

Pavlensky's 'Threat' Performance Barred from Russian Art Award

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Russian performance artist Pyotr Pavlensky

The performance of Russian artist Pyotr Pavlensky, in which he set fire to the main entrance of the Federal Security Service's headquarters in central Moscow, has been banned from the Innovation art award, the TASS news agency reported Tuesday.

Pavlensky's protest action titled "Threat" was disqualified due to its "containing an obvious violation of the law," TASS reported, citing Mikhail Mindlin, the head of the National Center of Contemporary Art.

Several members of the award's jury panel left the competition and the remaining experts refused to vote on the visual artwork nomination following the disqualification of Pavlensky's work, according to the center's official statement.

"The organizers may reject any request in accordance with the competition's regulation," the statement read.

The "Threat" was approved by the majority during the preliminary online voting, art critic Anna Tolstova, who nominated Pavlensky for the award, wrote on her Facebook page. "The Innovation prize is awarded by the expert community and not by the prosecutor," she added.

Pavlensky was arrested and charged with vandalism after he poured gasoline and set fire to the main entrance of FSB's main office on Moscow's Lubyanskaya Ploshchad on Nov. 9, 2015. According to the artist, the action — titled "Threat. The Burning Doors of Lubyanka" — was a protest against repressive government policies.

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