

Russia's Cultural Elite React to Serebrennikov's Arrest for Fraud

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Director Kirill Serebrennikov in a court in Moscow, Aug. 23, 2017 **Kardashov Anton / Moskva News Agency**

Prominent Russian director Kirill Serebrennikov on Wednesday was placed under house arrest as part of an embezzlement case widely seen as political.

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His arrest has politicized Russia's cultural elite, exposing fault lines in a community of actors, filmmakers and writers, many of whom have largely refrained from expressing such opinions in public until now.

[Writer Boris Akunin](#)

Arrests of people of that caliber that cause an international furor only take place with the

permission, or sometimes at the direct order of the Top Boss. Otherwise it's impossible.

So then, let's call a spade a spade. The director Meyerhold was not arrested by the NKVD, but by Stalin. The director Serebrennikov was not arrested by the Investigative Committee. He was arrested by Putin.

Film director Andrei Konchalovsky

What if this wasn't Kirill Serebrennikov, but some nobody? Who would have paid any attention?

Things like this happen every day in Russia. No one would have noticed. But apparently the investigators found something. And if they found something, what can you do? I have nothing to offer but sympathy and condolences for those who erred somehow.

Journalist Sergei Parkhomenko

This is a two-act performance which has been going on in Russia for a long time.

The first act is that everyone is guilty. In Russia anyone who receives state funding is trapped, because it is impossible to comply with all the regulations, and consequently they're hung up by several hooks.

The second act is such that is that any of these hooks can be pulled at any moment, either to exact bribes or to make a political statement.

Journalist Leonid Parfyonov

There's no logic in it. Something you don't understand yourself is impossible to explain.

Culture Minister Vladimir Medinsky

This is a very sad situation. Very [regrettable](#).

I'm sure this is not a case ordered from above. I have a [source](#).

Critic Katerina Gordeeva

Kirill Serebrennikov is my illustrious peer, my friend. I've known him just about as long as I've been alive on this earth. We grew up together. He is an honest, decent and extremely talented man whose raison d'être is art. Not politics, not petty squabbles, not kickbacks, not insinuations. Art. Kirill founded a theater, the Gogol Center, which has become a place of

power and a center of gravity for thousands of people, many of whom had been indifferent to theater before. Even when this disgusting campaign began — this stinking persecution — Kirill didn't throw in the towel. He directed and premiered a show, directed another, and began work on a film.

Kirill is what I'm proud of in my country. His work is what this era will be remembered for. My friend and illustrious peer Kirill Serebrennikov has much more to do. And I believe that he'll do it.

And you, scum, who have no use for all this, who dream of a gray medieval kingdom — you will be forgotten. Oblivion is worse than a curse. That you can be sure of.

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