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Russian Orthodox Leader Warns Modern Art Aims to Destroy Humanity

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Patriarch Kirill, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Patriarch Kirill should take care not to wander too far from Moscow's Christ the Savior Cathedral, lest he risks stumbling upon the city's museum of modern art — a cultural genre he recently described as "filth."

Speaking at an Orthodox festival on Wednesday, the head of the Russian Church told journalists that some forms of contemporary culture "show some horrors, some nonsense, idiocy," state-run news agency RIA Novosti reported.

According to the patriarch, art should be a thing of beauty and harmony, as opposed to "filth and stupidity under the guise of art."

"The purpose of [such] art is not to advance humankind ... but to destroy the [it]," he was quoted as saying.

Proponents of modern and experimental art would have us believe that anyone who fails

to understand the genre is simply "unenlightened," the patriarch said.

Despite the perils of modern art, however, there is always someone willing to applaud it, and anyone who doesn't understand it is described as "unenlightened," the patriarch added.

To illustrate his point, he described attending a symphony in Chicago. What began as a "wonderful concert" quickly devolved into a cacophony of sound after an announcer told the crowd that the symphony would play some "experimental music."

As the patriarch described it: "Everyone sat. Their faces tense, their eyebrows pursed with the desire to understand what was happening ... But no one wants to be the one to say 'the emperor has no clothes.' Everyone was too afraid."

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