



Kunstverein München e.V.

Galeriestr. 4

(Am Hofgarten)

80539 München

The team of Kunstverein München is committed to make the conversations and comments that have so far taken place in direct conversations (via email, telephone, Instagram Direct Messages) comprehensible.

For a detailed description the course of events is summarized below:

It is with deep shock that we have followed the events and violence in the Middle East since the inhumane massacre by Hamas on October 7, 2023. We unreservedly condemn this brutal attack by Hamas terrorists on Jews and Israelis in the strongest terms. Our thoughts and solidarity are with the victims and their families.

On Friday, September 8, 2023, we opened the solo exhibition of Palestinian artist Noor Abuarafeh at Kunstverein München. The exhibition had been planned since March 2023. The exhibition shows five video works from the last ten years of Abuarafeh's artistic practice, including *Am I the Ageless Object at the Museum?* (2018), which had been shown already in the German context in 2020 as part of the 11th Berlin Biennale, and in the international context at the Venice Biennale in 2022.

The works presented address the construction of memory and the politics of archiving. Her works are primarily based on immaterial references and oral traditions. Many of the references used in her videos come from private family archives. By referring to such private sources, the artist reflects on the writing of history. None of the video works shown question Israel's right to exist or sympathize with the terrorist organization Hamas.

In connection with the political and humanitarian escalation, Abuarafeh has been sharing various posts by others via the Story function of her private Instagram account for about two weeks. At the time of the exhibition opening, the artist did not have an active account. Among the Stories shared was a post from the Interim Revolutionary Feminist Committee (IRFC), Southern California Chapter on the morning of October 11, 2023. Abuarafeh's sharing of the specific IRFC post came to our attention after being linked in the Story of a third person who had taken a screenshot of it later that same day.

IRFC's shared post refers to a longer statement published on their website on October 10, 2023, the headline of which and also the headline of IRFC's Instagram post reads, "Tear feminism out of the hands of the colonizer: Our statement debunking the claims of mass rape used to siphon off support from the Palestinian resistance." The IRFC statement refers to Hamas terrorists as "Palestinian freedom fighters." It also contains passages questioning Hamas violence, and in particular the rape of women. Hamas atrocities, which include the rape and murder of Israeli women in the October 7, 2023 attacks, have been confirmed by international media.

**We explicitly and comprehensively distance ourselves from the post shared by Abuarafeh via her Instagram story and the IRFC's statement.**

Also, since October 12, 2023, we have received a number of calls to close the exhibition, both via Stories and direct messages to the Kunstverein's official Instagram account – always in combination with the screenshot of Abuarafeh's Story with the IRFC post.

After the story became public and the subsequent calls to close the exhibition, we immediately called a meeting with the entire team as well as the board of the institution, which took place on Monday, October 16, 2023, at 7pm.

We publicly issued a statement on our website at 5:30pm CET on October 17, 2023. This statement can still be viewed (see below).

We decided not to close the exhibition at the time of our statement, because as an art institution we do not consider a closure to be an appropriate response for this conflict and we consider a differentiated dialogue with critical and political issues to be central.

As an institution, we strongly condemn any anti-Semitism—especially against the backdrop of our own history during National Socialism—and have placed a focus on the historical examination and contextualization of the Kunstverein München Nazi history since the new team took office in 2019.

(October 26, 2023, 1:15pm CET)

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At the beginning of September, we opened the exhibition of the Palestinian artist Noor Abuarafeh. The exhibition deals with questions of memory and the politics of archiving.

In connection with the escalation in the Middle East, Abuarafeh shared posts of others via Instagram Stories in recent days, some of which do not demarcate themselves from the violence of Hamas. We explicitly distance ourselves from this.

Based on this, in recent days we have received several calls via social media to close the exhibition. We have decided not to do so.

We are shocked by the events and escalating violence in the Middle East and strongly condemn the brutal attack by Hamas terrorists. We also strongly condemn any anti-Semitism, especially in light of our own institutional history. Our thoughts and solidarity are with the victims and their families.

It seems important to us to emphasize that Palestinians in Gaza should not be held collectively responsible for the inhumane massacre by Hamas. Consequently, our thoughts and solidarity are also with their victims and relatives.

(October 17, 2023, 5:30pm CET)