



June 10, 2022

Dear Members of the San Francisco Public Library Board and Staff,

We are writing on behalf of SF Urban Film Fest to express our disappointment in the San Francisco Public Library's choice in pulling Clarion Alley Mural Project's *Wall + Response* exhibit, and concern over the censorship of the Arab Resource & Organizing Center's Arab Liberation and Art Forces Mural. As we are committed to creating just and equitable cities for everyone, we feel it is necessary to recognize and respect our Arab community members. In a time where we've seen increased violence on our Arab and Muslim communities right here in the Bay Area, and an escalation of violence in Palestine, we feel that it is our duty to address the role we play in the US in exacerbating this harm.

Art has the potential to challenge dominant narratives and create openings for generative conversations. Censoring a mural that amplifies calls for racial and economic justice only contributes to the daily harm BIPOC communities face as a result of structural racism. This is not only harmful, but it is also potentially dangerous; especially at this point in history when there are large factions of the United States banning books that speak to the importance and value of critical thinking and the lived experiences of communities which have and continue to experience racism and oppression.

The San Francisco Public Library (SFPL) plays an important role in uplifting marginalized communities within the Bay Area by giving voice to those most impacted. However, we see that Palestine is exceptionalized and othered, yet again. The SFPL must be consistent in its approach to centering vulnerable communities, especially those that are under heightened attacks.

We join the many storytellers, artists, poets, and community organizations in asking you to reconsider the decision to censor the *Wall + Response* exhibition, which has grave implications for communities throughout the San Francisco Bay Area and beyond.

Signed,

*Fay Darmawi*

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Founder and Executive Director, SF Urban Film Fest