

The Year's Best Art Scandal: Moscow Art Biennale

Not the finest moment for contemporary art.

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Kirill Zykov / Moskva News Agency

The 8th Moscow International Biennale of Contemporary Art launched almost a month later than expected and amidst a full-blown financial scandal. Artists who took part in the biennale in 2017 wrote a public letter complaining that they still haven't received payments for their work and asking their colleagues not to take part in this year's biennale. This year's biennale was decidedly tiny, taking up just one — albeit one large — hall at the New Tretyakov Gallery's West Wing. It also lacks any kind of concept or theme. A rather good selection from the Albertina Museum in Vienna, including works by Gerhard Richter, Stephan Balkenhol and Georg Baselitz is contrasted with works by contemporary Russian artists (Pavel Otdelnov, Evgeniya Buravleva, Andrei Kuzkin) and, for some reason, artists from Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, as well as Leila, the daughter of the Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev.

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