



# Mondoweiss

News & Opinion About Palestine, Israel & the United States

ACTIVISM

## Brooklyn Academy of Music: Drop Batsheva Dance Company, cultural ambassadors for genocide

Activists are calling on the Brooklyn Academy of Music to take a clear stance in support of Palestinian human rights and cancel an upcoming performance by the Batsheva Dance Company.

BY [OPEN LETTER](#) - FEBRUARY 23, 2025 - 0



THE BATSHEVA DANCE COMPANY PERFORMING IN 2007. (PHOTO: DAVID SHANKBONE – OWN WORK, CC BY-SA 3.0/WIKIMEDIA)

On January 15, [Dancers for Palestine](#), and [Theater Workers for a Ceasefire](#), and [Amplify Palestine](#) sent the following email to the President and Artistic Director of the Brooklyn Academy of Music, requesting a response by January 31. BAM leadership did not respond.

The signatory organizations and individuals join the call for BAM to respect the BDS picket line by refusing to program Batsheva and other complicit organizations. We recognize that it is as important as ever to escalate pressure for the support of Palestinian liberation, given ongoing violations of the ceasefire in

Gaza, the escalating violence in the West Bank, and the continued military occupation and Apartheid system of discrimination. [Add your signature here.](#)

We are New York City-based artists and cultural and social justice organizations and allies that support Palestinian human rights. We reject the use of art to normalize the atrocities Israel is perpetrating in Gaza – violence that has caused deep grief in our communities and that [experts](#), [scholars](#) and [human rights NGOs recognize as](#) [constituting genocide](#). In this time of crisis, we write to you because we greatly respect Brooklyn Academy of Music’s long history as a progressive arts institution and believe it is a grave mistake for you to program Batsheva Dance Company, which is scheduled to perform at the Howard Gilman Opera House March 6th-8th.

[The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#) describes Batsheva as “the best known global ambassador of Israeli culture.” The Company’s role as cultural ambassador reflects the State of Israel’s history of [using the arts](#) to launder its image and obfuscate its longstanding practices of apartheid, occupation, and dispossession of Palestinians from their homes and lands. This cynical attempt at “artwashing” further includes [contractual obligations](#) requiring artists presenting works internationally with funding from the Israeli state to represent the state and its policies positively.

No amount of artwashing can hide the unimaginable scale of suffering that the people of Gaza have been broadcasting to the world for well over a year. Israel’s indiscriminate destruction of infrastructure, [including hospitals](#), has made it impossible to accurately count the dead, many of whom remain under the rubble. Palestinians who survive Israel’s aerial attacks are subjected to what Amnesty International has described as a [“slow, calculated death”](#) produced by Israeli-imposed starvation and disease.

Palestinian civil society, inspired by the historic global movement to boycott apartheid South Africa, has called on all people of conscience to use [Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions \(BDS\)](#) as a tool to end Israel’s impunity and pressure it to respect international law and Palestinian rights. Specifically, the Palestinian Campaign for the

Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI), which includes the absolute majority of Palestine-based dancers and dance institutions, has [called for](#) the boycott of events carried out “under the sponsorship of or in cooperation with an official Israeli body” as well as of cultural institutions, including dance companies, complicit in whitewashing or justifying Israel’s violation of Palestinian rights.

Multiple times, Batsheva Dance Company has been asked to publicly disavow its role as Israel’s cultural ambassador and publicly affirm a commitment to the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people as enshrined in international law. Multiple times, too, it has been asked to refuse to participate in the Israeli government’s artwashing efforts and to refuse the sponsorship of Israeli state institutions, including embassies, consulate generals, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for its international shows. Such appeals have been met only with silence or dismissal.



DANCERS FOR PALESTINE PROTESTING A BATSHEVA PERFORMANCE AT 92Y IN NOVEMBER 2023. (PHOTO: DANCERS FOR PALESTINE)

Accordingly, we respectfully request that you cancel your upcoming engagement with Batsheva Dance Company. We would be happy to meet with you to further explain Batsheva's complicity in Israel's violation of Palestinian rights and the strong political message BAM is sending by programming the Company while Palestinians face an unprecedented, unthinkable scale of violence and the whole world bears witness to the first livestreamed genocide.

We truly hope BAM will join the massive wave of artists and cultural workers who are rising to meet the moral demands of this historic moment by taking a clear stance in support of Palestinian human rights. This past October, for example, saw the launch of the largest boycott of Israeli cultural institutions in history with over 7,000 writers and other literary workers now [declaring that](#) they will not work with complicit institutions. The boycott movement also includes [a growing number of Israelis](#), such as prominent Israeli actor and director [Itay Tiran](#), [28 American theater organizations](#), and a growing number of dance organizations, including [Pageant](#), [The Dance Union Podcast](#), and [Parijata Performance Projects](#) in NYC.

Signatories:

[\*Add your signature here\*](#)

- Dancers for Palestine
- Theatre Workers for a Ceasefire
- Amplify Palestine

**Organizations and Collectives:**

- BAM Cinema Floor Staff
- tinypistol
- Parijata Performance Projects

- SMUSH Gallery
- Dancing Through Prison Walls
- Renegade Performance Group
- YallaPunk
- Body Watani
- Control Group Productions
- The Outlet Dance Project
- The Dance Union Podcast
- US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel
- 8 Ball Community
- Brothers Wash & Dry
- The Come Forever Garage
- Cutelab
- Hex House
- INTERCOMM
- Light & Sound Design
- Please Y.S.
- Property Is Theft (P.I.T.)
- Skinny Apartment
- The Tubs
- Artists In Resistance NYC (AIRNYC)
- Center for Psychic Technology

- Chaos Warp
- Gold Bolus
- LiveCode.NYC
- Melting Point
- New York Underground
- NYC Noise
- PTP
- Reading Group
- Receiver
- Toadstool Records
- Voluminous Arts
- Wendy's Subway
- Aye Defy
- GLYK Kolektiv
- Theatre of the Oppressed NYC (TONYC)
- Dunya Productions Seattle
- Bearded Ladies Cabaret
- Physical Plastic
- YES Theater
- Abscissa
- Dweller
- Small Planet

- VERBAL ANIMAL
- ChrisMastersDance
- Dance PlayHouse
- The Woods Rehearsal and Performance Space
- SLUT Dance Collective
- Wet Spot
- Techno Queers
- Dada Strain
- Art Against Displacement
- NYC City Workers for Palestine
- Courageous Space
- Boom Arts
- Sana Sana Productions
- 55B Productions
- Purgatory
- Entertainment Labor for Palestine (formerly SAG-AFTRA & Sister Guild Members for Ceasefire)

**Individuals:**

- Suchi Branfman, Artistic Facilitator/Director of Dancing Through Prison Walls
- Kayla Farrish
- Sami Abu Shumays
- Parijat Desai



- Katelyn Halpern
- Andre Zachery
- Allie Hepple
- ava desiderio
- mayfield brooks
- Devin Leong
- william mcmorran
- Mads Ward
- Travis Amiel
- Sophie Amsterdam
- Tom Tsai
- Liiiam McLaughlin
- K Sher
- Kealoha Ferreira
- Sarah McCullough
- Devika Dhir
- Jesús I. Valles
- David Golden
- Angela Sclafani
- Tessa Nebrida
- Hannah Owens
- Annie cox

- Ann Chiaverini
- Aamna Z
- Olivia Jenna Brown
- iele paloumpis
- Vicki Antonini
- Laura Coe
- Ljuba Castot
- Artie Ticknor
- Lindsay Brents
- Summer Gan
- James Potter
- Zack Wilks
- Fiona Smith
- Wanggi Hoediyatno
- Nicole Oga
- Natalie Oga
- Rebecca Hadley
- Mollie Goldstrom
- aj medeiros
- Annika Greenig
- Edward Frumkin
- Sophie Frizzell

- Allie Frizzell
- Semira
- lex mengenhauser
- Lyric Mendez
- Daniel Efram
- Emory Campbell
- Leni Kreienberg
- Basia
- Nathan Nakadegawa-Lee
- E. Podsiadlo
- Gabi Sade
- Kalliope Piersol
- Tara Skurtu
- Leila Mire
- Maxine Flasher-Düzgüneş
- Raya Tuffaha
- Adanya Gilmore
- TJ Jaworski
- Jordan Smiley
- Diana Leon
- Hayley Ader
- Newton Schottelkotte

- Jess Jaffe
- Utkarsh Rajawat
- M Cantu
- Tom Casserly
- Katie Young
- Ezra Noel
- T. Chester
- Kel Fleming
- Wiley Naman Strasser
- Eliza Ducnuigeen
- Melanie FitzSimons Owen
- Jolie Frazer
- Laura Meche
- Christian Elán Ortiz
- Joanie St-Kaminsky
- Marie Anello
- Joey Reyes
- Miranda Cornell
- Elena Faverio
- B Valek
- Dan Fishback
- Alex Oleksy

- Laura Neill
- Sunil Malhotra
- Mohammad Shehata
- Tracy Francis
- Tah-Janay Shayoñe
- Chloé Hayat
- Johanna Griesé
- Gaby Skok
- Fatima Maan
- Gabriyèl Barlatier
- James Wyrwicz
- Minou Pourshariati
- Stan Richardson
- Bobby Marcus
- Madelyn Robinson
- Sarah Jones
- devin burnam
- Meg Rumsey-Lasersohn
- Stephanie “Soultree” Camba
- Katherine Gwynn
- Merlin Whitehawk
- HK Goldstein

- Rob Silverman Ascher
- Emily Stone
- Ann Kreitman
- Nathan Mullen
- Charlie Masami Anderson
- Ky Gale
- Carleigh Boyle
- Jesse Roth
- Jeanne Smith
- Emily Anderson
- Khyati Sehgal
- Ellery Cordes
- Miranda Jackel
- Deanalís Arocho Resto
- Star Finch
- Kiley Lotz
- Charlie Grass
- Chris Griswold
- Brianna Justine
- Patrick Harvey
- Brandt Adams
- Mark Yowakim

- Natalie Brandy
- Leia Squillace
- Jonny Chang
- Jasmine K Bernard
- Kelley Faulkner
- Brianna Simpkins
- Samie Johnson
- Madison Krekel
- Tim Briggs
- Dominique Morisseau
- Sarah Alice Shull
- Danielle Breitstein
- Erin Proctor
- Estee Chandler
- Erica Kermani
- Chisom Awachie
- Malaika Queano
- K Petit
- Caroline Magee
- Emily Tabler
- Victoria Nassif
- Lizbeth P McManus

- Sheridan Merrick
- Jess Barbagallo
- Emily D
- Arif Silverman
- A.E Hunt
- Stephen Walkiewicz
- Aly Mawji
- Cole Friedman
- Dara Swisher
- syd island
- Orlando Hernández
- Christian Paxton
- Sam Kusnetz
- Gabriel Kornbluh
- Nabra Nelson
- Jessica Lee
- Dolores Avery Pereira
- Em Powell
- kayla brooke
- Alex Rodabaugh
- Freddy Edelhart
- Neve Jahn



- Adam
- Julia Selden
- Sofia Steinhart
- mje
- Jack McManus
- Olivia Michel
- Cindy Hwang
- Corinne Segal
- Matt Steinberg

BATSHEVA DANCE COMPANY

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