The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

U.S. Photographer Sturges' Moscow Exhibition Closed Amid Child Pornography Claims

By Katie Marie Davies

September 26, 2016



A man visits Jock Sturges' exhibition called No Embarrassment at the Lumiere Brothers Center for Photography. **Andrei Makhonin / TASS**

The Moscow exhibition of controversial American photographer Jock Sturges has been closed following protests from conservative activists.

Members of the nationalist group "Officers of Russia" blocked the entrance to Sturges's show, "Jock Sturges: Absence of Shame" at The Lumiere Brothers' Center for Photography on Sunday.

The group accused Sturges of exhibiting child pornography in his work, which features naked adolescents with their families at American nudist colonies.

One activist entered the center under the guise of a journalist and threw a bottle of urine at the photographs,
Russian television channel Dozhd reported. The man has since been
charged with hooliganism, the news outlet reported.

Russia's Children's Rights Ombudswoman Anna Kuznetsova also condemned the show in the wake of the protests, which forced the center to close an hour early.

Writing on her Facebook page, Kuznetsova said that an investigation would be launched into the show.

“It's simply awful that an exhibition by an artist whose work is recognized as child pornography by [Russian state media watchdog] Roskomnadzor
can take place
in
the "cultural" life of our capital,”
she wrote.
“I pity the girls whose photos make up part of
this unfortunate exhibition.
”

The Lumiere Brothers' Center
has maintained that none of the images on display in Russia
feature unclothed children.

The exhibition's curator, Natalya Grigoreva, told Dozhd that the show had not previously received any complaints following its opening on Sept. 8.

Sturges also expressed his disappointment at the decision. It had been the first time that Sturges' work had appeared in Russia.

“Galleries and museums across the world haven't seen these photos as pornography. It simply isn't the case,” he said in a interview with Russia's Ren TV.

In a press release for the exhibition, Sturges defended his work, saying that, "nudity does not mean anything here.”

“People are exposed because they are nudists and spend the summer in resorts which are free of embarrassment," he said.

The U.S. states of Alabama and Tennessee attempted to ban books by the artist in 1998 while the FBI raided the artist's studio in 1990. The artist was never indicted for any crime.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2016/09/26/us-photographer-jock-sturges-sees-moscow-exhibition-closed-amid-child-pornography-claims-a55473