



Monastic treasures from Ukraine to go on display in the UK for the first time at the V&A

Ukrainian UNESCO Heritage site National Preserve 'Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra' monastic complex loans precious treasures to V&A South Kensington for display, with support from the British Council

Sacred Treasures from Kyiv

Silver Gallery and Sacred Silver and Stained Galleries, Galleries 84 and 89, V&A South Kensington

14 September 2026-17 September 2027

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Opening today at V&A South Kensington, *Sacred Treasures from Kyiv* is a free display of exceptional 18th-century sacred objects on loan from Ukraine's National Preserve 'Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra'. The display brings together remarkable works that reveal the artistry, craftsmanship and spiritual traditions of one of the world's most significant cultural and religious sites, while celebrating the richness of Ukraine's cultural heritage. These objects are being shown in the UK for the first time.

The British Council has supported the transport of the seven objects on display which include key items used in Orthodox Christian worship: an icon, a silver-bound altar Gospel, a diskos used to carry the Eucharist during the Divine Liturgy, and a silver-gilt chalice depicting the Crucifixion. The display offers a rare opportunity to encounter masterpieces of 18th-century Baroque sacred art from this extraordinary collection, reflecting the Lavra's status as a major centre of artistic production, patronage and Ukrainian goldsmithing.

Sacred Treasures from Kyiv builds on a multi-year partnership between the V&A and the National Preserve 'Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra', centred on provenance research into two pairs of rare silver-gilt Holy gates in the Gilbert Collection (on long term loan to the V&A from the Gilbert Trust for the Arts) that originated from the monastery. The V&A have worked collaboratively with the National Preserve 'Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra', with further support from the Ukrainian Institute and ICOM UK, to generate new insights into the history of the Lavra and its collections, while deepening understanding of Ukrainian cultural heritage and the complex histories of ownership, displacement and exchange embodied by museum objects. Now on display in newly transformed Gilbert Galleries at V&A South Kensington, the Holy gates are the only known examples of their kind outside the Orthodox world.

This work is part of a wider international effort to review how Ukrainian heritage held overseas is researched and presented. The Ukrainian Institute helps run the partnership between Ukrainian and British institutions and co-organises public events for the project. The project is also supported by the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine and the Embassy of Ukraine in the United Kingdom.

The project strengthens long-term collaboration between cultural institutions and professionals in Ukraine and the UK and contributes to the cultural ambitions of the [UK-Ukraine 100 Year Partnership](#).

The display will be accompanied by a programme of events spotlighting Ukrainian cultural heritage, including a symposium on 15 September 2025, *Ukrainian Cultural Heritage and UK Institutions: Shifting Perspectives and Practice*. The one-day symposium will bring together UK and international voices to explore changing approaches to representation, preservation and collaboration in the UK and the Ukraine.

Tristram Hunt, Director of the V&A, said: 'These national treasures showcase the exceptional skill of Ukrainian silversmiths and illuminate the rich artistic heritage preserved by the Lavra. We hope that the display and conference this September will inspire greater appreciation of Ukraine's unique heritage and foster collaboration across the cultural sector to uncover and share the country's remarkable story.'

Maksym Ostapenko, General Director of the National Preserve 'Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra' said: "This display offers an opportunity to tell a story far greater than that of a remarkable group of objects. The silver Holy Gates and other treasures from the collection of the National Preserve 'Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra' reveal an entire chapter of Ukrainian cultural heritage that remains little known beyond Ukraine. Through these works, international audiences are introduced to the Ukrainian school of eighteenth-century sacred goldsmithing – one of the highest achievements of Ukrainian Baroque art. For us, it is especially significant that, through our partnership with the Victoria and Albert Museum, this story will be shared with the world and presented in an international context as an integral part of Europe's shared cultural heritage."

Scott McDonald, CEO of the British Council, said: "This collaboration is a powerful example of what long-term cultural partnerships between Ukraine and the UK can achieve. By bringing Ukrainian and UK experts together to share knowledge and expertise, this exhibition will help deepen understanding of Ukraine's rich cultural heritage and bring its stories to wider audiences across the UK. We are proud to support this partnership as part of the UK-Ukraine 100 Year Partnership, which will strengthen the cultural ties between our two countries for the future."

Volodymyr Sheiko, General Director of the Ukrainian Institute, said: “This collaboration reflects the kind of sustained, mutually respectful partnership that produces lasting results. Our joint work on a decolonisation guide for museums contributed to a more accurate attribution of the Holy Gates’ origin, presenting them as part of Ukraine’s cultural heritage within the grand halls of the Victoria and Albert Museum. We are glad that the Holy Gates opened the way for broader engagement between the leading institutions of Ukraine and the United Kingdom.”

– ENDS –

For further PRESS information please contact the V&A press office on +44 (0) 20 7942 2502 or email press.office@vam.ac.uk (not for publication).

Press images available to download [here](#)

Social Media

- **Instagram:** @vamuseum
- **Facebook:** @VictoriaandalbertMuseum

Notes to Editors

- *Sacred Treasures from Kyiv* opens at V&A South Kensington on 14 September 2026 - 17 September 2027.
- More information on the *Ukrainian Cultural Heritage and UK Institutions: Shifting Perspectives and Practice* symposium can be found [here](#).
- The display has been made possible with support from the British Council and the Gilbert Trust for the Arts, and with the involvement of the Ukrainian Institute, the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine and the Embassy of Ukraine in the UK. The project strengthens long-term collaboration between cultural institutions and professionals in Ukraine and the UK and contributes to the cultural ambitions of the UK–Ukraine 100 Year Partnership. All objects are generously lent by the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra National Preserve.

Social Media

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About V&A South Kensington

The V&A is a family of museums dedicated to the power of creativity.

V&A South Kensington is a world of extraordinary global creativity, with unmissable exhibitions, experiences and educational programmes for all. One of London's most iconic buildings, it is home to national collections of art, design, fashion, photography and furniture to theatre, performance, architecture, and ceramics, as well as the UK's

National Art Library. It is a place where everyone can experience a story of creativity that spans 5,000 years and every creative discipline, which brings that story to life through programmes and activities for all ages and specialisms, and world-leading research and conservation.

About the Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Collection

The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Collection celebrates some of the most beautiful objects ever made, many in precious materials, and often on a small scale. It is famous for European and British masterpieces including stone and glass mosaics, silver, gold boxes and enamel miniatures.

Their passion for craftsmanship and beauty prompted Sir Arthur Gilbert (1913 – 2001) and his first wife Rosalinde (1913 – 1995) to acquire the very best objects in their collecting areas. Always intended for the public, the V&A has been the home of this collection since 2008.

About the National Preserve ‘Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra’

Established in 1926, the National Preserve ‘Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra’ is Ukraine’s largest historic museum complex and a secular public institution responsible for preserving and interpreting the cultural heritage of Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra. Founded in the 11th century and inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, the Lavra has been a major centre of spirituality, scholarship and artistic production for nearly a millennium.

The National Preserve cares for approximately 73,000 museum objects and 140 cultural heritage monuments dating from the 11th to the 20th centuries. Its mission is to safeguard this heritage, support research and interpretation, and ensure public access, while contributing to the preservation of Ukraine’s history, identity and cultural memory.

About the British Council

The British Council is the UK’s international culture and education organisation. We support peace and prosperity by building connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and countries worldwide. We do this through our work in arts and culture, education and the English language. We work with people in over 150 countries and reach over 700 million people.

www.britishcouncil.org

About the Ukrainian Institute

The Ukrainian Institute is Ukraine's cultural diplomacy institution. It develops international cultural partnerships and promotes a deeper understanding of Ukraine through culture, dialogue and professional exchange.

The Institute works with Ukrainian and international organisations to strengthen Ukraine's agency and presence in global cultural conversations.