

Hundreds of Artists, Demonstrators Take the Steps of the Met for Palestine with Giant Artwork — Exposing Art Institutions' Complicity in Israel's Genocide

Participants gathered around an enormous 30-by-50-foot quilt made of paintings by 68 artists around the world for Palestinian Liberation.

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Photo credit: Alexa B. Wilkinson @Alexabwilkinson
[Photos and Videos](#)

New York, NY — March 24, 2024 — Hundreds of pro-Palestine and anti-Zionist protesters danced, chanted and played instruments on the steps of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, disrupting business as usual at an institution whose board members and endowments are heavily invested in the war on Gaza and directly profit from the occupation of Palestine. Participants, including artists and cultural workers, claimed the space to make several clear demands: that the publicly funded museum (1) cut ties with board members who profit from the ongoing Israeli bombardment and settler-colonial occupation of Palestine, (2) support an immediate and permanent cease-fire in Gaza and (3) aid in the preservation of Palestinian

cultural heritage sites being destroyed and desecrated by Israel. Their action was organized to draw attention to the more than 30,000 Palestinian martyrs, hundreds of thousands injured, 8,000 Palestinian prisoners and the erasure of entire communities, cultures and material histories — the very cultural heritage the Met purports to preserve, with taxpayer money.

The action began with several concurrent events, including protestors unfurling a 30-by-50-foot quilt on the Met's steps, a dabke-inspired performance, chants to arab rhythms and the distribution of fliers that detail the institution's Zionist ties and war profiteering. The quilt, a collection of painted squares contributed by 68 artists based across the world, were shipped to New York City and debuted in a reclamation of the city's largest art museum. Each 40-by-40-inch square was rendered in the colors of the Palestinian flag and represents artists' responses to the prompt "From oppression to liberation, free Palestine." For more information about the quilt and the contributing artists see the [Hope in the Art World](#) website. Squares include imagery referencing the late Palestinian poet Refaat Alareer, tatreez (traditional Palestinian embroidery), poppies and the Jenin Horse (a landmark Palestinian sculpture recently stolen by the IOF), among other emblems of resistance and freedom. Artists who collaborated on this project modeled the quilt after the [NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt](#), recognizing commonalities in their grassroots creation processes, handmade nature and intention of sharing messages of protection, warmth, grief and resistance.

Participants called for cultural institutions to commit to the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions ([BDS](#)) movement's demands, the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel ([PACBI](#)), as well as cut ties with Zionist funders, organizations, programs and other partnerships.

In observance of Ramadan, the demonstration included a break for prayer, provisions distributed for Iftar and an invitation for all participants to fast in solidarity with Muslims globally, notably those observing Ramadan amid violence and ethnic cleansing in Palestine, Sudan and Myanmar.

The action follows the March 11 delivery of an [open letter](#) signed by more than 160 staff members, fellows and volunteers of the Met to Max Hollein, the institution's director and chief executive officer. The letter calls for the museum to publicly call for a cease-fire, take steps to better attribute and showcase its collection of Palestinian artworks and protect the voices of staff who speak out against the genocide and the destruction of Palestinian cultural heritage.

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