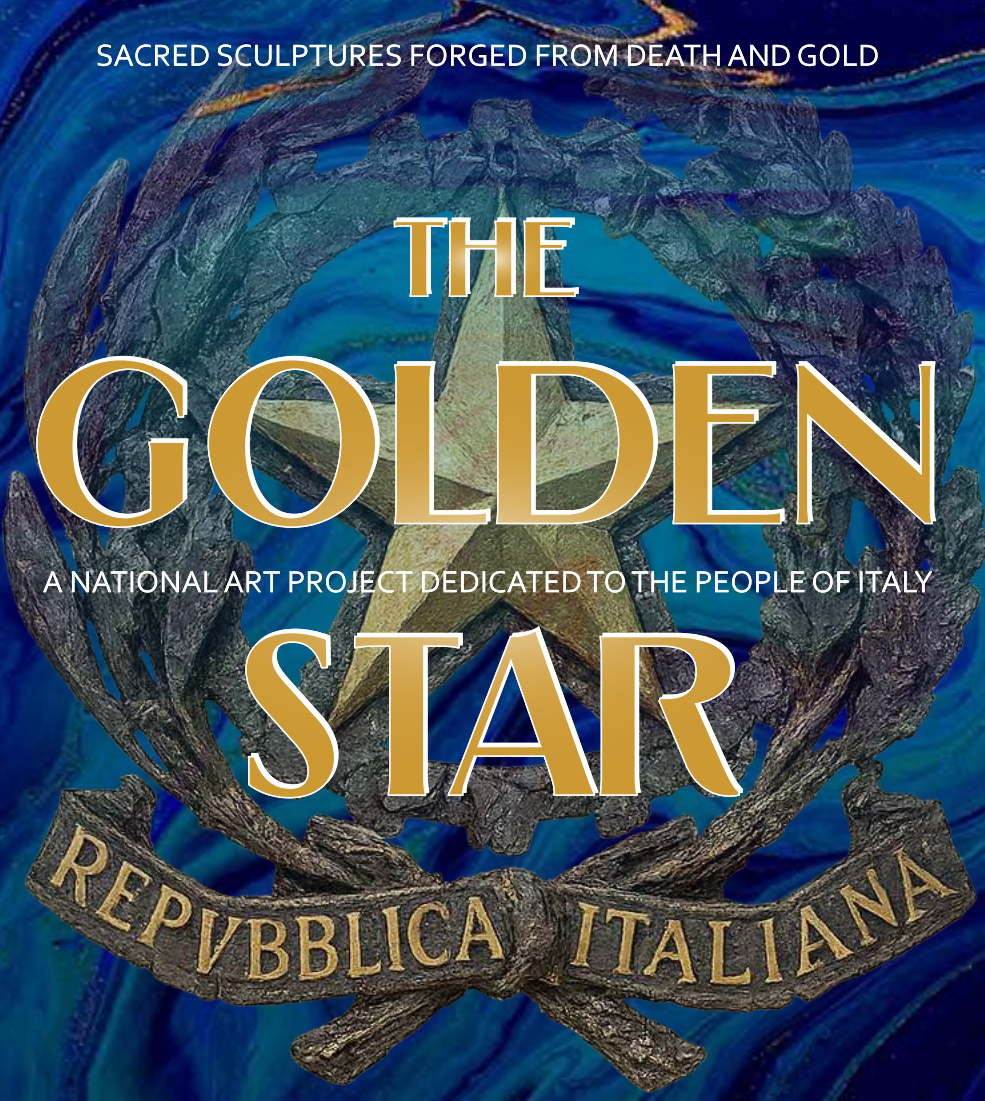


The Art of MFF

ASHES of WAR

SACRED SCULPTURES FORGED FROM DEATH AND GOLD



THE GOLDEN STAR

A NATIONAL ART PROJECT DEDICATED TO THE PEOPLE OF ITALY

Concept and Direction by Valentina Bianca Bertagnin
Sculpture by Sergey Melnikoff, a.k.a. MFF

The Soul of Ukraine Foundation, Inc.
2025



FROM WAR TO BEAUTY

The Art of MFF

THE TRANSFORMATION OF FRAGMENTS OF WAR INTO SACRED ART

THE CROSS OF PEACE

A monumental installation by Sergey Melnikoff (MFF). This life-sized Crucifix is composed of **20,000 fragments of bullets**, each meticulously plated in **999.9 pure gold**, transforming instruments of destruction into symbols of hope and reconciliation.

In Ukraine — a land where beauty and tragedy exist side by side — the talent of an artist has given birth to a new form of contemporary art known as “**Ashes of War.**”

Shrapnel and twisted iron, scattered across Ukrainian fields where every fragment carries the memory of violence and loss, become the material for sacred sculptures that radiate light and dignity.

Here, among the ruins of war, the impossible becomes real: the remnants of death are reborn as symbols of peace.

In the hands of American artist **Sergey Melnikoff (MFF)**, these remnants undergo purification — through fire, faith, and gold.

Each creation from his unique “**Ashes of War**” collection is both a masterpiece and a message:

*Even among the ashes of war,
beauty can be reborn.*

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THE GOLDEN STAR

A NATIONAL ART PROJECT DEDICATED TO THE PEOPLE OF ITALY



The artist's sketch of the future sculpture.

The Golden Star is a symbol of rebirth, peace, and human solidarity. The project envisions the creation of the Coat of Arms of Italy, forged from genuine fragments of ammunition gathered on Ukraine's battlefields — transforming weapons of war into a work of sacred beauty.

Through art, the initiative unites two nations — Italy and Ukraine — in a gesture of gratitude for the unwavering humanitarian support of the Italian people.

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THE ARTIST

In the photo: Master MFF with His Holiness Filaret, Patriarch of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, at St Volodymyr's Cathedral.

Sergey Melnikoff (MFF) is an American photographer and sculptor of Ukrainian descent, a former Soviet dissident whose life and art are marked by a struggle against tyranny and an unwavering fidelity to human dignity.

After years of imprisonment as a political opponent of the communist regime, he fled the Soviet Union with his family under the protection of the United Nations.

Recognised worldwide, Melnikoff has been honoured with numerous distinctions, including the title of Knight of the Order of Saint Vladimir the Great and Hero of the Nation of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria.

His art is officially represented by **His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama**, Nobel Peace Prize laureate.

Melnikoff's unique works — born of suffering and faith — transmute pain into light. His creative journey reaches its culmination in the series **Ashes of War**, where sculptures are forged from the remnants of shells and shrapnel.

His achievements and global recognition affirm Sergey Melnikoff (MFF) as one of the most authentic and inspiring figures in contemporary art.

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THE HOLY MANDYLION

Estimated value: **USD 750,000 – 1,000,000**

This sacred image of Christ is crafted in six intricate layers, enclosing thousands of tiny metal fragments. Each fragment contributes to a radiant, multidimensional presence, turning remnants of matter into a testament of devotion and transcendence.

THE
UKRAINIAN
REVIEW

“Today, art experts value the works of the Ashes of War series between USD **150,000** and **1,000,000**, depending on scale, uniqueness, materials, symbolism, and philosophical depth.

Art historians compare MFF’s works to Damien Hirst’s *For the Love of God* and Picasso’s *Guernica*, yet note their greater immediacy and emotional resonance — a reflection of our turbulent times and humanity’s unbroken spirit in the face of devastation.”

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A CALL TO THE HEART

BECOME PART OF THE LEGACY OF LIGHT



The artist's sketch of
the future sculpture.

The Golden Star is not an ordinary artwork.
It is a message of peace, forged in the crucible of an ongoing war.
Each fragment that will form Italy's Coat of Arms carries a human story — a memory of courage and a prayer for the future of humanity.
This project is dedicated to those who believe in the power of art to transform pain into beauty and memory into hope.
Your support will help shape a symbol that will forever unite the peoples of Italy and Ukraine — a timeless testament to **compassion and courage**.
By supporting **The Golden Star**, you become part of the artistic legacy of our civilisation — a legacy devoted to peace, proclaiming to all humankind:

Beauty can rise from the ashes.

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In the photo: The third President of Ukraine, Viktor Yushchenko, and the National Hero of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, Sergey Melnikoff, present the National Emblem of Ichkeria, created by MFF from five thousand fragments of military ammunition. Kyiv, 2024.

THE VOICE of UKRAINE

THE VOICE OF FREEDOM AND HOPE

The Third President of Ukraine, **Viktor Yushchenko**, presents to the world the “Ashes of War” series by **Sergey Melnikoff (MFF)**.

These sculptures, born of the artist’s genius and composed of thousands of authentic fragments of ammunition, embody a powerful metaphor of rebirth — when the traces of destruction are transformed into eternal symbols of spiritual strength.

Speaking on behalf of the Ukrainian people, Viktor Yushchenko emphasises that art born amidst war can deliver to humanity a **message of hope**, uniting nations around the universal values of life, freedom, and human dignity.

The “**Ashes of War**” series is not only an artistic revelation, but also an **act of historical memory**, a profound expression of gratitude to the world for its solidarity and support of Ukraine.

The Art of MFF TO THE SUPPORTERS OF THE GOLDEN STAR PROJECT

Dear friends,

We need to raise **€85,000** (USD98,000) to bring the *Golden Star* project to life. This amount covers the collection and transportation of shell fragments from the war zone in Ukraine; a welder's salary for three months; the chemical cleaning of the collected material; the galvanic process for nickel-plating and gilding the sculpture; the transportation of the Golden Star to Italy; the organisation of public events; professional photography services, and much more.

The artist **Sergey Melnikoff** does not keep a single cent for himself. His work is an exceptional gift, offered with love and gratitude to the people of Italy.

Wherever Italy chooses to place this majestic Coat of Arms — in Parliament or in the Museum of Fine Arts — a commemorative plaque, carved from a fragment of a cruise missile, will stand alongside it, bearing the names of all donors, without exception.

We express our heartfelt thanks to everyone who will help make this extraordinary creation possible.

With gratitude,

Valentina Bianca Bertagnin
Project Director



Cella/WhatsApp: **+39 349 739 9382**

valentina.bertagnin@soul-of-ukraine.foundation



www.italy.mff.name

**Each golden ray of the Star gleams with your kindness.
Thank you for illuminating this work of peace.**



The Art of MFF

**A gift of art and peace — from the hearts of Ukraine
to the people of Italy.**



Credits

Art Project: *La Stella d'Oro — The Golden Star*

Concept and Supervision: *Valentina Bianca Bertagnin*

Sculptor: *Sergey Melnikoff (MFF)*

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