

Art Museum in St. Petersburg Charged With 'Nazi Propaganda'

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"Festival" by Sergei Grinevich. **Social media**

The Erarta contemporary art museum in St. Petersburg is facing administrative charges for displaying a painting that the authorities claim contains “Nazi symbols,” a spokesperson for the city’s court system [said](#) Thursday.

An administrative case against the museum was brought before the Vasilevsky District Court, which is in the same neighborhood where Erarta is located, though it was not immediately clear when charges were pressed.

According to Daria Lebedeva, who heads the St. Petersburg court system’s press service, the case centers around a painting by the Belarusian artist Sergei Grinevich called “Festival.” The painting, which depicts dancers in national costumes behind three security guards, was introduced to Erarta’s collection in 2016.

The independent news outlet Agentstvo, citing a frequent Erarta visitor, [reported](#) that the Belarusian phrase “Zyvie Bielarus!” (“Long Live Belarus!”) appeared under the painting in

2020 and has since remained there.

“Zyvie Bielarus!” was widely used by Belarusians who protested against the controversial re-election of longtime leader Alexander Lukashenko in 2020, which was followed by brutal crackdowns against dissent. Grinevich previously accused the authorities in his native Belarus of [censoring](#) him.

“Experts concluded that this slogan was the symbol of [two collaborationist units during World War II] along with the Nazi party greeting,” court spokeswoman Lebedeva wrote on Telegram.

Erarta has not publicly commented on the criminal charge.

If found guilty, Erarta faces a fine of up to 50,000 rubles (\$567) and confiscation of Grinevich’s painting.

Correction: Erarta is facing administrative charges, not criminal charges, as we originally wrote.

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