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Tretyakov Gallery Head Suddenly Dismissed

By The Moscow Times

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The Culture Ministry fired the Tretyakov Gallery's director on Tuesday.

The director of the Tretyakov Gallery, Irina Lebedeva, was unexpectedly fired Tuesday, the RIA Novosti news agency reported.

Lebedeva, an expert on painting in the first half of the 19th century, had been head of the museum since 2009. Her firing was due to a number of grievances the Culture Ministry had with her work, the ministry said.

A ministry official said that construction of a new gallery building has gone on too long and that there were scandals around the museum, the website ok-inform.ru reported.

"The main arts museum of the country, of Russian art, did not become a tutorial center," said Mikhail Bryzgalov, director of the department of cultural heritage at the ministry. "A reduction of visitors by 15 per cent was in the plans."

Vladimir Tolstoy, adviser to Culture Minister Vladimir Medinsky, said that the ministry had long had questions over Lebedeva's management skills and her legal and organizational skills with regard to construction and restoration, ok-inform.ru reported

The move comes less than two years after Irina Antonova, the longstanding director of the Pushkin Museum, left her position. Antonova had been in her position since 1961. Although she officially resigned, many felt that she was pushed out by the Culture Ministry.

Zelfira Tregulova, head of ROSIZO state exhibit center, was named as Lebedeva's successor. Tregulova said that she plans to make the Tretyakov Gallery, one of Russia's most prestigious museums, more comfortable and attractive for visitors.

Lebedeva did not make any comment Tuesday.

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