

From: Sandy Dijkstra <sandy@dijkstraagency.com>

Sent: Tuesday, January 16, 2024 3:06 PM

To: davabren@indiana.edu <davabren@indiana.edu>

Cc: McComas, Jennifer <jmccomas@indiana.edu>; pwhitten@iu.edu <pwhitten@iu.edu>; Elise Capron <elise@dijkstraagency.com>

Subject: Samia Halaby

Dear David Brenneman,

According to the *New York Times* (1/13/24), the Eskenazi Museum at Indiana University has just cancelled an exhibition by the artist Samia Halaby, an outspoken defender of an unpopular position on the Israel-Hamas war. As potential patrons of the Museum, we hereby notify you that we are deeply disturbed by the decision of the Museum and the University to cancel a long-scheduled exhibition by Ms. Halaby, which you described only a few months ago as "dynamic and innovative".

This, after the University suspended a tenured professor for expressing a similar unpopular opinion.

Not long ago, your chief curator, Jennifer McComas, wrote us to ask that we lend our painting "De Profundis" by the artist William Gropper (enclosed) to her forthcoming exhibition "The Holocaust and American Art", and, of course, we agreed.

Now, in light of your censoring of the work of an "outspoken" living artist, we are asking ourselves how Gropper, a Jewish artist deeply committed to free speech and social justice, would have wanted us to react to this blatant instance of censorship, and its implied demand for intellectual conformity.

Our first instinct was to withdraw our approval of the loan, given the University's arrogant denial of the voice of one of the few Palestinian artists in our midst, at a time when dissenting voices are more urgent than ever.

However, we realized that, by doing so, we would be joining the advocates of censorship, who are currently working to diminish our ability to make informed choices.

Indeed, William Gropper abhorred nothing more than the self-righteous hypocrisy of those whose feigned outrage at others' non-conformity to a specific set of values is designed to maintain the power of one group over all others.

McCarthyism attempted to muzzle Gropper in 1953. He responded by speaking out more loudly, and by satirizing those he identified as holier-than-thou "patrioteers" whose arrogant demands for uniformity were designed to silence all "dangerous" dissent.

To us, it is very clear that this true Jewish-American patriot would have included the thousands of those dying or suffering starvation in Gaza today amongst those for whom the heart-rending wail of the Rabbi he portrayed in "De Profundis" was a small, but profound, commemoration.

Sincerely,

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WILLIAM GROPPER
"De Profundis"
1942, oil on canvas, 30 x 20 inches

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