

Cossacks Detained Trying to Disrupt Pussy Riot Exhibit Opening

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Gallery-goers looking at works inspired by punk band Pussy Riot at the Guelman Gallery. **Anton Belitsky**

Several Cossacks were detained at a Moscow arts complex while trying to disrupt the opening of an exhibition of works inspired by punk band Pussy Riot.

A group of some 20 Cossacks and pro-Church activists crowded at the entrance of Moscow's Guelman Gallery, where the exhibition opened Thursday evening, Interfax reported.

The show is dedicated to the three women sentenced to two years in prison each for their "punk prayer" performance in Christ the Savior Cathedral in February.

Some of the pictures on display, authored by artist Yevgenia Maltseva, resemble wooden icons depicting Pussy Riot members in their trademark colorful balaclavas, the news agency said.

The Cossacks chanted "Liberal fascism will not pass!" outside the gallery located within the Winzavod exhibition complex and tried to break through gallery doors blocked by the organizers and visitors.

OMON riot police arrived to the scene and detained at least nine of the activists, Interfax reported.

On Friday, an unidentified caller told police that there was a bomb in the gallery, an unidentified law enforcement official told Interfax. A bomb squad was scheduled to go to the gallery Friday afternoon to investigate the threat.

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