

U.S. artist declines award over Germany's censorship of pro-Palestine voices



Berlin, February 8 (RHC)-- American artist and curator Fared Armaly has turned down an award by the Academy of Arts in Berlin in protest at the German government's "censorship" of pro-Palestinian voices.

In a statement released in Berlin, the academy acknowledged "with respect and deep regret" Armaly's declining of the annual Käthe Kollwitz Prize. Meanwhile, the artist, who has Arab roots and lives in Berlin, said the institution did not explain in its statement his reasons for rejecting the award, whose winners are usually selected a year earlier.

Thus, Armaly published on his website the letter he sent to the academy in August 2024, after he was notified that he had won the prize for 2025.

In his letter, the artist criticized a “disturbing trend of censorship in Germany” and “intolerable interference” meant to silence pro-Palestinian voices. “For several years now, there has been a highly politicized, reactionary shift in official cultural policies, aimed at silencing advocates for Palestinian rights under international law,” he added.

“In such a context of intimidation, liberal cultural institutions appear to adopt complacency and self-censorship. All this, consciously or unconsciously, structurally performs the ongoing dehumanization of Palestinians by obscuring and abstracting their agency and voice.”

The artist also noted that he is "unable to align himself with any institution operating under the current cultural policy framework of the German government."

The Käthe Kollwitz Prize, endowed with ?12,000 (\$12,400), has been awarded to visual artists each year since its inception in 1960.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz says his country will continue to provide Israel with weapons, despite opposing calls that demand a halt of arms sales to the occupying regime amid its genocidal war on Gaza. Germany is among Israel's main weapons suppliers, with its arms exports to the occupying regime rising nearly tenfold annually in 2023, the year when Tel Aviv unleashed its bloody war on the Gaza Strip.

With the arms transfer, Germany has become not only complicit but an active participant in Israel's 15-month-long genocide against Palestinians in Gaza.

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