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EDITOR: Danby Choi is editor of the culture newspaper Subjekt. Photo: Bjørn Olav Hammerstad

Danby Choi on Israeli artist who was cancelled: - Unheard of

 - Does not belong to our time, says the editor.



Bjørn Olav Hammerstad

bjornolav@dagen.no

Published: 19/04/2024 11:40

Last updated: 11:40



The Israeli award-winning artist [Ori Lenkinski](#) was refused to contribute during the Bergen Fringe Festival in June [on the grounds that she comes from Israel](#) .

...the festival director, it is the country of Israel, which must be boycotted for its warfare in Gaza.

The article continues below the ad.

- Unfortunately, it affects the artist, says Sundt to Dagen.

The Israeli artist was asked to seek support from his embassy, because the festival had limited finances.



JUSTIFICATION: Festival director Maja Bergebakken Sundt justifies the decision with Israel's warfare in Gaza. Photo: Bjørn Olav Hammerstad

She did, but then this also became an argument for canceling the invitation.

- Bringing an Israeli artist here now with Israeli funds would be a legitimization of Israel, and we cannot vouch for that at the present time, says Sundt.

- **Must withdraw support**

The cancellation has sparked reactions.

withdraw the support.

Cultural council Reidar Digranes (Sp) believes the decision is "unfortunate" and will consider the support for next year.

- When they justify with country of origin, it can be more reminiscent of discrimination, he says.

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Against basic ideals

Danby Choi, editor of the cultural newspaper, also reacts.

- It is unheard of to withdraw the invitation of an artist who initially qualified on artistic criteria, on the basis of the artist's ethnicity. This does not belong to our time, says Choi, and continues:

- Art and culture can play a big role when the world is as tense as it is. That art and cultural actors will contribute to further tension is against basic cultural ideals, he believes.

Last year, the editor published the book "Cancel me if you can", in which he deals with "woke" and the fear of not being politically correct.

Warns politicians

Choi believes some artists would rather be activists.

- And that's perfectly fine, but when the organizers become more activists than promoters of art and culture per se, we have a problem. The cultural arenas are being kidnapped by political actors, says Choi.

He believes the festival "deserves criticism for its decision".



OSLO: Danby Choi in the editorial premises of Subjekt. Photo: Bjørn Olav Hammerstad

Choi is nevertheless skeptical that politicians should interfere and withdraw support for cultural organizers.

The article continues below the ad.

- They must not go too far, as in withdrawing support, even if the justification given for the cancellation is political, or perhaps even ethnic. I think the cultural organizers who are given support should have artistic freedom, and to such an extent that politicians respect such a decision, he says.

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MENU



Bjørn Olav Hammerstad

bjornolav@dagen.no / 930 85 116

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