

June 16, 2021

Dear Department of Art Community,

We, the ladder faculty of the Department of Art, write this statement in solidarity with the Palestinian people as they continue to fight for basic human rights to life, land, freedom of movement, and cultural expression. We condemn the recent Israeli military attacks against Palestinians in the weeks leading up to the 73rd anniversary of the Nakba. We affirm the Palestinian struggle as a liberation movement confronting a settler-colonial state, and are outraged by the recent evictions of Palestinian families in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem. These violent evictions are part of a decades-long campaign of warfare, expulsion, unequal residency rights, and discriminatory planning policies that advance the ethnic cleansing of Jerusalem. While we commend the cessation of airstrikes that killed hundreds, injured thousands, and displaced over 40,000, we insist that the blockade on Gaza be lifted immediately. We grieve the devastating and ongoing loss of life. We reject a narrative that equates Israel, a heavily militarized state supported by \$3.8 billion in military aid from the U.S., with a Palestinian population living under Israeli occupation. We also reject a narrative that conflates all Palestinian people with Hamas.

We condemn anti-Semitism and the rise of anti-Semitic acts locally, nationally, and internationally. We reject the conflation of Jewish identity with Zionism and recognize that this conflation has contributed to anti-Semitism. The conflation of Zionism and Jewish identity discounts the perspective of many anti-Zionist Jewish people. The conflation of anti-Zionism and criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism also is used as a means of limiting free speech and silencing political debate in the media and within academia, including here at UCLA. At UCLA, the Students for Justice for Palestine have faced legal aggression from groups seeking to pursue terrorist charges against those who spoke at the group's conference.

Within this context, we feel compelled to state our position unequivocally. We call for an immediate end to the military occupation of the West Bank and to settler-colonial violence against all Palestinians.

Signed,

*Department of Art Ladder Faculty*