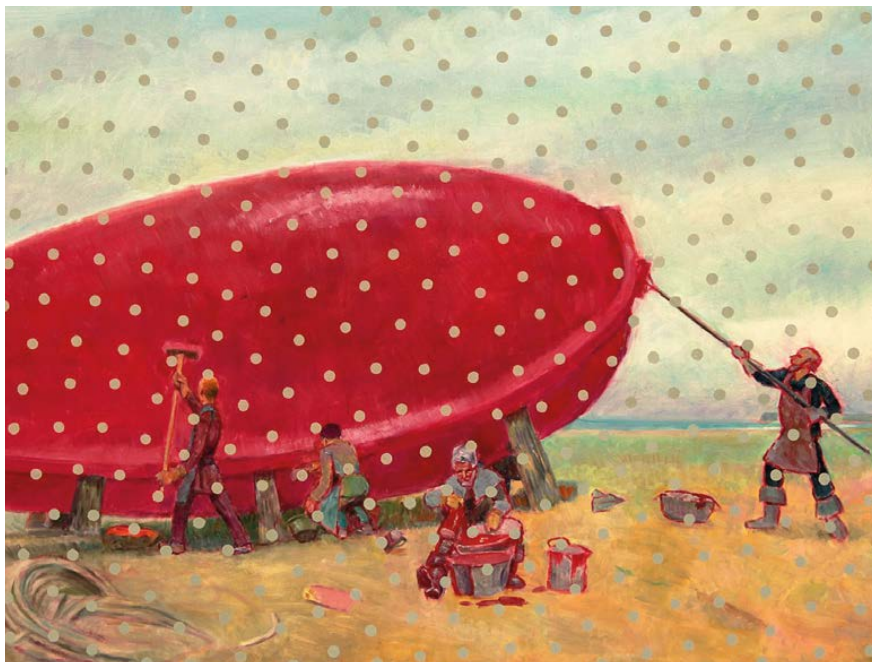


# RUSSIAN ART + CULTURE



## RUSSIAN ART WEEK GUIDE

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LONDON ■ 24 NOVEMBER - 01 DECEMBER 2017

# EXHIBITIONS

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## UNTIL 17 DECEMBER

### DMITRI PRIGOV. THEATRE OF REVOLUTIONARY ACTION

Solo exhibition in the UK by the leader of Moscow Conceptualism

Calvert 22, 22 Calvert Avenue, London E2 7JP

Times: Wed - Sun 12:00 - 18:00 Tickets: Free entry

Website: [www.calvert22.org](http://www.calvert22.org)

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## UNTIL 31 DECEMBER

### ART RIOT: POST-SOVIET ACTIONISM Saatchi Gallery, Duke of

York's HQ, King's Rd, Chelsea, London SW3 4RY Times: Daily 10:00 -

18:00, last entry 17:30 Tickets: Free Website: [www.saatchigallery.com](http://www.saatchigallery.com)

## UNTIL 27 DECEMBER

INSIDE PUSSY RIOT. Tickets: From £21.50

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## UNTIL 21 JANUARY 2018

### SOUTINE'S PORTRAITS: COOKS, WAITERS & BELLBOYS

The Courtauld Gallery, Somerset House, Strand WC2R 0RN Times: Daily

10:00 - 18:00 Tickets: £5 - £10.50 Website: [www.courtauld.ac.uk](http://www.courtauld.ac.uk)

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## 25 NOVEMBER | STUDY DAY

### SOUTINE'S PORTRAITS IN CONTEXT

Times: 11:00 - 18:00 Tickets: £40 - £45

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## 03 & 10 DEC - 07, 14 & 21 JAN | TALKS & TOURS

### SUNDAY TALK - SOUTINE'S PORTRAITS

Times: 15:00 - 15:45 Tickets: Free with Gallery admission

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## 13 DEC & 10 JANUARY 2018 | TALKS & TOURS

### CURATOR'S TALK - SOUTINE'S PORTRAITS

Times: 17:00 - 17:45 Tickets: Free with Gallery admission

## HEROES AND CLOWNS RUN RIOT AT THE SAATCHI. INTERVIEW WITH CURATOR OF ART RIOT: POST-SOVIET ACTIONISM - Simon Hewitt



The new Saatchi show ART RIOT: Post-Soviet Actionism, staged under the auspices of the Tsukanov Foundation (November 16–December 31), showcases Russians who have turned political protest into an art form. Oleg Kulik, AES and Blue Noses, who emerged after the fall of Communism, rub shoulders with such latterday scourges of Putinism as Pussy Riot, Piotr Pavlensky and Vassily Slonov. As the controversial show prepared to open, our International Editor Simon Hewitt – who coined its ART RIOT title – spoke to Curator Marat Guelman.



*Homage to Igor* by Lateral ArtSpace at the 2017 Timișoara Biennale

**Simon Hewitt:** How did the show come about?

**Marat Guelman:** Igor Tsukanov has his vision of how to promote Russian art. He understood that, after Sots Art, he must show something new in London. We discussed a few types of approach. My approach was that

today, for an international public, you can do only one kind of successful exhibition – by showing interesting artists. The idea is to show art whose protagonists are both artists and heroes. We want people to empathize with these artists, to make it easier to explain Russian art. The paradox is that, in Russian art, artists are heroes yet also comics – heroes and clowns. But artists are afraid to be real heroes. Russian contemporary artists are prone to self-parody.

**SH:** Is the show based on Igor's own collection?

**MG:** No, it's not about his collection. Pussy Riot and Pavlensky are not in Igor's collection. It's about showing a new generation of artists who can interest the world. A lot of people have heard of Pavlensky and Pussy Riot, but never seen or had a chance to understand what they are doing.



*Pussy Riot Run Riot on the Kremlin Wall  
Courtesy @Saatchi Gallery*

**SH:** What sort of works does the exhibition consist of?

**MG:** Mainly video and photography, of course, but also sculpture, paintings and film. There are two floors: one for the main exhibition, the other featuring an immersive theatre devoted to Pussy Riot.

**SH:** How do you assess the impact of these artists? Do they change anything?

**MG:** Can art change life? That's a very old question... a thousand-year-old question... But I can say that these artists do a very important job. A lot of people in Russia feel it is impossible to change anything because Putin is too strong and controls everything. Yet Pavlensky has shown that one person without money, and without media or political organization, can achieve a lot. After his performances people ask themselves 'Maybe I can do something?' In this way they are very successful.

Pussy Riot have shown how the Orthodox Church does not follow the Bible but is aggressive, Fundamentalist not Christian, ready to kill...They have shown that there are

political prisoners in Russia and how bad the judicial system is. There were thousands of political prisoners before Pussy Riot, but no one talked about them. Pussy Riot juxtapose politics with art: Putin is grey, they are colourful; Putin is a man, they are women; Putin is old, they are young; Putin is free, they are not; Putin is boring, they are funny. They have created an ideal 'anti-Putin' out of themselves, and performed a great feat in helping civil society in Russia to mature.

**SH:** What do you think of Piotr Pavlensky's recent 'performance' in Paris? (On October 16 Pavlensky – who was granted asylum in France in May – set fire to the doors of the Banque de France, claiming it had 'taken the place of the Bastille, and bankers have taken the place of monarchs.')

**MG:** Radical artists are not simple people. They see things in a special way. They can easily go against the law, sometimes even against friendship. They want to say



*Petr Pavlensky, The Carcass action, May 3, 2013  
Courtesy @Saatchi Gallery*

something to society. It's important for us to listen to what they have to say. The Saatchi show focuses on free people who pay a high price for their art.

**SH: Are you apprehensive about the Russian government's reaction?**

**MG:** I want the artistic public to understand, and go deeply into, Russian art. I want to speak to London and the international public – not to the Russian government! If I want to speak to the government, I have other possibilities. The Russian authorities have suppressed political opponents and the free press to such an extent that only artists retain loud, independent voices. By defining artists as powerful enemies, the authorities have turned them into heroes.

**SH: Your own radicalism as a curator has led to your 'exile' to Montenegro. Will you ever return to Russia?**

**MG:** I don't know. Here in Montenegro I make exhibitions and communicate with the Russian community. I feel that maybe, after the Montenegrin period of my life, there will be another Russian period. I love Moscow. I belong to Russia. But I have become very pessimistic about change there. I am 57. Change may not come in my lifetime.



Oleg Kulik, *Horses of Bretagne 4*, 1998  
Courtesy @Saatchi Gallery



Blue Noses, *Suprematist bannermen*



Blue Noses Art Group Courtesy @Saatchi Gallery