants, and orange work gloves. He is also smiling and looking towards the camera. They are both standing next to a large, dark metal cross structure that is being worked on. The background shows a workshop with various tools and equipment.

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A FOUNDATION OF RESILIENCE

THE CROSS IS SUPPORTED BY AN ANTI-TANK HEDGEHOG CRAFTED FROM RAILS SALVAGED FROM A KHARKIV TRAM DEPOT, DESTROYED BY A RUSSIAN MISSILE IN 2023. THESE RAILS WERE ORIGINALLY MANUFACTURED AFTER WORLD WAR II AT THE AZOVSTAL PLANT IN MARIUPOL, WHOSE DEFENDERS HAVE BECOME A SYMBOL OF HEROISM.

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STEPS OF REMEMBRANCE

BENEATH THE ANTI-TANK HEDGEHOG, STEPS LEAD TO THE “CALVARY.” CRAFTED FROM HOWITZER SHELLS, THESE STEPS SYMBOLICALLY EVOKE THE UKRAINIAN CITIES DEVASTATED BY RUSSIAN FORCES—MARIUPOL, BAKHMUT, AND BUCHA.

ADJACENT TO THE CROSS STANDS AN ARTILLERY SHELL, SHATTERED BY THE IMMENSE FORCE OF AN EXPLOSION. FROM ITS CENTER, A CRYSTAL RED ROSE EMERGES ON A GOLDEN STEM, REACHING TOWARD THE FEET OF THE SAVIOR. THIS ROSE EMBODIES THE DELICATE FRAGILITY OF OUR WORLD.



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THE SACRED RUSHNYK

THE ANCIENT HOMESPUN UKRAINIAN TOWEL TIED AROUND THE SAVIOR'S HIPS IS A PROFOUND NATIONAL SYMBOL. IN UKRAINIAN CULTURE, THE RUSHNYK SERVES AS A LINK BETWEEN THE LIVING AND THE DEAD. IN THIS ARTWORK, THE TOWEL — ADORNED WITH RED FLOWERS — REPRESENTS THE BLOODY SUFFERING OF THE UKRAINIAN PEOPLE IN THEIR STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL.

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THE ANCIENT BELL

A KEY ELEMENT OF THE INSTALLATION IS AN ANCIENT BELL, ADORNED WITH AN IMAGE OF THE VIRGIN MARY AND INSCRIBED WITH THE LATIN PHRASE: "VOCEM MEAM AUDIT QUI ME TANGIT" — "WHOEVER TOUCHES ME WILL HEAR MY VOICE."

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HOLY LANCÉ

THE INSTALLATION ALSO FEATURES THE "LONGINUS SPEAR," CRAFTED FROM A PIPE SALVAGED BY THE ARTIST FROM A MULTI-STORY BUILDING DESTROYED BY A RUSSIAN MISSILE. THE ARTIST FORGED THE SPEARHEAD FROM A SUBSTANTIAL PIECE OF DEBRIS, FOLLOWING AN ANCIENT DESIGN. THE SPEARHEAD IS GILDED IN PURE GOLD.



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INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

EXHIBITED ACROSS UKRAINIAN CITIES DURING THE FIRST HALF OF 2025—EVEN UNDER CONSTANT THREAT OF ATTACK—THE CROSS OF PEACE HAS ALREADY GARNERED INTERNATIONAL ACCLAIM, WITH OVER 200 PUBLICATIONS AND NUMEROUS TELEVISION REPORTS DOCUMENTING ITS PROFOUND IMPACT.

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WHO IS MFF?

SERGEY MELNIKOFF (MFF) IS A CELEBRATED AMERICAN ARTIST AND ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL PHOTOGRAPHERS OF OUR TIME, WITH A CAREER SPANNING OVER 50 YEARS AND MORE THAN 150 COUNTRIES. RECENTLY, HE HAS GAINED ACCLAIM AS A METAL SCULPTOR, CREATING UNIQUE MASTERPIECES FROM THE "ASHES OF WAR."

A DESCENDANT OF AN ANCIENT UKRAINIAN COSSACK FAMILY, MELNIKOFF WAS A SOVIET DISSIDENT AND POLITICAL PRISONER WHO ESCAPED THE USSR WITH HIS WIFE AND INFANT DAUGHTER. HONORED AS A NATIONAL HERO OF THE CHECHEN REPUBLIC OF ICHKERIA AND RECIPIENT OF ALL RANKS OF THE UKRAINIAN ORDERS OF SAINT VOLODYMYR THE GREAT, HIS GROUNDBREAKING WORK HAS EARNED WORLDWIDE RECOGNITION. THE 14TH DALAI LAMA SERVES AS A PROMINENT ADVOCATE FOR HIS ART.

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SUMMARY

A SCULPTURE WITH A THOUSAND VOICES



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EACH ELEMENT OF THE CROSS CARRIES SYMBOLIC DEPTH AND NARRATIVE RESONANCE. TOGETHER THEY FORM A POLYPHONIC WORK THAT SPEAKS SIMULTANEOUSLY OF PERSONAL GRIEF AND COLLECTIVE REMEMBRANCE:

- THE VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL BEAMS: FORGED FROM SALVAGED PIPES RECOVERED FROM THE RUINS OF CIVILIAN HIGH-RISE BUILDINGS, THEY EMBODY THE LIVES AND SACRIFICES OF THOSE WHO ONCE DWELLED BENEATH THEM. THESE BEAMS SERVE NOT ONLY AS STRUCTURE BUT AS SANCTIFIED VESSELS OF MEMORY.
- THE GOLD-COVERED SAVIOR: CRAFTED FROM 20,000 FRAGMENTS OF ARTILLERY SHELLS AND MINES GATHERED FROM UKRAINIAN FIELDS, THE CRUCIFIED CHRIST FIGURE IS PLATED IN 999.9 — PURITY GOLD. HE STANDS RADIANT ABOVE AN EMBEDDED ARTILLERY SHELL — DESTRUCTION TRANSFORMED INTO A PEDESTAL OF TRANSCENDENCE. HIS BLOOD-RED ENAMEL WOUND RECALLS DIVINE SUFFERING, WHILE THE LUMINOUS GOLD BODY PROCLAIMS ETERNITY.
- THE THREE ENDS OF THE CROSS: A UNIQUE SCULPTURAL INTERPRETATION OF CHRISTIAN UNITY, SYMBOLICALLY RECONCILING ORTHODOXY, CATHOLICISM, AND PROTESTANTISM — ART TRIUMPHING WHERE DOCTRINE ONCE DIVIDED.
- TRAM RAILS AND ANTI-TANK OBSTACLES: THE FOUNDATION, BUILT FROM TRAM RAILS SALVAGED FROM A MISSILE-STRUCK DEPOT, EMBODIES RESILIENCE—EVERYDAY INFRASTRUCTURE REBORN AS SPIRITUAL SUPPORT.
- SYMBOLIC ELEMENTS: A RITUAL RUSHNYK HANGS FROM THE CROSSBEAM, WEAVING THE LIVING WITH THE DEPARTED. A BRONZE BELL BEARS THE LATIN INSCRIPTION VOCEM MEAM AUDIT QUI ME TANGIT — “WHOEVER TOUCHES ME WILL HEAR MY VOICE.” FROM THE SHATTERED CASING OF AN ARTILLERY SHELL EMERGES A CRYSTAL SCARLET ROSE, FRAGILE BEAUTY REBORN FROM VIOLENCE.
- THE SPEAR OF LONGINUS: FORMED FROM BOMB FRAGMENTS, GILDED IN GOLD AND NICKEL, AND ENCIRCLED BY 106 FLAME-LIKE CANDLES. A WEAPON OF DEATH, RE-ENVISIONED AS A SACRED RELIC, COMPLETING THE SCULPTURE'S TRANSFORMATION OF DESTRUCTION INTO PEACE.

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