

Venerations: Petition

To the board of trustees and leadership of ArtCenter College of Design:

You are aware of Israel's ongoing genocide against the Palestinian people— started by, but not limited to, its invasion of the Gaza Strip on 7 October, 2023— yet you have remained silent. We are deeply disappointed. From the invasion of the Gaza Strip (10/07/2023) to the publication of this document (06/17/2024), 255 days have passed, during which the Palestinian people have endured systemic eradication efforts with the end goal of erasing their existence. Through suffering and death, the ArtCenter College of Design (ACCD) has remained quiet, witnessing the starvation, rape, and murder of Palestinians without so much as releasing a statement denouncing the state of Israel and its benefactors, like the United States government.

Israel's acts of violence against the Palestinian people need not be restated as anyone can investigate them easily. However, in order to persuade action and dissuade callousness, I will summarize some of what the Palestinians have had to endure:

35,647+ dead as of 24 May, 2024
14.71x the ACCD student population
15,162+ children dead as of 24 May, 2024
6.23x the ACCD student population
10,000+ missing as of 24 May, 2024
4.13x the ACCD student population
79,852+ wounded as of 24 May, 2024
32.96x the ACCD student population
1.9 million displaced in Gaza as of 24 May, 2024¹
784.15x the ACCD student population
700,000 menstruating adults and adolescents have limited access to hygiene supplies as of 11 January, 2024²
284.78x the ACCD student population
800,000 people (nearly half the population) has had to flee Rafah since 6 May 2024 as of 18 May, 2024³
330.17x the ACCD student population
24 of Gaza's 36 hospitals are inoperative as of 24 May, 2024⁴
All 12 Gaza's universities have been severely damaged or destroyed as of 6 May 2024⁵

¹ Altruisa. (2024, May 24). *The Latest Numbers*. Palestine Resource Guide.

<https://www.protectpalestine.org/latest-numbers>

² Batrawy, A., & Bashir, A.B. (2024, Jan. 11). Another layer of misery: Women in Gaza struggle to find menstrual pads, running water. National Public Radio.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2024/01/11/1224201620/another-layer-of-misery-women-in-gaza-struggle-to-find-menstrual-pads-running-water>

³ United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. (2024, May 18). *Once again, nearly half of the population of Rafah or 800,000 people are on the road, having been forced to flee since the Israeli Forces started the military operation in the area on 6 May*. United Nations.

<https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/once-again-nearly-half-population-rafah-or-800000-people-are-on-the-road>

⁴ International Rescue Committee. (2024, May 6). *The collapse of Gaza's health system*. International Rescue Committee. <https://www.rescue.org/article/collapse-gazas-health-system>

⁵ Stack, L., & Shbair, B. (2024, May 6). *With Schools in Ruins, Education in Gaza Will be Hobbled for Years*. New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/06/world/middleeast/gaza-schools-damaged-destroyed.html>

*For reference the ArtCenter College of Design currently enrolls 2,423 students.

These acts of violence and their catastrophic impact are unjust, inhuman, and evil. After forcefully inhabiting the historical land of the Palestinians, displacing 700,000 in the seizure of territory, the Israeli geopolitical state has produced immeasurable suffering in its settler colonialist agenda. As of now, 5.9 million Palestinians are registered refugees. These realities should be enough to persuade any higher education institution to take a stance. Demonstration of a political opinion, especially one rooted in justice and empathy, is vital to fostering the young minds that are to shape the world.

We, the undersigned, call on the ArtCenter College of Design to do what is right: join us in standing with Palestine, denouncing Israel's crimes against humanity and demanding the liberation of Gaza. We acknowledge too the culpability of the United States and its allies in supporting Israel via direct action or their own silence. From the river to the sea Palestine will be free!

We ask the college to do the following:

- I. Issue an official statement signed by all members of the Board of Trustees, Executive Cabinet, and the Provost's Cabinet that:
 - A. Acknowledges Israel's crimes as those of genocide against the Palestinian people.
 - B. Affirms Palestinians' rights to their land, to the land stolen by Israel, and to live with access to the liberties outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
 - C. Places culpability on the United States government and its allies in supporting Israel directly or with silence.
- II. Cut direct ties with Israeli institutions and their supporters by ending the exchange program, as well as any other relations, ArtCenter currently maintains with Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design.
- III. Make economic commitments to sever ties with associates/members of the military-intelligence industrial complex and the funders/investors of Israeli apartheid by:
 - A. Disclosing ArtCenter's complete investment portfolio.
 - B. Listing individual companies included in indexes, mutual funds, and ETFs.
 - C. Identifying the trustees on the investment committee.
 - D. Providing detailed descriptions of the decision-making process.
 - E. Economically divesting and disassociating its holds from companies, corporations, and partnerships that publicly or privately fund, invest in, and/or profit from the military, intelligence agencies, and police forces.
 - F. Economically divesting and disassociating its holds from companies, corporations, and partnerships that publicly or privately fund, invest in, and/or profit from Israel's ongoing military campaign, occupation, genocide, and apartheid politics.
 - G. Continue to do III.A-III.E each year for the foreseeable future and III.F until a serious plan to end Israeli occupation is fully implemented by the State of Israel.
- IV. Call on comparable art institutions to do the same, if those institutions haven't already.
- V. Provide a timeframe for all of the above actions (I-IV).

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As alumni of ACCD, I swear to not donate to ACCD until the above (1-5) are done.

We eagerly await your response.

Sincerely,