

London Culture Fest Shows More Than Pussy Riot

By [Julia Karlysheva](#)

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Russian artist Nadja Ryzhakova will be in attendance at the fest to make art of the event's comings and goings.

London — A one-day festival on the banks of the River Thames promises to deliver an "interesting and engaging" glimpse into contemporary Russian culture.

Russian Wave, scheduled for Sunday at the Riverside Studios in London, will feature a 12-hour multimedia program that includes films, literature, performance and games, and is designed to appeal to kids and grownups alike. Visitors will also get the chance to sample traditional Russian cuisine, from borscht to blinis and sour-cream meringues.

The festival is run by Academia Rossica, a London-based organization that seeks to boost cultural links between Russia and the English-speaking world through various projects and events.

According to founding director Svetlana Adjoubei, the festival is one

such intercultural project that strives to create a relaxed and informal environment where people can meet and have fun, while at the same time discovering the best of what Russian culture has to offer today.

"We want to contradict Russian culture's reputation for being hard work," Adjoubei said.

At 12 p.m., the festival will showcase the best in contemporary Russian animation, followed by consecutive screenings of four very different award-winning films: a documentary about Cuba by famed director Vitaly Mansky, a historical drama; Pavel Lungin's "Tsar" starring Pyotr Mamonov; "Gromozeka" a tragicomedy about three friends who meet at a school reunion and "Indifference," starring Fyodor Bondarchuk, which was inspired by Italian cinema and which won best film at the Kinotavr festival in 2011.

During the day, the venue will be transformed with live performances of English and Russian poems. Moreover, as part of an open culture project in London, a series of discussions on contemporary literature will take place between literary specialists representing both the English and Russian language. A book stall will introduce a selection of literary works on Russia, from Russia or in Russian, while all the books can be borrowed, bought or won in a special raffle.

Other entertainment includes contemporary art, music and Russian zabavas (fun and games) for the whole family. In a celebration of Russian food, the festival will also offer a wide selection of dishes prepared by local chefs. The menu boasts traditional Russian staples, such as meat and cabbage-stuffed pirogi, as well as more unusual delicacies.

This brief snapshot into Russian culture strives to not only show its vibrant side, but also to reflect the dynamic processes taking place in modern-day Russian society.

Speaking of Russian culture in the United Kingdom, Adjoubei cited the high-profile case of the punk trio Pussy Riot, which garnered huge international attention last month. "People in countries like the U.K. are now more interested in Russia, but our role is to show that Pussy Riot is part of a bigger and more varied culture," Adjoubei stressed. "This culture reflects Russian society today."

Correction: An earlier version of this article incorrectly stated that the film "Gromozeka" is about four friends who meet at a university reunion. The film is about three friends who meet at a school reunion.

Russian Wave Festival will take place Sunday, 11 a.m.-11 p.m. Riverside Studios, Crisp Road, SW6. Hammersmith Tube, London. Tel. (020) 8237 1111, russianwave.org, www.riversidestudios.co.uk

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