

## The Polygon Gallery presents the landmark exhibition *Velvet Terrorism: Pussy Riot's Russia*

*First-ever museum survey of Pussy Riot's protest and performance art*

**FEB. 15, 2024 (VANCOUVER, CANADA)** — The Polygon Gallery is pleased to present ***Velvet Terrorism: Pussy Riot's Russia***, a survey exhibition of the feminist art collective, from **March 22–June 2, 2024**. Drawing from more than a decade of activism, the show features documentation of Pussy Riot's actions as assembled by member Maria Alyokhina.

“This exhibition highlights Pussy Riot's courageous spirit and tenacious advocacy of human rights, while offering a graphic narrative about Russia's recent history,” says Reid Shier, director of The Polygon Gallery. “Pussy Riot's international impact has been growing since they performed in Moscow's Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in 2012, and the survey demonstrates the urgent relevance of their activism, particularly as they raise awareness about the war in Ukraine — which has now been waged for close to two years.”

Pussy Riot is a protest and performance art collective that produces provocative and politically engaged performances, music, and videos. Formed in Moscow in 2011, the group has become an iconic symbol of opposition against Vladimir Putin's Russia. The collective has received the LennonOno Grant for Peace in 2012, the Hannah Arendt Prize for Political Thought in 2014, and, most recently, the Woody Guthrie Award in 2023, which recognizes the spirit of resistance through music, literature, dance, or other forms of art.

Through videos, photographs, testimonies, song lyrics, and reflections, the exhibition offers a rich account of Pussy Riot's non-violent actions as well as the reactions of the Russian authorities. Through their work over the years, Pussy Riot has transformed the repressive apparatus of an authoritarian state into a creative partner, boldly playing with fire.

In addition to the exhibition, Pussy Riot will stage a performance of RIOT DAYS in Vancouver on March 22 at The Pearl. The concert, based on Alyokhina's memoir of the same name, combines music, theatre, and political action. The award-winning show has been performed more than 200 times worldwide.

*Velvet Terrorism: Pussy Riot's Russia* was originally presented at Kling & Bang (Reykjavik). Created by Maria Alyokhina and curated with Ragnar Kjartansson and Ingibjörg Sigurjónsdóttir, the exhibition has been shown at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Denmark and the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal.

### Programming

- March 21 at 6pm: Velvet Terrorism Opening Celebration at The Polygon Gallery. All are welcome. [RSVP here](#).
- March 21 at 7:30pm: Pussy Riot members Maria Alyokhina, Olga Borisova, Diana

Burkot, and Nadya Tolokonnikova in conversation with *Velvet Terrorism* curators Ragnar Kjartansson and Ingibjörg Sigurjónsdóttir at The Pipe Shop (five minute walk from The Polygon). Space is limited. Priority seating for Gallery Members. Doors at 7pm.

- March 22 at 7pm: RIOT DAYS concert at The Pearl (881 Granville St). [Find out more](#).
- More will be announced at [thepolygon.ca](http://thepolygon.ca)

### **Acknowledgements**

Organized and circulated by Kling & Bang, Reykjavik.

Created with Maria (Masha) Alyokhina in collaboration with Ingibjörg Sigurjónsdóttir and Ragnar Kjartansson.

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*Velvet Terrorism: Pussy Riot's Russia* is part of [Capture Photography Festival](#).

The exhibition catalogue for *Velvet Terrorism: Pussy Riot's Russia* is [available for purchase in The Diane Evans Bookstore](#).

### **About The Polygon Gallery**

Grounded in photography, The Polygon Gallery creates space to challenge how we see the world. The Gallery moved into its Governor General's Medal-winning building in 2017 after operating as Presentation House Gallery for 40 years. Admission is by donation, courtesy of BMO Financial Group.

### **Gallery hours**

Wednesday, 10am–5pm; Thursday, 10am–9pm; Friday–Sunday, 10am–5pm

### **Address**

101 Carrie Cates Court, North Vancouver | Unceded territories of the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), səliłwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh), and xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam) Nations

### **Press kit and photos**

[bit.ly/VelvetTerrorism](http://bit.ly/VelvetTerrorism)

### **Social media**

Facebook: [@polygongallery](#)

Instagram: [@polygongallery](#)

### **Press contact**

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