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Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art

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Press Release #9

Statement regarding the withdrawal of works by Layth Kareem, Raed Mutar, and Sajjad Abbas

Berlin, August 18, 2022

The artists Layth Kareem, Raed Mutar, and Sajjad Abbas informed the Berlin Biennale on August 16, 2022, that they would withdraw their participation in the 12th Berlin Biennale.

This was preceded by a public controversy following the publication in *Artforum* magazine of a letter written by Rijin Sahakian and co-signed by several artists. The response to the open letter written by the curator of the 12th Berlin Biennale, Kader Attia, together with the members of the artistic team, Đỗ Tường Linh, Marie Helene Pereira, Noam Segal, and Rasha Salti can also be found in *Artforum* below that letter. Rijin Sahakian, Layth Kareem, Raed Mutar, and Sajjad Abbas then laid out the reasons for withdrawing their works below the response. The Berlin Biennale had previously apologized to the artists privately and in a written [statement](#).

We respect the artists' decision, although we regret it very much. The works by Raed Mutar and Sajjad Abbas had already been relocated to new exhibition venues in close consultation with the artists. All three works are now no longer on display.

As soon as they voiced their feelings, the Berlin Biennale, Kader Attia, and the artistic team have made intensive efforts to engage in a personal exchange with the artists in order to find solutions with them. We believe in dialogue and value the relationships we have with all artists taking part in the Berlin Biennale very much. We are still interested in working through the controversy and will remain open to a dialogue. We think the issues at stake are highly important and would therefore like to invite the parties involved to speak about them in a public discussion. More information on this will follow soon.

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