

Press Release

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A European Collection Masterpieces from the Khanenko Museum in Kyiv

From 30 April 2026 at the Christian Schad Museum

The Bohdan and Varvara Khanenko National Museum in Kyiv houses the most important collection of Western art in Ukraine and ranks among the leading European collections of its kind. From 30 April 2026, the Christian Schad Museum in Aschaffenburg will host a special exhibition featuring 73 masterpieces from the pre-modern era, shown in Germany for the first time. The paintings on display are largely by renowned European artists, including several world-famous figures, dating from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries. These artworks offer an overview of key developments in European painting and follow the didactic structure characteristic of the Khanenko Collection.

The exhibition includes works by some of the most important figures in European art history, among them Peter Paul Rubens, Bernardo Bellotto, Pieter Bruegel the Younger, Jacob Jordaens, and Antonio Canova, as well as paintings from the workshops of Hieronymus Bosch and Rembrandt. This ensemble forms the core of the collection and illustrates the far-reaching cultural interconnections across Europe. It also embodies a shared European cultural heritage that has developed over centuries.

The exhibition is the result of an exceptional international collaboration between the Khanenko National Museum and the Museums of the City of Aschaffenburg. In recent years, selected works from the Khanenko Collection have been presented at various European exhibition venues in order to safeguard their preservation while maintaining public access. At the Christian Schad Museum, these works are now brought together for

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the first time in a comprehensive presentation, making the exhibition the most significant and extensive display of Ukrainian cultural heritage in Europe since the beginning of the war.

Yuliya Vaganova, Director General of the Khanenko Museum in Kyiv, emphasises: “For us, this exhibition is far more than the presentation of important works outside Ukraine. It is an expression of a partnership based on trust, mutual respect, and a shared sense of responsibility for Europe’s cultural heritage. The Museums of the City of Aschaffenburg have proven to be reliable and committed partners, ensuring not only the safety of the artworks but also the sensitive communication of their art-historical context.”

The historical core of the Bohdan and Varvara Khanenko Collection is complemented by a contemporary work from the *Shot Figures* series by the Ukrainian artist Maria Kulikovska, acquired by the Museums of the City of Aschaffenburg. Kulikovska’s sculpture stands in a striking dialogue with Antonio Canova’s iconic work *La Pace*, opening the historical presentation to a contemporary perspective.

“In *A European Collection*, the works are presented in Europe for the first time in a constellation that reveals both their art-historical importance and their contemporary relevance,” says Thomas Schauerte, Director of the Museums of the City of Aschaffenburg and curator of the exhibition. “The exhibition is intended as a contribution to the preservation and communication of our shared European cultural heritage.”

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The Khanenko Museum in Kyiv

The Bohdan and Varvara Khanenko National Museum in Kyiv is the most important art museum in Ukraine. It was founded in 1919 and is based on a private collection meticulously and deliberately assembled over several decades by the collector couple Khanenko.

Its collection of approximately 25,000 works ranges from antiquity and ancient Egypt to outstanding examples of Western European art, as well as masterpieces from Persia, China, and Japan. It is distinguished by its exceptional quality.

The museum is housed in the former villa of its founders in the centre of Kyiv, which was damaged in 2022 as a result of Russia's war of aggression. The building exemplifies the targeted threat to cultural institutions in times of war.

Under the martial law, the museum's main collection is secured and temporarily unavailable for viewing. However, the Khanenko Museum continues to work actively, hosting temporary exhibitions, educational programmes for various audiences, events and meetings. During Russia's full-scale war in Ukraine, the museum team has been opening contemporary art projects, initiating interdisciplinary exhibitions, and developing cooperation with private collectors and institutions. At the same time, the museum continues its research activities, rethinking its own collection, historical contexts and the role of museums today, which is reflected in its public projects. In this context, the Khanenko Museum has redefined its role as a museum serving society, transforming itself into a space of solidarity, security and resilience. For this work during the war, the Museum received two international awards: in 2024, the CIMAM Outstanding Museum Practice Award, and in 2025, the main award of The Best in Heritage – Project of Influence.

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The exhibition “A European Collection”

From 30 April 2026

The exhibition opens with a structure organised according to the major European schools of art—Italy, Flanders and the Netherlands, as well as France and Spain. Within these sections, the works are arranged chronologically, allowing stylistic developments over several centuries to be traced. Spread across approximately 450 square metres on the upper two floors of the Christian Schad Museum, the exhibition offers a concise overview of key developments in European painting, following the didactic structure of the Khanenko Collection.

Italy (First Floor)

The first section of the exhibition is devoted to the Italian schools of art. With more than thirty works on display, the presentation offers an exceptional concentration of major Italian masters and traces the development of painting from the early fifteenth to the late eighteenth century.

Among the earliest works is the *Crucifixion* by the “Master of the Osservanza” (active c. 1425–1440, Siena), an altarpiece that exemplifies an Early Renaissance still strongly shaped by Byzantine and Late Gothic pictorial traditions.

Masterpieces such as representations of the Virgin Mary by Marco Palmezzano, Giovanni Battista Cima da Conegliano, and Marco d’Oggione (from the workshop of Leonardo da Vinci) exemplify the Italian Early and High Renaissance. These are complemented by paintings with mythological subjects, such as Jacopo del Sellaio’s *Orpheus and Eurydice* (c. 1483), which likewise belongs to the established pictorial canon of the period.

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The eighteenth century is represented by masterpieces of Italian veduta painting, including works by Francesco Tironi and Bernardo Bellotto, the nephew and pupil of the celebrated Venetian view painter Canaletto.

The Netherlands and Flanders; France and Spain (Second Floor)

The focus of this section is on works by prominent masters of the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, reflecting Bohdan Khanenko and Varvara Khanenko's particular appreciation of these important artistic traditions.

An exemplary exhibit is the diptych *Adoration of the Magi* by an anonymous artist, who, based on this work, is referred to as the "Master of the Khanenko Adoration" (c. 1490). The work is regarded as a key example of Early Netherlandish painting. Religious imagery of the sixteenth century is represented by the triptych *The Temptation of Saint Anthony* (c. 1520/50) from the workshop of Hieronymus Bosch, whose bizarre and symbolic visual language is here powerfully articulated. Highlights of Flemish Baroque painting include Peter Paul Rubens's oil sketch *God of the Scheldt River, Cybele and the Goddess of Antwerp* (c. 1617) and Jacob Jordaens's dynamically animated mythological scene *Cupid and the Sleeping Nymphs* (c. 1650). The painting *Man in a Turban* from the workshop of Rembrandt is a representative example of seventeenth-century Netherlandish portraiture.

French painting is prominently represented by Claude-Joseph Vernet (1714–1789), one of the most important landscape painters of the eighteenth century. His dramatic coastal and seascapes, including *A Shipwreck in Stormy Sea*, exerted a lasting influence on the depiction of maritime scenes. The section is further enriched by the *Portrait of Stanislaus II Augustus Poniatowski, King of Poland* (1797) by Élisabeth

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Vigée Le Brun, one of the leading portrait painters of the European high aristocracy in the late eighteenth century.

The exhibition also devotes attention to seventeenth-century Spanish painting, known as the “Golden Age.” On view is Francisco de Zurbarán’s *Still Life with Chocolate Mill* (1640), which exemplifies Spanish Baroque painting through its meticulous composition, characteristic chiaroscuro, and subtle lighting. Also presented is the Portrait of *Margaret Teresa, Infanta of Spain* (c. 1665) from the workshop of Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo, reflecting a stylistic orientation toward his father-in-law Diego Velázquez and continuing the tradition of court portraiture.

Classical Ideal of Peace Meets Contemporary Perspective

The striking centrepiece of the exhibition is Antonio Canova’s life-size marble sculpture *La Pace* (*Peace*, 1815). Canova, the leading master of European Neoclassical sculpture, gave form to the ideal of peace at the end of the devastating Napoleonic Wars—an ideal that gains particular relevance in light of contemporary realities of war. In sharp contrast to this historical ideal stands a sculpture from Maria Kulikovska’s *Shot Figures* series, made of epoxy resin.

Kulikovska’s work renders visible the physical and psychological traces of war, thereby lending Canova’s sculpture a profound contemporary counter-perspective. The sculpture was acquired by the City of Aschaffenburg.

The Exhibition Project

In June 2025, the Museums of the City of Aschaffenburg received an inquiry as to whether significant artworks—particularly paintings—from the Khanenko Museum in Kyiv could be exhibited in the city.

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It was agreed to present the works at the Christian Schad Museum, the most suitable venue among the municipal museums in terms of conservation and security requirements for this exceptional collection.

A selection of works by Christian Schad will remain accessible on the ground floor; following the exhibition, his works will once again occupy all three floors of the museum.

The Catalogue

The exhibition catalogue will be a trilingual publication (German/Ukrainian/English) by the renowned art publisher Schnell & Steiner and will be available in the museum shop as well as through book retailers.

With contributions by Thomas Schauerte, Director of the Museums of the City of Aschaffenburg and curator of the exhibition, and Yuliya Vaganova, Director General of the Khanenko National Museum, the publication offers in-depth insights into the exhibition.

The Public Programme

An accompanying programme of guided tours, educational offerings, and further events will be announced on an ongoing basis at

www.museen-aschaffenburg.de

Patronage

The exhibition “*A European Collection. Meisterwerke aus dem Khanenko Museum in Kyjiw*” is held under the patronage of Dr Markus Söder, Minister-President of Bavaria, and Ivan Verbytskyi, Deputy Minister for Culture and Strategic Communications of Ukraine.

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Opening Hours

Tuesday: 10 am-8pm
Wednesday to Sunday, public holidays 10 am-6 pm
Closed on Mondays

Admission

12 euros / 8 euros reduced

Christian Schad Museum in combination with Kunsthalle Jesuitenkirche
15 euros / 9.50 euros reduced

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Marco Palmezzano

The Madonna and Child with Saints Peter and John the Evangelist

oil on wood (poplar)

162 x 136.5 cm

© picture credit: Bohdan and Varvara Khanenko National Museum



Bernardo Bellotto

An Architectural Fantasy (Capriccio)

oil on canvas

99 x 132 cm

© picture credit: Bohdan and Varvara Khanenko National Museum



Juan de Zurbarán

Still life with Chocolate Mill, 1640

oil on canvas

48 x 75 cm

© picture credit: Bohdan und Varvara Khanenko National Museum

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**Master of the
Khanenko Adoration**

Adoration of the Magi,
diptych

oil on panel

28 x 17,5 cm (each

panel)

© picture credit: Bohdan
und Varvara Khanenko
National Museum



Workshop of Hieronymus Bosch

The Temptation of Saint Anthony, triptych, circa 1520–1550

Left and central panel: oil on canvas transferred on to wood; Right panel: oil on wood
(oak)

92 x 37,5 cm; 92 x 37,5 cm; 82 x 71,5 cm

© picture credit: Bohdan und Varvara Khanenko National Museum

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Jacob Jordaens

Cupid and Sleeping Nymphs,
late 1640s – early 1650s

oil on canvas

167 x 161 cm

© picture credit: Museums of the
City of Aschaffenburg (Stefan
Stark)



Copy after Rembrandt van Rijn

Man in a Turban

oil on canvas (transferred from wood)

81 x 65,5 cm

© picture credit: Bohdan und Varvara
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Antonio Canova

La Pace, 1815

marble

192 x 93,5 x 84,5 cm

© picture credit: Museums of the City of
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Maria Kulikovska

Shot Figures, epoxy resin

The series *Shot Figures* addresses the traumas of war, particularly from a female perspective, and points to both physical and psychological vulnerability. The damaged figures stand for the devaluation of human life and for existential fragility in the context of armed conflict. In form and material, the sculptures convey an extreme sense of delicacy: the transparent epoxy resin functions like a skin that simultaneously conceals and reveals wounds. The female bodies appear both as victims of violence and as embodiments of resilience.

Central to the work is its process of creation, during which Kulikovska shot the sculptures with firearms—an artistic act conceived as a response to personal trauma and as a statement against the loss of humanity in war. *Shot Figures* may be understood as a protest against the objectification of female bodies in military conflicts and as a memorial to the often invisible victims of violence.

Maria Kulikovska (*1988, Kerch, Crimea) is a Ukrainian multimedia and performance artist. She lives and works between Kyiv and London. Following the occupation of Crimea by Russia, she became a registered internally displaced person in her own country. Her works have been exhibited internationally, including at the Saatchi Gallery, London; the Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin; and the Francisco Carolinum, Linz.

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Maria Kulikovska

Sculpture from the series *Shot Figures*, 2025
epoxy resin

© picture credit: Maria Kulikovska



Maria Kulikovska

Sculpture from the series *Shot Figures*, 2025
epoxy resin

© picture credit: Maria Kulikovska