

Russia to Probe Hermitage Visitor Who Hung Self-Portrait

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Kirill Smorodin hung the portrait of himself wearing 19th-century military uniform at the museum's Patriotic War of 1812 exhibit last week. [smorodin.kir / Instagram](#)

Russian authorities will probe whether a visitor who hung a portrait of himself at the famed Hermitage Museum broke the law against insulting veterans, St. Petersburg media [reported](#) Wednesday.

According to the Fontanka.ru news website, Kirill Smorodin hung the portrait of himself wearing 19th-century military uniform at the museum's Patriotic War of 1812 exhibit last week.

“Why isn’t my portrait here?” Smorodin reportedly wrote in his Instagram post before making his account private after the images went viral online.

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The State Hermitage Museum, the world's largest art collection, told Fontanka it had petitioned the St. Petersburg prosecutor's office to "inspect and evaluate" Smorodin's actions.

The Hermitage said it wanted to probe whether Smorodin violated a recently adopted law against "publicly insulting the memory of the defenders of the Fatherland."

President Vladimir Putin [signed](#) the law last March imposing jail terms of up to 5 years for insulting World War II veterans.

The Patriotic War of 1812 exhibit commemorates Napoleon's invasion of Russia 209 years ago. Although the Russian army retreated, the depleted French army did not destroy the Russian forces and left the country later that year.

The language of Russia's law against insulting veterans does not explicitly mention the War of 1812.

This is at least the second petition to investigate alleged insults of Russian war veterans in the past 48 hours.

On Tuesday, a veterans' organization asked the Investigative Committee, which probes major crimes, to determine whether popular rapper Morgenshtern [broke the law](#) when he questioned the feasibility of annual parades commemorating the Soviet victory in World War II.

The controversies come amid what critics call Putin's attempt to use the history of World War II to boost his personal power.

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