

Tsereteli: 'Cry of My Soul' Is Sculpture for Japan

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Zurab Tsereteli, noted for his fondness for larger-than-life sculptures that he freely gives away, said he plans to create a monument to the victims of the last week's earthquake in Japan.

"It's the cry of my soul. Poets write verses, and the cry of my soul is to create a monument," Tsereteli told reporters Tuesday, adding that he has only sketched the outline of the monument so far, Interfax reported.

Tsereteli did not elaborate on the artistic concept but said the monument should be presented to Japan as a gift from the Russian people and placed in Tokyo or some other area hit by the earthquake and tsunami last Friday.

He said he has not contacted the Japanese authorities over the proposal.

"He is a highly emotional man and he feels empathy for the victims," Tsereteli's spokeswoman said by telephone.

Tsereteli, 77, head of the Russian Academy of Arts, was known for his strong ties to ex-Mayor Yury Luzhkov. During Luzhkov's tenure, Tsereteli sculpted a number of monuments for the city, including a 98-meter statue of Peter the Great, who, incidentally, loathed Moscow.

Tsereteli has shown his empathy on similar occasions in the past, particularly in 2006, when he attempted to present New York with a monument to honor the victims of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

The 175-ton sculpture, dubbed "[Teardrop](#)", was rejected by New York but eventually accepted by Jersey City, which shelled out \$2.2 million to install it, Tsereteli's representative Emily Madoff told the local NJ.com news web site last August.

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