

Penis Art Wins State Award

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The controversial art group Voina, two members of which face jail time for their performances, won a state award for painting a gigantic penis on a drawbridge facing a Federal Security Service building.

The June performance, dubbed "Penis in FSB Captivity," has swept the prestigious Innovation award in the main category, visual art.

The presenter, prominent art curator Andrei Yerofeyev, announced the winner at a ceremony in the Garage center in Moscow with a single Russian expletive for penis, *Moskovsky Komsomolets* [reported](#).

Innovation is co-staged by the State Center for Contemporary Arts and the Cultural Ministry. The ministry said in a statement Friday that it disapproved of the decision of the jury, which was comprised of prominent Russian and international art figures, but will not contest it, *RIA-Novosti* [reported](#).

Voina's nomination was marred by controversy, with the group dropped from the prize's shortlist in February, only to reappear in mid-March. No representative of the group came

to Garage to collect the cash prize of 400,000 rubles (\$14,000).

Voina activists Leonid Nikolayev and Oleg Vorotnikov face up to seven years in prison on hooliganism charges over another St. Petersburg performance in September that saw them flipping over police cars, some with officers in them. Both spent three months in detention before walking out on bail in February and are now pending a trial.

The award-winning "penis" performance, staged ahead of the St. Petersburg Economic Forum, was a protest against the FSB's unchecked powers, Voina said at the time.

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