

Head of Russia's Tretyakov Gallery Replaced After Culture Ministry Standoff

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Yelena Pronicheva, the new director of the Tretyakov Gallery. **Sophia Sandurskaya / Moskva News Agency**

A new director has been appointed to the State Tretyakov Gallery, one of Russia's most renowned fine arts museums, following a reported clash with the Culture Ministry over its exhibitions' alignment with state values.

Zelfira Tregulova, who has served as the Tretyakov Gallery's general director since 2015, will step down from her role, the Culture Ministry [said](#) Thursday, and be replaced by Yelena Pronicheva.

The head of Russia's Polytechnic Museum since 2020, Pronicheva previously served as executive director of Moscow's Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center.

According to [Forbes Russia](#), she is the daughter of Vladimir Pronichev, a former deputy head of the Federal Security Service (FSB).

Tregulova only learned of her dismissal by seeing it in the news, she [told](#) the National News Service.

Her replacement was the result of her contract coming to an end, the Culture Ministry said in its statement, which was reported by Interfax.

But last month, the ministry [reportedly](#) told the Tretyakov Gallery that it should be doing more to promote “spiritual and moral values.”

The demand came after the ministry apparently received a complaint from a museum visitor who claimed the gallery’s exhibitions were displaying works “that have signs of a destructive ideology” and that evoked feelings of “deep pessimism... emptiness and hopelessness.”

“We are dealing with a typical Soviet way of dealing with objectionable art, allegedly by a letter from the people,” an unidentified Tretyakov employee told The Moscow Times’ Russian service at the time.

Russia has increasingly turned to what officials refer to as “traditional values” amid the war in Ukraine and a standoff with the West.

President Vladimir Putin signed a [decree](#) in November that stressed the importance of "traditional values as the basis of Russian society."

Founded in the mid-19th century by merchant Pavel Tretyakov, the Tretyakov Gallery's collection is considered the foremost collection of Russian art in the world.

Last spring, the Tretyakov suddenly [closed](#) an exhibition of works by Russian-American artist Grisha Bruskin, apparently over complaints from “indignant citizens.”

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