



Folkwang

University of the Arts

University Communications
Head | Press Officer
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PRESS RELEASE

Internationally acclaimed artist Laurie Anderson no longer taking up the Pina Bausch Professorship on 1 April as planned

Internationally acclaimed artist Laurie Anderson had been appointed the second Pina Bausch Professor by the Folkwang University of the Arts in early January 2024 – an appointment made based on her exceptional prominence on the arts scene and her ground-breaking work in visual arts, theatre, experimental music and technology. It has now become apparent that, in 2021, Laurie Anderson publicly supported the Palestinian artists' 'Letter Against Apartheid' appeal, which, among other things, takes up calls for boycotts by the anti-Israel BDS movement. The university engaged in talks with Laurie Anderson and the Pina Bausch Foundation to discuss the extent to which Anderson would be able to carry out her planned artistic project at the Folkwang University of the Arts and ensure uninterrupted, focused work at this time.

In light of the now public question regarding her political stance, Laurie Anderson has decided to withdraw from the professorship:

'For me the question isn't whether my political opinions have shifted. The real question is this: Why is this question being asked in the first place? Based on this situation I withdraw from the project. My colleagues at the University and the Pina Bausch Foundation have discussed this with me at great length and we have jointly decided this is the best way forward', said Anderson.

This was not a decision taken lightly by the Folkwang University of the Arts, the Pina Bausch Foundation or Laurie Anderson, given its context in the current discourse on freedom of art and opinion. Discussion and dialogue are indeed key pillars in the general philosophy of the Folkwang University of the Arts. However, art, culture and science should remain places where the boundaries of dialogue are open and expansive as a matter of principle, and where contentious issues are kept in check. The university strictly rejects any form of antisemitism, misanthropy or racism.



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Today's decision in no way questions Laurie Anderson's character or distinctions, which include being a recipient of the Wolf Prize (awarded by the Israel-based Wolf Foundation).

The university will now be working with the selection committee to determine how to proceed with regards to filling the Pina Bausch Professorship position. The Folkwang University of the Arts established the Pina Bausch Professorship – named after world-famous Folkwang alumna Pina Bausch and run in co-operation with the Pina Bausch Foundation – in the 2022|23 winter semester using funding from the NRW state government.

Groß / 26 January 2024