The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

In Photos: Literary Rave at Moscow's Lenin Library Draws Crowds and Conservative Backlash

November 02, 2026

The Russian State Library in Moscow, widely known as Leninka, hosted a literary rave over the weekend, drawing criticism from pro-Kremlin figures despite opening with an appearance by pro-war poet Anna Revyakina. Organized with publishing group Eksmo-AST, "LitRave," whose name carries a double meaning in Russian, featured poetry, light installations and an exhibition of literary memes alongside electronic music. Yekaterina Mizulina, head of the Safe Internet League, accused the event of treating Russia's cultural heritage irresponsibly. "Did anyone slip anything out under the radar? What is the Culture Ministry's take on this?" she wrote on Telegram. The far-right group Russkaya Obshchina called the event "a center of demonic dancing" and said it was "quite symbolic that modern Satanists threw a Halloween party at the library named after Lenin, the greatest Satanist in Russian history." In response to the criticism, the library told the news outlet Podyom that the rave was "an attempt to speak to a new generation in its own language." "At the heart of LitRave is the book," the library said. "And, most importantly, the readers. Young readers. That lively, vocal and inquisitive audience that every library in the world secretly dreams of. The one that has long since retreated into their phones." Eksmo-AST also defended the event, saying it had succeeded in bringing people who do not usually read into the library. "All 3,000 visitors signed up for library cards," the publisher told Podyom. "How else can we compete with entertainment formats in the 21st century? How can we offer an alternative to Moscow's spoiled public? How can we divert attention from TikTok? How can we show that reading is trendy and relevant?"

Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency

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