

THE ASHES OF WAR

ANTI-WAR PRO-UKRAINIAN EXHIBITION

OF UNIQUE WORKS OF CONTEMPORARY ART CREATED IN UKRAINE BY
AMERICAN ARTIST SERGEY MELNIKOFF, A.K.A. MFF

PHOTOS BY MARIIA UNIVERSALIUK



The Soul of Ukraine Foundation, Inc.

2023 – 2024

SYMPHONY: METAL

TRANSFORMING WAR ARTIFACTS INTO ART

— You are a genius, turning debris that took lives into a grand Resurrection!

— Lyudmila Leukhina

Art Beauty Industry Biotech. Kharkiv city, Ukraine

In the art world, there is a delicate yet eternal thread that connects the past and present, memory and creativity. It weaves through the hearts and souls of artists, inspiring the creation of works that become timeless symbols of human strength and resilience.

At the “Ashes of War” exhibition, immerse yourself in the artistry of Sergey Melnikoff, an American artist of Cossack descent. His contribution to the art world has become an integral part of the struggle for freedom and the memory of those who sacrificed their lives for their homeland.

In late 2023, in the outskirts of frontline Odessa, a creative ode to the heroism of the Ukrainian people began. In an atmosphere of creative inspiration, the artist, known by the pseudonym MFF, started transforming remnants of military ordnance into symbols of struggle and hope.

Sergey Melnikoff creates art where each metal fragment is a drop in the grand saga of the fight for freedom. From the installation “Wheel of Fortune,” depicting the tragic moments of human fate, to the sculpture “Ukrainian Phoenix,” where the legendary bird of eternal rebirth emerges from an exploding artillery shell. Each piece embodies the spirit of the Ukrainian nation and its unyielding strength in the fight for freedom against foreign domination and oppression.

The American artist has created something remarkable from the chaos of war. The “Ashes of War” exhibition is a testament to the power of the human spirit, capable of turning battlefields into art, and war fragments into masterpieces. In an era of change and challenges, these works inspire us and remind us of the strength and significance of art in our world.

Read more... <https://worldphoto.us/en/the-metallurgical-symphony>

Symbolizing Ukraine’s indomitable spirit: a Russian soldier’s helmet, pierced by a Ukrainian bullet and skewered by a Ukrainian trident, crafted by an American artist.

**THE “ASHES OF WAR”
EXHIBITION FEATURES UP TO
15 EXCEPTIONAL
SCULPTURES!**



RESILIENCE FORGED IN METAL

The ingenuity and creativity of the American artist play a fundamental role in this artwork. The artist meticulously assembles a puzzle of fifteen hundred metal fragments from exploded ordnance, creating a complex mosaic that tells a story of resilience and proud independence of Ukraine.

To achieve the three-dimensional sculptures of a Cossack and a lion, the fragments were layered in four tiers. This eccentric approach, where fragments of mines and artillery shells retain their original, unprocessed form, helped create a piece that challenges conventions and demands contemplation of its stark symbolism.



The sculpture “Unconquered Ukraine,” set against the backdrop of destroyed Russian military equipment, graced St. Michael’s Square in Kyiv for a photoshoot for the legendary National Geographic magazine.



THE COAT OF ARMS OF UKRAINE

The small Coat of Arms of Ukraine, crafted from fragments of military ordnance, was presented by **SERGEY MELNIKOFF** to Ukrainian President **VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY**

Read more... <https://worldphoto.us/en/symbols-of-ukraine>



FEATHERED REBIRTH

**"UKRAINIAN PHOENIX"
TAKES FLIGHT IN
ARTISTIC SPLENDOR**

Ingeniously delving into the realm of "war artifacts," the artist breathes life into the mythical "Ukrainian Phoenix," crafting a sculpture from feather-like fragments of MLRS shells. The Phoenix, a mythical bird synonymous with eternal renewal, finds profound reinterpretation in the hands of Sergey Melnikoff. This richly symbolic sculpture emerges from the burst of a Russian artillery shell, with its raised wings boldly proclaiming freedom and the triumph of life over death. The small, ever-quivering fragments, elegantly suspended on fine wire, sway with the slightest breeze, lending a lifelike quality to the iron bird.

The Phoenix, originating in ancient mythology, has become a significant symbol across various cultures and religions worldwide. In alchemy, this bird signifies the completion of the "Great Work" and the attainment of the philosopher's stone. Melnikoff brilliantly captures this transformation stage, equating the Phoenix with a liberated soul and symbolizing the rebirth of Ukraine during one of the most brutal military invasions in the country's modern history.



Sergey Melnikoff and Ukrainian master welder Viktor Belchik showcase the "Ukrainian Phoenix" sculpture in the artist's workshop in Odessa city. November, 2023



THE MAGNIFICENT ALBANIAN EAGLE

As a token of gratitude, the people of Ukraine are presenting Albania with a majestic two-headed eagle, meticulously crafted from fragments of mines and shells. This sculpture, representing the National Emblem of the Republic, aptly named “The Magnificent Albanian Eagle,” symbolizes the strong bond forged during the tumultuous times of war.

Sergey Melnikoff has channeled his artistic expertise to create this heartfelt symbol as part of the establishment of the International Rehabilitation Center for Ukrainian children in Albania—a sanctuary for those who have lost limbs due to the brutal Russian bombings. “The Magnificent Albanian Eagle” is a masterpiece of contemporary art, carefully constructed in Ukraine from battlefield fragments in the fight against 21st-century Russian fascism.



THE ENEMY OF RUSSIA
SERGEY MELNIKOFF
CREATED A HISTORICAL WORK
OF ART FOR THE CHECHEN PEOPLE

A modern art masterpiece in the form of the state emblem of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, crafted from fragments of artillery mines, shells, and military ordnance collected from battlefields with the Russian dragon in Ukraine, was created by the legendary American artist Sergey Melnikoff, also known as MFF.

Deeply connected to the fate of the Chechen people, Sergey Melnikoff has been the sole prominent Western figure to publicly support the Chechens fighting against Russian invaders for decades. He bravely faced a torrent of criticism from Russian-language media in every country his profession led him to.

A former political prisoner of the USSR, who spent many years in the prisons and camps of the modernized Gulag, he ultimately outwitted the Soviet KGB in a deadly game and illegally escaped the Soviet «paradise" with his wife and one-year-old daughter on his shoulders. Sergey hails from an ancient lineage of Zaporizhian Cossacks, who, like the Chechen people, have been fighting against oppressive invaders for 400 years.



The unique sculpture of the State Emblem of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, created from military ordnance in the frontline Ukrainian city of Odessa, was ceremoniously presented to the Prime Minister of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, **AKHMED ZAKAYEV**, by the artist **SERGEY MELNIKOFF** and the third President of Ukraine, **VIKTOR YUSHCHENKO**.

Read more... <https://worldphoto.us/en/russias-enemy-sergei-melnikoff-created-a-work-of-the-century-for-the-chechen-people>





WHO'S MFF?

The Soul of Ukraine International Foundation proudly presents the art of one of the most significant photographers of our time. His works, of exceptional merit, consistently evoke admiration and embody the fusion of half a century of experience across over 150 countries worldwide.

SERGEY MELNIKOFF, also known as MFF, is a National Hero of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria for his personal contributions to the informational struggle against Russia, and a recipient of all grades of the Ukrainian Orders of Saint Equal-to-the-Apostles Prince Volodymyr the Great. A descendant of an ancient Ukrainian Cossack family, Melnikoff was a Soviet dissident and political prisoner who daringly escaped from the USSR with his wife and young daughter. Now an acclaimed American artist, he holds a dominant position in revolutionary methods in contemporary photography. He is also acclaimed as a sculptor, particularly noted for his unique artworks created from artillery fragments and shells.

Melnikoff's achievements and accolades affirm his status as an icon in the world of contemporary art. His profound impact and innovative approach have established him as one of the most creative masters in the field, making him the most titled photographer of our time.



THE NATIONAL EMBLEM OF ICHKERIA

CRAFTED BY THE NATIONAL HERO OF THE REPUBLIC OF ICHKERIA,
AMERICAN ARTIST OF UKRAINIAN DESCENT SERGEY MELNIKOFF, A.K.A. MFF,
IS PART OF HIS ANTI-WAR PROJECT "WAR ARTIFACTS INTO ART"

Five thousand elements of a complex metal puzzle
are united in the sculptural depiction of Ichkeria's national symbol.
This piece of modern art is created from fragments of artillery mines and shells,
as well as various types of military ordnance collected from battlefields
with the Russian aggressor on Ukrainian soil.

The artist dedicated this unique piece to the 80th anniversary
of the birth of Dzhokhar Dudayev (Dudin Musa-klant Dzhohar 1944 — 2024),
the first President of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria.