



## ARTS & CULTURE

# Ukrainian Man Turns Guns into Art

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Viktor Mikhalev is a blacksmith, someone who creates and repairs things made of metal. He lives in the Russian-controlled city of Donetsk in eastern Ukraine. Mikhalev uses his skills as a **welder** to turn metal from weapons and ammunition into beautiful representations of flowers.

He calls his pieces the flowers of war. The project began when a friend gave him a broken machine gun. Now more friends bring him similar objects, such as burnt machine guns and shells from the war's front line.

Inside his workplace, religious statues and pictures fill the space. Outside, he has **decorated** his front door and fence with his metal flowers. He also creates containers out of equipment used to launch small explosives.

Mikhalev has shown his war art in a museum in Donetsk. He also keeps his art as a remembrance of the war in eastern Ukraine.

“Real flowers will not last long, and my roses will become a **reminder** for a long memory,” he said.

Donetsk is in the Donbas region of Ukraine. It was once a center of industry. Since April 2014, however, the area has been the center of a separatist rebellion supported by Russia. The conflict began a few weeks after Russia seized control of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula.

Russia invaded Ukraine again last year. It has since declared Donetsk and three other areas in eastern and southern Ukraine as part of Russia. The city of Bakhmut in the Donetsk region and the city of Donetsk itself has seen intense fighting.

I'm Faith Pirlo.

*Faith Pirlo adapted this story from the Associated Press for Learning English.*

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## Words in This Story

**welder** – *n.* person who join pieces of metal together by heating them and pressing them together

**decorate** – *v.* to make (something) more attractive usually by putting something on it

**reminder** – *n.* something that causes you to remember or to think about something

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