

# **Mykola Ridnyi**

# **Mazepa's Ride**

**John Hansard Gallery**  
**31 May–6 September 2025**

**#JHGRidnyi**

John Hansard Gallery, part of  
the University of Southampton,  
is pleased to present a new  
exhibition by Mykola Ridnyi.

This summer, Ukrainian artist Mykola Ridnyi premieres his ambitious Mazepa trilogy, developed in collaboration with John Hansard Gallery since 2022. Showing the trilogy in its entirety, this exhibition premieres the second and third parts which extend Ridnyi's exploration of Ivan Mazepa's contested legacy – a political and military leader of the Zaporizhian Sich and Left-bank Ukraine in the late-17th and early-18th century, whose story has been mythologised throughout European art and literature.

Famously, many historic depictions of Mazepa have focused on the story in which he was apparently punished for having an affair with a Count's wife. His punishment was to be tied naked to the back of a horse and set off into the wilderness. Mazepa survived this punishment, however retellings and versions of this story vary greatly, and the tale is not entirely proven to be true. Nonetheless, over the centuries it has caught the attention of many artists, writers, poets and composers (e.g. Gericault, Delacroix, Byron, Pushkin, Vernet, Voltaire, and Liszt).

Therefore, Ridnyi's trilogy begins with *The Battle Over Mazepa* (premiered in 2023 at John Hansard Gallery and Pushkin House, London), which reimagines the historic literary clash between English poet Lord Byron (1788–1824) and Russian poet Alexander Pushkin (1799–1837) as a contemporary rap battle. It then continues and concludes with two new works: *Mazepa's Ride* (2025), a surreal musical fantasy examining gender transformation through non-binary BDSM performers; and *Poltava* (2025), a multi-channel video installation investigating how the 1709 Battle of Poltava continues to shape Ukrainian identity.

Created against the backdrop of Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine, Ridnyi's Mazepa trilogy interrogates historical narratives, cultural appropriation, and Ukraine's continuing struggle for self-determination. Following its Southampton premiere this summer, *Mazepa's Ride* will travel to the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw as part of the Kyiv Biennial 2025.

Exhibition supported by The Foundation Foundation, Kyiv Biennial and the Ribbon Foundation.

Mykola Ridnyi's *Mazepa's Ride* forms part of the New World Order season, a programme in which John Hansard Gallery presents a compelling exploration of artistic responses to our rapidly evolving global landscape. New World Order brings together diverse voices from across the UK and around the world, fostering solidarity in increasingly divisive times through the unique perspectives of artists with varied lived experiences.

In an era characterised by geopolitical instability and shifting power dynamics, artists offer vital alternative perspectives on conflict and division. Through examinations of botany, community building, historical reflection, land rights, and domestic spaces, the programme invites us to reimagine our relationship with the world around us.

**For more information, please contact:**

**Jack Lewis, Communications Manager,  
John Hansard Gallery**  
jack@jhg.art  
+44 (0)23 8059 2477

## Notes for Editors

### Mykola Ridnyi

Mykola Ridnyi was born in Kharkiv, Ukraine. He lives and works in Berlin where he holds a guest professorship on the Lensbased Media course at the Berlin University of the Arts (UdK). Ridnyi was a founding member and participant of the SOSka Group and SOSka gallery-lab (2005–2012), a Kharkiv-based art collective and related artist-run-space. In recent work, he has been experimenting with combining documentary and fiction: reflecting on social and political reality, contrasting the fragility and resilience of individual stories and collective histories. His short films, installations and photography series have been presented at various institutions and festivals across Europe and USA, including the Schinkel Pavillion in Berlin, Albertinum in Dresden, Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, Bonniers Konsthall in Stockholm, Los Angeles Film Forum, e-flux screening room, the 56th Venice Biennale, The Kyiv Biennial and others.  
[mykolaridnyi.com](http://mykolaridnyi.com)

### John Hansard Gallery

John Hansard Gallery is a locally engaged and internationally recognised contemporary art gallery in Southampton. Being part of the University of Southampton, the Gallery aims to create extraordinary encounters with the rich diversity of contemporary art that inspire people and communities to change the world for the better. To realise this, the Gallery creates innovative and critically acclaimed contemporary art exhibitions, events, engagement and research projects that excite, challenge, represent and reach the widest possible public audience. Learning and engagement are at the heart of the Gallery and underpin all its activities. The innovative education and public programme is accompanied by special community-focused projects, including activities for all ages and levels of experience. John Hansard Gallery was established in 1979 and is a National Portfolio Organisation supported by Arts Council England.  
[jhg.art](http://jhg.art)

### University of Southampton

The University of Southampton is one of the UK's leading teaching and research institutions, with a global reputation for research and scholarship across a wide range of subjects. The University combines academic excellence with an innovative and entrepreneurial approach to research, supporting a culture that engages and challenges students and staff in their pursuit of learning.  
[southampton.ac.uk](http://southampton.ac.uk)

**John  
Hansard  
Gallery**



**FOUNDATION  
FOUNDATION**

ЦЕНТР ВІЗУАЛЬНОЇ КУЛЬТУРИ  
VISUAL CULTURE RESEARCH CENTER

**RIBBON**