

Guelman Cancels St. Petersburg Show, Citing 'Unfavorable Atmosphere'

By [The Moscow Times](#)

October 16, 2012



Gallery owner Guelman is a vocal opponent of censorship and a frequent target of attacks by Orthodox fundamentalists opposed to his nonconformist exhibits.

Outspoken Russian gallery owner Marat Guelman said Tuesday that he had canceled an art exhibition in St. Petersburg that was scheduled to open on Nov. 15 after appeals by the show's promoter.

The Rizzordi Art Foundation, which had offered to display "Icons," a religious-themed exhibition, in Russia's second-largest city, asked to consider postponing the exhibition until late 2013, keeping all preliminary agreements, Guelman wrote on his LiveJournal blog.

"Unfortunately, the current atmosphere in the city is extremely unfavorable to stage the mentioned art show," the Rizzordi Art Foundation said in a letter, which Guelman posted on his blog.

Guelman, who put together the exhibition, responded by saying that he deeply regretted the current situation but had decided "not to postpone the show, but to cancel it."

The project's aim is show modern icon painting that differs from the traditional style espoused by Russian Orthodox painters. The project caused protests by religious activists in the southern city of Krasnodar in May, when the exhibition went on display there.

Guelman said that his decision would not affect plans to bring "Icons" to the Urals city of Perm.

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