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## German City Withdraws Art Prize for Walid Raad Over Artist's Alleged Support of BDS Movement

BY ALEX GREENBERGER

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Walid Raad (<https://www.artnews.com/t/walid-raad/>)'s 2015 survey at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

JUSTIN LANE/EPA/SHUTTERSTOCK

On Monday, the German city of Aachen said it had withdrawn a prestigious €10,000 (roughly \$10,900) prize that was previously given to artist Walid Raad. In a release, the city's mayor, Marcel Philipp, said that the cause for the withdrawal was the artist's alleged support of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement, which seeks to pressure the Israeli government into granting equality for Palestinian citizens.

In a statement, Philipp said, "According to research, we have to assume that the designated prizewinner is a supporter of the BDS movement and has been involved in various measures for the cultural boycott of Israel." The release announcing the city's

decision to withdraw the prize said that Raad's answer to a query by Philipp about his position on BDS was "evasive."

BDS has been a controversial movement, particularly in Germany, where its actions have been met with hostility from some. In 2017, the German parliament **passed a resolution** (<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/17/world/europe/germany-bds-anti-semitic.html>) that officially labeled BDS "anti-Semitic." The Palestinian BDS National Committee, in response, said that it "rejects anti-Semitism" and called the resolution "unconstitutional." Earlier this year, the director of the Jewish Museum in Berlin **resigned** (<https://hyperallergic.com/505426/jewish-museum-resign/>) after tweeting an article that defended BDS.

*ARTnews* has reached out to Paula Cooper Gallery, Raad's New York representative, for request for comment.

Raad has not publicly stated his support for BDS, though in 2014, he signed a prominent open letter that had been organized by an art-related offshoot of the movement. That year, the organization Creative Time traveled its exhibition "Living as Form" to the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology in Haifa, and the BDS Art Coalition claimed in that letter that the institution played a "central role in maintaining the unjust and illegal occupation of Palestine." The BDS Art Coalition called on artists in the show to withdraw, and more than 100 artists, critics, and activists signed. One of them was Raad.

The Aachen Art Prize, which also comes with an exhibition at the Ludwig Forum for International Art museum in the city, is given to one artist every other year. Previous winners of the award include On Kawara, Pavel Althamer, Michael Asher, Tacita Dean, and Christian Boltanski. Raad, whose work deals with notions of fact and fiction as they relate to conflict in the Arab world, was to be its 2018 winner.

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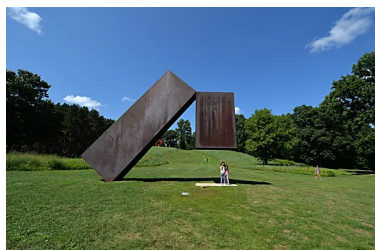


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