

What Is Quadrobics, Russia's Viral But Divisive Youth Subculture?

By [Moscow Times Reporter](#)

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[Quadrobics.ru](#) / VK

A Russian senator this week called on fellow lawmakers to introduce a legal ban on quadrobics, a subculture revolving around the impersonation of animals that is rapidly gaining momentum among Russia's youth.

"I am convinced that any subculture should remain within the bounds of reason and be safe for oneself and others," Senator Natalia Kosikhina was [quoted](#) by the state-run RIA Novosti news agency as saying.

"Quadrobics — [which] not only traumatize the psyche, but can also lead to very tragic consequences — must be banned," she added.

Kosikhina is not the first high-profile figure to have commented on the viral youth trend, which has drawn split reactions from celebrities and the general public.

Here is everything you need to know about Russia's new viral youth trend.

What is quadrobics?

Quadrobics is believed to have been invented by Japanese sprint runner Kenichi Ito, who set a world record in running on four limbs in an imitation of a monkey.

Like Ito, teenagers who call themselves quadrobbers roleplay as various animals by using all four limbs to move and imitating specific animal sounds and moves while wearing animal masks and other costumes.

Quadrobbers distinguish themselves from other subcultures by emphasizing the athletic nature of their activities.

What triggered the debate?

Quadrobics entered the spotlight earlier this month when Russian pop singer Mia Boyka [criticized](#) a young fan for being part of the movement in front of a crowd of concertgoers.

Boyka was performing at a City Day concert in the northern town of Nadym when organizers brought a teenage girl wearing a cat mask and tail on stage to help her find her parents in the crowd.

The singer asked the girl, who introduced herself as Maryana, whether she was a “cat or — God forbid — a quadrober.”

After confirming that the girl was indeed a quadrober, Boyka proceeded to ask whether anyone else in the crowd “supports this thing,” to which the public responded with loud booing.

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Boyka later [posted](#) a clip of the incident on social media, where she received thousands of comments condemning her behavior.

Shortly after the incident went viral, Russian pop star Yegor Kreed [released](#) a TikTok video in support of young Maryana.

“We all impersonated cats and dogs when we were kids and I am in general against publicly condemning people for their hobbies and choices,” said Kreed.

Boyka's actions were also [condemned](#) by Russia's chief denunciator Yekaterina Mizulina, the head of the Kremlin-aligned Safe Internet League.

Mizulina called Boyka's actions a “pathetic attempt to assert oneself at the expense of a child,” though noted that she is “not a supporter of quadrobics.”

What are critics saying?

Opponents of quadrobics [say](#) that the subculture could have a long-lasting negative effect on

children's mental health. They also claim to be aware of instances when quadrobbers attacked passersby on city streets, biting and scratching them as if they were animals.

"I constantly receive letters [from subscribers] about quadrobbers. Some letters are from those who are involved in quadrobics: they write about being bullied and attacked. Other letters are from teenagers who say they were attacked by quadrobbers while walking in a park," said the Safe Internet League's Mizulina.

"What should we do about that? I don't really know yet," she [wrote](#) on Telegram in June.

What do psychiatrists say?

Vera Sukhikh, a psychotherapist and research fellow at Moscow State University, [told](#) Kremlin-aligned news outlet Vzglyad that quadrobics is both a sport and a subculture, a part of a teenager's natural "search of identity and a form of socialization."

"Quadrobics is an advanced imaginative game that migrated from preschool age to early adolescence. In this sense, I do not see anything asocial...in quadrobics," said Sukhikh.

"The game stays with a person for life as a way to have fun, distract himself, and unload emotionally," she added.

Child psychologist Alexandra Ermilova also dubbed quadrobics a normal children's game in an interview with the independent news outlet Kedr.

"Problems arise when [quadrobbers] start to bother other people. But as far as I understand, such cases are rare," Ermilova [told](#) Kedr.

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