



East Side Gallery artists sue over Berlin Wall restoration

Published: 3 May 11 15:38 CET

In the latest chapter of a controversy over the restoration of the Berlin Wall's famed East Side Gallery, several artists are demanding compensation from the city because they say their artwork was removed, painted over or reproduced without their consent.

The 1.3-kilometer section of the Wall, painted by artists as a monument to peace in 1990, progressively crumbled after Germany's re-unification until restorations commenced in 2000.

In many cases, artists were asked to repaint their work because a sandblasting process removed them during the restoration. But many angrily refused. Some argued they hadn't been given an adequate share of the revenue the monument has brought in. Others said repainting the works destroyed the wall's authenticity.

Artist Bodo Sperling is one of those filing suit because he says his work, "The transformation of the pentagram to a peace star in a Europe without walls," was removed and repainted without his consent, the *Berliner Morgenpost* reported on Tuesday.

His attorney, Hannes Hartung told the paper that he is demanding at least €20,000.

"We want to leave the amount at the discretion of the court, however," he said.

Hartung said at least two other artists had their works unnecessarily removed and then repainted and he is demanding €3,000 for each of them.

The lawyer said they should have been handled more carefully, "Like frescoes," he said, explaining that he had previously demanded compensation but had been refused.



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Other artists have repainted their works, but only grudgingly.

In 2009, Russian artist Dmitry Vruble said he was stunned that his "Brother Kiss" mural had been erased. As he redid the work, he said he was "a little bit afraid" because he couldn't remember all the details of his mural exactly.