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Artists Stage Dramatic Protest at Louvre Near Close of Paris Climate Summit

Ben Davis, Wednesday, December 9, 2015

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Activists protest in front of the Louvre in Paris during the Paris Climate Summit, calling on the museum to drop sponsors Eni and Total.
Image: Courtesy: Emma Cassidy | Survival Media Agency.

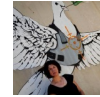
As the [Paris Climate Summit](#) draws towards a close, and with our collective futures hanging in the balance, an international coalition of artists and activists stepped things up today with twin actions, both inside and outside the Musée du Louvre. The goal of the protest: to demand that the world's most popular museum sever ties with French petroleum giants Total and Eni.

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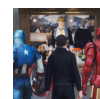
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Protesters at the Louvre.
Image: Emma Cassidy | Survival Media Agency.

Beginning at noon today, hundreds of activists defied a ban on protest by surrounding the famed I.M. Pei-designed glass pyramid outside the museum. The event saw demonstrators dress in black and brandish umbrellas that spelled out the words "Fossil Free Culture." Others, dressed as angels bearing signs that read "Climate Justice: No Excuses," also joined the event.



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Meanwhile, a small group threw molasses on the floor inside the museum, tracking it around the atrium to indicate that oil company money was besmirching the reputation of the internationally-acclaimed institution.

Ten activists were arrested, with two of them posting a YouTube video from inside jail detailing their motives.

From inside Paris jail - fossil free culture





The coalition of groups involved included Art Not Oil and Liberate Tate from the UK, which have worked to end [oil company sponsorship of the Tate](#), as well as Occupy Museums and the [Gulf Ultra Luxury Faction](#), which have been engaged in highly publicized direct actions against the Guggenheim's museum deal with Abu Dhabi.

In a press release, Beka Economopoulos of the radical Brooklyn collective [Not An Alternative](#) (featured in the Brooklyn Museum's "Agitprop!" show) stated the following:

It used to be acceptable for tobacco companies to sponsor cultural institutions. That's no longer the case. We believe it's a matter of time before the same is true of fossil fuel companies. When oil companies sponsor the Louvre, the Louvre likewise sponsors those companies—the museum gives these companies cultural capital and their 'social license to operate'. On the occasion of the UN Climate Summit in Paris, we're urging the Louvre to stop sponsoring climate chaos.

Most significantly of all, the Louvre action was framed as part of the growing movement of fossil fuel divestment. So expect more actions in the future under the banner of #FossilFreeCulture.

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