

Oscar-Winning Russian Filmmaker Thinks Yeltsin Center Harms 'National Identity'

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Filmmaker Nikita Mikhalkov **Sergei Porter / Vedomosti**

Academy Award-winning Russian filmmaker Nikita Mikhalkov has accused the Yeltsin Center, an educational center and museum named for President Boris Yeltsin, of destroying Russia's "national consciousness."

The filmmaker, known for his conservative political views, accused the Yeltsin Center of carrying out a hi tech program that destroys "people's ideas of Russian history."

"In Yekaterinburg, there is a center that carries out an injection of destruction into the people's national consciousness on a daily basis," Mikhalkov [said](#) Friday during parliamentary hearings on implementing the state's cultural policy strategy up to the year 2030.

He called on Valentina Matvienko, speaker of Russia's Federation Council, to pay attention to

the issue and not let it go unaddressed.

Mikhalkov said that the Center should not be closed, but that its program must be "adjusted."

The president of the Yeltsin Center later responded to Mikhalkov's criticism, inviting the filmmaker to come to the center.

"Personally I am very eager to see Nikita Sergeyevich Mikhalkov in the museum; we would be happy to show him an artifact with which he is surely familiar," said the center's Executive Director Alexander Drozdov.

Drozdov says that they are in possession of several documents from Mikhalkov himself, including a personal appeal to then-president Boris Yeltsin.

"It was sincere, which is always characteristic of Nikita Sergeyevich in his expressions of his love for the current government in all its forms," Drozdov said.

The Yeltsin Center opened in Yekaterinburg in November 2015. Russian President Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, and many prominent politicians, cultural figures, and associates of Russia's first president attended the opening ceremony.

Mikhalkov won the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film for 1994's *Burnt by the Sun*, an epic film about the era of the Stalinist purges.

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