

Statement on the dismissal of Alistair Hudson

L'Internationale Confederation

27 Feb 2022



L'Internationale European museum confederation calls on the University of Manchester to reverse its decision to dismiss Alistair Hudson, a long time collaborator of the confederation, as director of the Whitworth and Manchester Art Galleries. We believe it is profoundly wrong for the University of Manchester to implement the policy of the lobby group UK Lawyers for Israel, following their objections to the statement of support that was part of Forensic's Architecture 'Cloud Studies' exhibition. Not only does the University's decision serve to silence critical debate regarding the Palestinian occupation, it sets a dangerous precedent for the influence of special interest groups over publicly funded cultural institutions. We believe that the space for art to bring forth urgent discussion, without fear or favour, is vital to the functioning of democracy and its institutions. The removal of Alistair Hudson is an attack on art's ability to place pressing questions in the public domain and serves to stifle discussion, embolden forms of censorship and diminish debate.

At the same time, the decision of Manchester University deprives Manchester, the UK and the cultural field at large of one of the most reforming museum directors in the field. Alistair Hudson's policies concerning in the role art can play in bringing about social change, how institutions are places driven by the needs and desires of their publics and his implementation of non-hierarchical forms of museum management is an exemplary case of museological experimentation, exceptional in the UK context and recognised internationally. The decision to remove him is a fundamental failure to meet the responsibility of European universities and cultural institutions to defend an open, discursive space where art and ideas should be

deeply respected.

Signed,

L'Internationale Museum Confederation

Zdenka Badovinac, Director, Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb

Bart de Baere, Director, Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerp

Manuel Borja Vilel, Director, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid

Fatma Çolakoglu, Director of Programmes and Research, SALT Istanbul

Elvira Dyangani Ose, Director, MACBA, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona

Charles Esche, Director, Van Abbemuseum Eindhoven

Joanna Mytkowska, Director, Museum of Modern Art Warsaw

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