

Political Activist 'Washes' Himself Of Russia's Past in Ancient Roman Tomb

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A screenshot of the YouTube video showing a St. Petersburg protester scrubbing off a 'United Russia' inscription.

An activist walked into the Hermitage museum in St. Petersburg, stripped to his underpants, climbed into a bathtub-shaped ancient Roman sarcophagus, and proceeded to 'wash' off himself the name of the ruling United Russia party.

The protest action titled "Unwashed Russia" — in an apparent nod to a renowned and opposition-minded 19th century poem by Mikhail Lermontov — symbolized the "need for Russia to cleanse itself of the filth and dirt of the past," the Siniy Vsadnik (Blue Horseman) art group that organized the action said, Grani.ru reported Wednesday.

A [video](#) of the stunt showed two women, likely museum employees, walk into the room and look on as the activist rubbed vigorously at the logo of the pro-Kremlin United Russia party drawn in black on his torso, imitating the motions of a man taking a shower, and then

climb back out.

The sarcophagus emerged from the action intact, but the activist and two journalists who filmed the protest were briefly detained by police, Grani.ru reported.

The video had garnered almost 4,000 views on YouTube a day after being posted.

"You can't wash off United Russia," a reader said on the Ekho Moskvyy website. "Anybody who joins it is tainted for life."

It is not the first time a political protester undresses at a cultural venue to prove a point.

In 2008, Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, sentenced to jail for Pussy Riot's anti-Kremlin performance at Moscow's Christ the Savior Cathedral, was part of a group who were photographed and filmed having intercourse at Moscow's State Biology Museum in protest of then-President Dmitry Medvedev's calls to increase the country's birth rate.

See also:

[Man Nails Testicles to Red Square Cobblestones in Bizarre Protest](https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2014/06/12/political-activist-washes-himself-of-russias-past-in-ancient-roman-tomb-a36382)

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