

Russia Probes Artistic Human Corpse Exhibition After Uproar

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Investigators will determine whether the controversial "Body Worlds" exhibit "insults the religious feelings of believers." **Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency**

Russia will probe an artistic exhibition of preserved human corpses after the display sparked an uproar among conservative religious groups and public figures.

German anatomist Gunter von Hagens' traveling "Body Worlds" exhibition opened at Moscow's VDNKh exhibition center on March 12. Its display of donated human bodies and organs [aims](#) to educate visitors "by looking inside a stranger's body to discover our own in a completely new way."

Russian Investigative Committee chief Alexander Bastrykin ordered a probe into the exhibition to assess its "goals, content and purpose" as well as its compliance with Russian law, the investigative body [said](#) in a statement Wednesday.

The inquiry by the Investigative Committee, which probes major crimes, follows negative comments toward the exhibition in the media as well as petitions calling for its closure, the

statement said.

“According to public figures, [the exhibition] violates moral values, expresses a clear disrespect for society and can be regarded as an insult to the religious feelings of believers,” it said.

Violating moral values and insulting religious feelings are both criminal offenses under Russian law.

The conservative Orthodox group Sorok Sorokov (Forty Forties) had sent a request to the General Prosecutor’s Office to investigate “Body Worlds” while presidential human rights council head Valery Fadeyev also called for a legal assessment, the state-run RIA Novosti news agency [reported](#).

“Body Worlds” was first displayed in Tokyo in 1995 and has been shown in 35 countries worldwide since then, though not without controversy. Some 19,000 people have donated their bodies to the exhibition since the 1980s.

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