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Russian Artist Highlights Inflation Struggles With Food Portrait of Prime Minister

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The food used to create Mishustin's portrait cost is worth the average increase in cost of living over the past year. **evgenia_skovart / instagram**

Political protest has never had so much flavor.

A Russian artist has created a portrait of Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin using only food to highlight the increasing strain that surging inflation is taking on Russians' finances.

Yevgenia Skovart's artistic medium of choice was a selection of staple groceries worth 1,028 rubles ($13.40) — the average increase in Russians' cost of living over the past year, the Znak.com news website reported Wednesday.

The portrait, made with items like cabbage, potatoes, bread and rice, represents Skovart's dissatisfaction with the government's social benefits aimed at supporting citizens amid rising inflation.

In her Instagram post Tuesday, the Ufa-based artist wrote that her grandmother's pension has increased by 1,300 rubles ($17) in the past year. But since staple goods have become more expensive, pensions have actually decreased if adjusted for inflation.

"I have no illusions that tomorrow, when he sees his portrait from food purchased with these same allowances, Mikhail Mishustin will raise them again. But I hope he will at least be ashamed when he looks at his portrait, painted with a meager amount of products bought for an average allowance," she wrote.

Russia has seen a sharp hike in prices and interest rates as the country desperately battles inflation.

Inflation is running at 8.4%, according to the latest figures — its highest level in six years.

Real incomes have stagnated since Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 sparked sanctions against Moscow. Russia's latest standoff with the West over military buildup near Ukraine threatens to batter the economy even further.

Fittingly, Skovart didn't let the food go to waste after her creation was complete.

"After the portrait was ready, it was eaten!" Skovart declares in her post.

A digital version of the portrait is available to potential buyers, with most of the proceeds to be donated to charities that help the poor and pensioners.

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