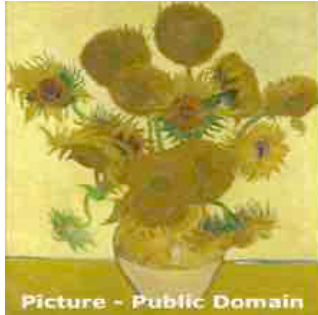


## Activists jailed for soup attack on Van Gogh painting

30th September 2024



Two climate activists have been jailed in the U.K. for dousing Vincent van Gogh's Sunflowers painting with soup. The pair of protestors are from Just Stop Oil (JSO), an environmental group focused on highlighting the issue of climate change caused by fossil fuels. One of the activists received a sentence of two years in prison. The other will serve 20 months. In October 2022, the protestors threw two cans of tomato soup over Van Gogh's priceless 1888 painting at London's National Gallery. They then knelt beneath the iconic work of art and glued their hands to the wall. The soup did not harm the painting, but it did over \$13,000 of damage to the picture frame.

Presiding judge Christopher Hehir called the Van Gogh painting a "cultural treasure" that could have been "seriously damaged or even destroyed" in the attack. The judge told the activists: "You couldn't have cared less if the painting was damaged or not. You had no right to do what you did to Sunflowers. You clearly think your beliefs give you the right to commit crimes when you feel like it. You do not." He added: "Soup might have seeped through the glass." In their defence, the protestors said that prior to throwing the soup, they checked to see if the painting was protected by the glass. Museum staff worried the soup could have dripped through the protective glass.

Sources: [bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com) / [newsweek.com](https://www.newsweek.com) / [cnn.com](https://www.cnn.com)

### Writing

We should end the use of fossil fuels before the end of the decade. Discuss.

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

climate / activists / Van Gogh / sunflowers / paintings / climate change / tomato soup / judge / cultural / treasure / crimes / beliefs / rights / glass / defence / museum

### True / False

- 1) Ten activists have been jailed for attaching a Vincent van Gogh painting. T / F
- 2) The jailed activists are part of the Just Stop Fossil Fuels group. T / F
- 3) The longest sentence given by the judge is two years. T / F
- 4) The attack caused \$13,000 of damage to the painting's frame. T / F
- 5) The court judge said Sunflowers was a cultural treasure. T / F
- 6) The judge accused the activists of not caring more about the painting. T / F
- 7) The judge said soup seeped through the protective glass. T / F
- 8) Museum staff were confident the soup would not get onto the painting. T / F

### Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                       |                |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| 1. <b>activists</b>   | a. tarnish     |
| 2. <b>jailed</b>      | b. before      |
| 3. <b>sentence</b>    | c. imprisoned  |
| 4. <b>glued</b>       | d. shielding   |
| 5. <b>harm</b>        | e. affixed     |
| 6. <b>treasure</b>    | f. support     |
| 7. <b>seeped</b>      | g. campaigners |
| 8. <b>defence</b>     | h. leaked      |
| 9. <b>prior to</b>    | i. prison term |
| 10. <b>protective</b> | j. work of art |

### Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think of tomato soup?
- b) What do you think of climate activism?
- c) What would you protest about?
- d) What's the purpose of attacking a famous painting?
- e) What do you think about the prison sentences for the protestors?
- f) What's your opinion of fossil fuels?
- g) Who are your favourite artists, and why?
- h) What do you think of gluing your hands to things as a form of protest?

## Phrase Match

- |                                    |                           |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Two climate activists have been | a. less                   |
| 2. The pair of protestors are from | b. caused by fossil fuels |
| 3. climate change                  | c. throwing the soup      |
| 4. a sentence                      | d. treasure               |
| 5. the iconic                      | e. what you did           |
| 6. a cultural                      | f. of two years in prison |
| 7. You couldn't have cared         | g. jailed in the U.K.     |
| 8. You had no right to do          | h. crimes                 |
| 9. commit                          | i. Just Stop Oil          |
| 10. prior to                       | j. work of art            |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What do you think of Van Gogh's Sunflowers?
- What do you think when cultural treasures are attacked?
- How important is art?
- How important is the right to protest?
- What kinds of protests are good and bad?
- What's your favourite soup?
- What questions would you like to ask the protestors?

## Spelling

- Two climate vtaciitss
- diunosg Vincent van Gogh's Sunflowers painting
- The pair of rpttseoosr
- caused by lsoisf fuels
- They then ketnl
- beneath the cnoiic work of art
- neirsigdp judge
- a cultural seaurtre
- the right to momcit crimes
- Soup might have epdsee through the glass
- staff worried the soup could have rdeipdp
- through the etceptitovr glass

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. c	3. i	4. e	5. a
6. j	7. h	8. f	9. b	10. d

## Role Play

### Role A – Climate Change

You think climate change is the most important thing to protest about. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): the price of food, human rights or government corruption.

### Role B – Food Prices

You think the price of food is the most important thing to protest about. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): climate change, human rights or government corruption.

### Role C – Human Rights

You think human rights is the most important thing to protest about. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): the price of food, climate change or government corruption.

### Role D – Government Corruption

You think government corruption is the most important thing to protest about. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): the price of food, human rights or climate change.

## Speaking – Protests

Rank these with your partner. Put things you would protest about at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |                  |                         |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| • Climate change | • Equality              |
| • Food prices    | • Human rights          |
| • Taxes          | • Immigration           |
| • War            | • Government corruption |

### Answers – True False

1	F	2	F	3	T	4	T	5	T	6	F	7	F	8	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.