

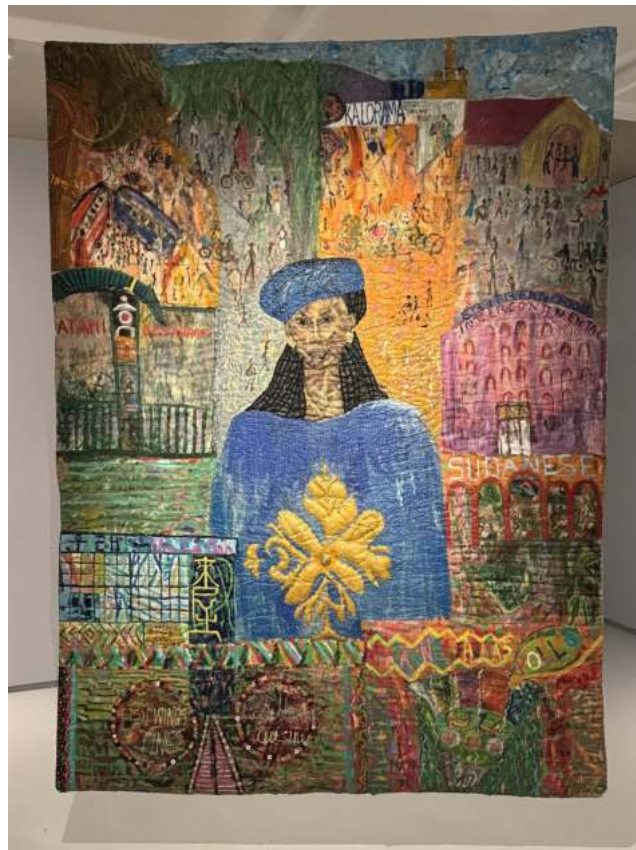
News

More Artists Withdraw From Barbican Show in Solidarity With Palestine

The London institution is facing scrutiny after deciding not to host Pankaj Mishra's lecture "The Shoah after Gaza."



Maya Pontone March 12, 2024



Pacita Abad, "From Doro Wat to Sushi and Chicken Wings and Tings" (1991), acrylic, oil, painted canvas, plastic buttons, beads on stitched and padded canvas, 94 3/10 inches x 69 7/10 inches (all images by Censorship At Barbican, courtesy Lorenzo Legarda Leviste)

Nine artworks have been removed from an exhibition at London's Barbican Centre in response to the institution's decision not to host a lecture addressing Israel's attacks on Palestine. A large-scale trapunto painting by Pacita Abad is the latest artwork to be requested withdrawn from *Unravel: The Power and Politics of Textiles in Art*, on view at the Barbican through May 26.

The removal of Abad's work comes after collectors Lorenzo Legarda Leviste and Fahad Mayet **pulled two quilts by Loretta Pettway** that they had loaned to the gallery in late February. The pair was joined by artists Yto Barrada, Cian Dayrit, Diedrick Brackens, and Mounira Al Solh, who also decided to withdraw. Yesterday, the cultural

organization Art Jameel rescinded its loan of Abad's piece, "**From Doro Wat to sushi and chicken wings and tings**" (1991).

"Our understanding of the role of arts institutions includes foregrounding considered, informed debate and raising awareness of situations such as the genocide taking place in Gaza, Palestine," Art Jameel's Director Antonia Carver told *Hyperallergic*.

So far, the works by Pettway, Barrada, Dayrit, and Brackens have been taken down and replaced with signage explaining their removal. The Barbican plans to deinstall Abad's and Al Solh's works later this week.



Cian Dayrit, "Valley of Dispossession" (2021) and "Yuta Nagi Panaad (Promised Land)" (2018) on view in *Unravel* at the Barbican Centre, prior to their deinstallation at the request of the artist

In response to the artists' withdrawals, the Barbican's Chief Executive Officer Claire Spencer told *Hyperallergic* that the institution is "thoroughly reviewing the circumstances in which the [LRB lecture series] decision was taken" and acknowledged that the center should have allotted "sufficient time for planning and preparation."

The slew of retractions from *Unravel* was prompted by the Barbican's decision not to host the London Review of Books's lecture series over its inclusion of writer Pankaj Mishra's talk "The Shoah after Gaza," which **argues that** the Israeli government has weaponized the Holocaust to legitimize its current attacks on Gaza. After initially claiming that the venue was unable to "**properly consider**" how to present Mishra's lecture, the Barbican issued

another **public statement** last week expressing that it was “not able to get the necessary logistical arrangements in place.” Mishra’s talk was ultimately **held at St. James’s Church** on February 28.

“The Barbican’s language to defend its censorship is changing before our eyes,” Leviste told *Hyperallergic*. “We would like to know: What ‘logistical arrangements’ and ‘planning and preparation’ was a church capable of providing that the Barbican was not?”



Left: Mounira Al Solh's "Paper Speakers" (2020/2021) prior to its deinstallation; right: Diedrick Brackens's "fire makes some dragons" (2020) prior to its deinstallation



Yto Barrada's "Untitled (cosmos yellow)" (2021) and "Untitled (indigo grey)" (2021) before they were removed from *Unravel*