



Centre
PEN
Belarussian



Cultural Resistance in Belarus

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The beginning of January in Belarus feels like an ebb after a storm: a wave of mass repressions has subsided, it's time to deal with the thickets of arrests and convictions, dismissals and bans. But the music hasn't stopped playing, the brush is dipped in paint, a pen has touched the paper, the spirit of the free people is dancing a karahod.

Arrests and Convictions

Pressure, Dismissal, Ban

Repressions for the Symbols

Cultural Resistance

International Solidarity



1. ARRESTS AND CONVICTIONS

Aleh Mataščanka, a military retiree from Baranavičy, whose family initiated a number of projects developing Belarusian culture and language, including a Belarusian-language class, in their native town, was detained and deported to Russia on December 30 (he had a Russian passport). The court suspended the decision, but only after Aleh had been deported.



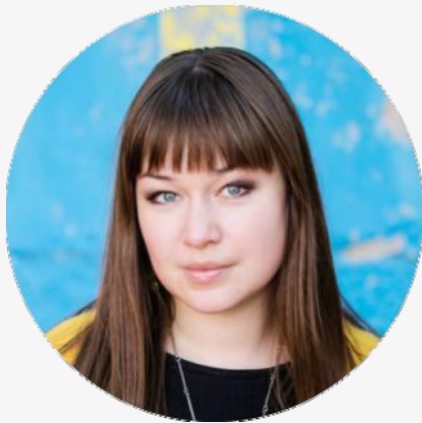
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Kryścina Pałtavič, an artist and art teacher from Skidziel, was detained for painting murals about the events of recent months. [A criminal case has been filed against her.](#)



2. PRESSURE, DISMISSAL, BAN

Michail Rybakoŭ, director of the Museum of Belarusian Literature History in Minsk, [has been fired](#). After the events of August 9-11, most of the museum staff took a photo with the caption “**We are against violence**”, it was posted on the museum’s social media. Michail himself also openly expressed his position.



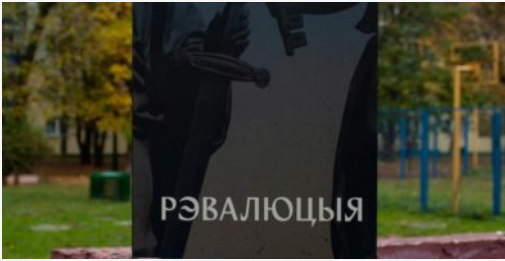
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Ksienija Kniazieva, an associate professor at the Department of History and Theory of Arts at the Belarusian Academy of Arts, a well-known theater critic, had her contract not extended for political reasons.

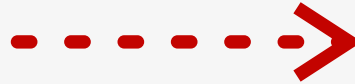
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Slava Kamisaranka, a stand-up comedian from Belarus living in Moscow, had his shows in Minsk canceled. The artist has [repeatedly spoken out about the election fraud](#) and condemned the violence by the security forces.

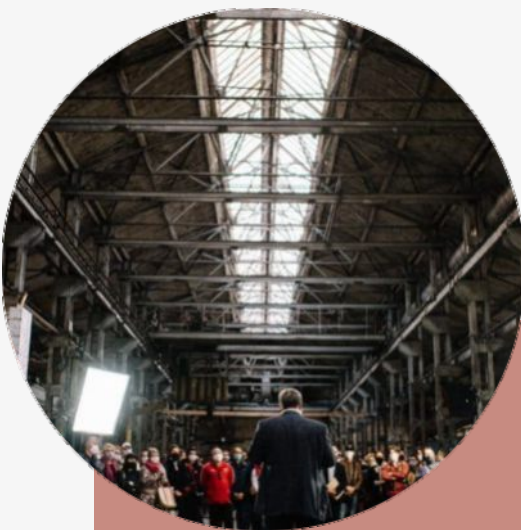




Belarusian customs did not allow Viktor Marcinovič's novel titled "Revolution" through the western border; the volume "Belarusian National Idea" written by Zmicier Łukašuk and Maksim Harunoŭ have also been detained at the border. The same thing happens with the parcels of the symbal.by store.



The pressure on cultural venues has been ongoing for more than a month, many have been closed down. Among them are **the art pub Torvald** in Viciebsk and **cultural hub OK16** in Minsk. **Ok16** was sponsored by Belgazprombank and **Maryja Kalesnikava** was its director before the start of the election campaign 2020.



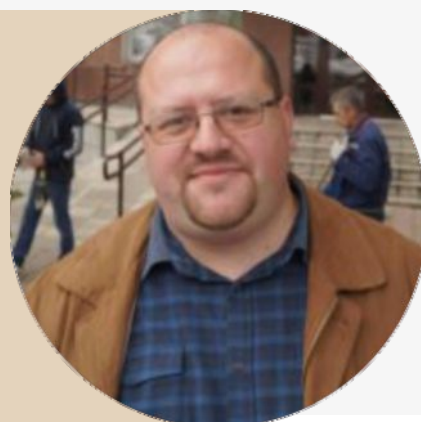
The hub gave home to a lot of contemporary art projects, and its closing is part of the attack on independent Belarusian culture.



Due to the closure of OK16 space, which has long given life to many important projects, the performances of **the independent theater TOK** have been canceled.



Alaksiej Baciukoŭ, director of the Mahiloŭ History Museum, **has his contract not extended**. Earlier, he and six museum workers signed an open letter condemning the brutality of law enforcement officers. Among their requirements was Lukašenka's resignation.



СОВРЕМЕННЫЙ
ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННЫЙ
ТЕАТР

The independent Contemporary Art Theater (SHT)

had to suspend its activities because they have been deprived of the opportunity to perform in Belarus.



Repressions for white-red-white flags and other symbols continue. For the past two weeks, such cases have been reported throughout Belarus: in Rečyca, Minsk, Viciebsk, Homel, Navapolack..



3. CULTURAL RESISTANCE



[See the link for new music of Belarusian protest for the first week of the new year.](#)

The fashion of the Belarusian revolution: how **Belarusian designers** conveyed the spirit of the time in clothes and accessories last year.



An online broadcast of a **Batlejka play** (Batlejka was one of the first folk forms of puppet theatre, very popular around Christmas) took place on January 9.



The fourth episode of the already **regular interactive youtube show Worthy Yard (Hodny Dvor)**.

The Christmas online concert of the legendary **Volny Chor (Free Choir)**, whose songs have been heard in different parts of the country in recent months, **took place on January 10**. The choir performed with the orchestra for the first time.





Anna Stakanova

Artists continue reflecting the Belarusian protest reality in their works.



tasha_drugakova

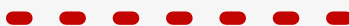


Musicians perform and local Christmas-themed events are organized in neighbourhoods, despite the weather and danger of detentions, and people across Belarus have been joining Jerusalema dance challenge, dancing in their national white-red-white colors.

4. INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY



The Kyiv Drama and Comedy Theater presented a reading of testimonies of Belarusians who became victims of violence by security forces after the election.



Musicians in support of Belarus:

*Album
of the Russian band
Arkady Kots*



*The song "That day when"
from the Russian band
Mummy Troll*



Belarus Free Theater won the International Award at The Stage Awards 2021 for its artistic excellence and continued political activism that extends beyond theatre walls, keeping the eyes of the world on Belarus.



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