FREE PALESTINE

FLOOD BROOKLYN FOR GAZA
DECEMBER 09
1PM AT BROOKLYN MUSEUM
1. Brooklyn Museum - 200 Eastern Parkway
2. BNY Mellon - 2 Hason Palce
3. Chuck Schumer’s House - 9 Prospect Park West
4. Brooklyn Borough Hall - 209 Joralemon St.
5. Barclays Center - 620 Atlantic Avenue
7. Manhattan Bridge
8. Brooklyn Bridge
9. JPMorgan Case - 4 Chase Metrotech Center
10. Morgan Stanley - 1 Pierrepont St.
+ everywhere you see:
   Starbucks, McDonald’s, Burger King, Puma ++

BROOKLYN MUSEUM: NO SILENCE ON GENOCIDE
It shall pass, I keep hoping. It shall pass, I keep saying. Sometimes I mean it. Sometimes I don’t. And as Gaza keeps gasping for air, we struggle for it to pass, we have no choice but to fight back and to tell her stories. For Palestine.”

- Refaat Alareer, a poet and scholar killed by Israel on December 7, 2023

1. The Museum Remains Silent: The Brooklyn Museum remains silent about the ongoing genocide of the Palestinian people. This is no surprise, because the museum is a nexus of Zionism, empire, and settler-colonization. The museum bears direct connections to the institutional, state, and philanthropy networks materially supporting Israel. We are here to highlight these ties, and to call for their severance. Severing the support-networks of Zionism running through cultural institutions advances our overall movement for anti-colonial liberation. In the process, it allows us to imagine and practice a different kind of cultural formation aligned with freedom and justice rather than the ruinous course of late imperialism and its apartheid-state proxy.

2. The Workers Have Spoken: On November 12, Brooklyn Museum workers and their supporters issued a statement that begins “We are writing in our capacity as workers at the Brooklyn Museum to unequivocally recognize Israel’s ongoing actions in Gaza as genocide of the Palestinian people; to stand with Palestinians as they resist violent colonial occupation and apartheid; and to call on our colleagues in the cultural field, as well as our Brooklyn Museum community, to join this movement.” They continue that “We refuse to make this issue more complicated than it is: the unrelenting killings of Palestinian must stop with a ceasefire and the occupation of Palestinian land must end. As Museum workers, we know the powerful role that institutions play in uplifting impassable cultural voices. We also recognize the dissonance between the way that cultural institutions amplify and historicize just movements of the past while often failing to fully engage with those in the present. American institutions’ silence on this matter contributes to the erasure of this genocide from the historical record; with this letter, we aim to correct that by making it clear: at this crucial moment, we will not become complicit by remaining silent.”

3. Interconnected/Ongoing Struggles: The museum has been a site of intensive mobilization over the past decade, beginning with a two-pronged action against the Zionist photography exhibition This Place and the museum’s entwinement with the real-estate industry. The museum also owns the largest collection of African art in the United States, for example, yet the Museum refuses to make and take concrete steps towards Black liberation, which is inextricably tied to anti-colonial struggles here, there, and everywhere. Our interconnected struggles have shown the world that the museum holds stolen culture and stands on stolen land, operating as a tool of racialized gentrification and displacement. Calls by community groups for their resignation have been ignored. Zionism endorses Israel’s war andéra "the right of self-determination," which claims that "We are committed to addressing exclusions and erasures of Indigenous peoples, and confronting the ongoing legacies of settler colonialism in the Museum’s work." What does the museum have to say about the people of Palestine, and the outpouring of Palestinian Solidarity by Indigenous movements in Turtle Island?

4. Weaponizing the Charge of Anti-Semitism: The museum has remained silent about the genocide, but a recent incident forced it to implicitly clarify its position on pro-Palestinian voices. On November 22, a Zionist museum attendee claimed to media outlets to have felt threatened by pamphlets displayed at the museum as part of the Printed Matter Zine Fair. The New York Times noted: “The “Zionist support networks in the cultural field amplifies the courage of all those speaking out in the face of repression, direct and indirect, at museums, universities, and other institutions.

Zionist support networks are woven throughout the upper echelons of the Brooklyn Museum, overlapping with and reinforcing support for the other facets of the museum’s settler-colonial and anti-Palestinian agitation toward people, land, and the planet.

Anne Pasternak, Shelby White and Leon Levy Director. A long-time opponent of the Boycott Divest Sanction (BDS) movement since her days at Creative Time, Pasternak holds a directorship named after Shelby White and her deceased husband; Leon Levy, who passed away in 2013. The Leon Levy Program for Archaeological Publications supports research on archaeological fieldwork led by the Israel Antiquities Authority, centered on the narrative of ‘biblical Israel’ which fuels the toxic right-wing nationalisms of the US and Israel.

Overlapping Corporate Donors:

After October 7, major U.S. corporations gave millions of dollars directly to the state of Israel or to pro-Israeli groups, on top of the myriad investments many of them have across all sectors of the settler-colonial military-industrial complex.

American Express - $1.5 million in pro-Israel donations
Bank of New York Mellon - major investor in Elbit, the weapons manufacturer
Bank of America - $1 million commitment to Israel
Barclays - $1 million donation
Chanel - $4 million to Israeli organizations
Bloomberg - $25 million to Israeli organizations
JPMorgan Chase - $1 million

It is clear from the composition of its board, and the corporate group that directly support it, that the Brooklyn Museum is part of the industrial/military/cultural complex that funds settler-colonialism for the genocide in Gaza. This link between art, gentrification and technologies of mass killing must be broken.

Museums only care about colonized peoples after the genocide, the stealing of land and the looting of culture takes place. They turn freedom into a commodified reality from the past without any roots in the living struggle. They want the art, not the people. We refuse to wait around for the Brooklyn Museum’s “Palestine. From the Rubble” exhibition. We refuse to normalize museums or any other institution which benefits and profits from colonization, imperialism, and war. We refuse to support the Brooklyn Museum’s silence around Palestine and other anti-colonial struggles. Today, we meet at the Brooklyn Museum to stand in these refusals and to unite with our comrades from our unconditional solidarity with the Palestinian revolution, which resonates universally across the world and throughout the settler-colony of the so-called United States.