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Mayakovsky Museum Calls for Aid as Closing Set for Saturday

By D. Garrison Golubock

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While Mayakovsky may no longer be as popular an author since the collapse of communism, his museum, located close to Lubyanka Square, has long been a popular tourist attraction. It was therefore somewhat surprising when it was announced last year that the museum would be closed in 2013 for extensive repairs. Personnel at the museum complained that no provisions were being made to protect the main exhibition, which they feared could be damaged and separated during the period of closure.

With the final date for the museum's closure now set for Sept. 15, an "Initiative Group for the Protection of the State V. V. Mayakovsky Museum" has sent out one last plea for help, calling for the closure to be delayed or for the Ministry of Culture to take responsibility for the fate of the museum's exhibits.

"There have been many promises that the exposition will be preserved, that a commission will be formed for oversight into the repairs ... but as of yet there has been no concrete

information, only general phrases," the Initiative Group writes in their open letter.

The Moscow City Culture Ministry has previously stated that the repairs are not intended to affect the exhibition but are solely for the purpose of performing structural maintenance on the building. While the repairs are ongoing, the museum's collection will be stored in other museums around the city such as the Rabochy i Kolkhoznitsa Exhibition Center. Some of the collection will be placed in joint exhibits organized at the Museum of Literature and the State Tretyakov Museum.

However, museum employees are not satisfied with the plans that have been made for preserving the exhibition, writing in their open letter that "in the last few months the library department has been destroyed and no replacement has been arranged. It is still unclear who is responsible for the preservation of the books that have already been taken from museum collection and stored in the Nekrasov Library."

The museum's website, which has become a de facto message board for news about the closing and complaints from employees, contains a forum with allegations against prominent officials at the Moscow Culture Ministry, who are accused of closing the museum with the express purpose of dismantling the traditional exhibition in favor of more space for events and temporary exhibitions.

The accuracy of these allegations and the eventual fate of the permanent exhibition remain unclear, but it seems certain that the museum will be closing on Sept. 15 for an unspecified period of time.

Contact the author at g.golubock@imedia.ru

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