

Art Show Faces Barrage of 'Religious Hatred' Complaints

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Prosecutors have received 117 complaints about the "The End of Fun" exhibit by brothers Jake and Dinos Chapman at the State Hermitage Museum, pictured here.

St. Petersburg prosecutors are checking whether an exhibit by British artists incited religious hatred by displaying Ronald McDonald and a teddy bear nailed to a crucifix.

Prosecutors have received 117 complaints about the "The End of Fun" exhibit by brothers Jake and Dinos Chapman at the State Hermitage Museum, [Interfax reported](#) Friday, citing local prosecutors.

The complainants say the exhibit "offends" their faith and is "aimed at inciting ethnic hatred and enmity," a representative of the prosecutors told Interfax.

The museum's director, Mikhail Piotrovsky, said the complainants believed that the crucifix had been desecrated because it had a McDonald's clown and a teddy bear nailed to it.

Piotrovsky asked Prosecutor General Yury Chaika to take action "so that both we and prosecutors are not distracted from our work."

"Our society is being used for smear campaigns," Piotrovsky said. "There is nothing blasphemous [in the exhibit], but there is a clear intention to spoil the mood in the city."

In a [statement](#) on his museum's website, Piotrovsky noted that the complaints were "almost identical in wording."

Inciting religious hatred is a criminal charge in Russia punishable by up to two years in prison for an individual and up to five years for a member of an "organized group."

The brothers apologized to believers through the BBC's Russian service, saying they would "[never set foot in Russia again](#)."

[The exhibit](#), depicting a day of reckoning for fascists, opened on Oct. 20 and runs through Jan. 13.

On Oct. 20, an obscure group of [Cossacks e-mailed local television network](#) Piter.tv, calling on Piotrovsky "to come to his senses." They said they would complain to prosecutors if he didn't heed their suggestion to close the exhibit because it depicted swastikas.

Last month, the same Cossack group made another local museum cancel a staging of "[Lolita](#)," a play based on the Vladimir Nabokov novel, saying it violated a local law enacted in March against promoting pedophilia.

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