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Messi Gets Face-Saving Kazan Mural to Match Ronaldo's

By Reuters

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Pilar Olivares / Reuters

Kazan artists worked through the night on Friday painting a mural of Argentina's Lionel Messi to match one of Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo on a building opposite, saving the blushes of the World Cup host city.

The three-story portrait of Ronaldo was painted on a building behind the Ramada Hotel to welcome the five-times World Player of the Year when Portugal played in the capital of Tatarstan in the 2017 Confederations Cup.

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To the embarrassment of city officials, it turned out that Argentina would be staying at the same hotel ahead of Saturday's World Cup last 16 clash against France with Messi potentially

being able to see the Ronaldo mural from his room.

To avoid to appear to be taking sides in the eternal debate over which of the Spain-based forwards is the world's best player, the city commissioned the smaller side profile of Messi, also a five-times World Player of the Year.

Fans were already gathering outside the hotel hours before the arrival of Messi and his compatriots.

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