

Dear Harriet:

I have carefully examined the slides of the New Museum proposal, and found it suitable to pass on my opinions in writing.

I have two positions as the Director of the Biennial; first and foremost my responsibility as an art critic/historian and curator, and secondly as the administrator of the project.

The first demands that I make judgements only on an artistic basis. These judgements may be relative. However, I am as you know a graduate of one of the most long-standing and perhaps the most prestigious institution of art history, the Institute of Fine Arts of New York University in the United States. My judgements will be thus on a professional basis and I would not and could not judge a work on any other criteria other than its vitality, quality, and ontological status.

As the administrator of the project, I preview the works with reference to the theme and the scope of the Biennial. I also know very well that art may represent digression and transgression, and that it has a liberating power.

I find the New Museum's proposal in perfect harmony with the general subject of the Istanbul Biennial. The exhibition has also something to say about the "des-orbitational" nature of art production in the United States, an issue which often goes unnoticed. It will also make artists in Turkey view their own works under a fresh and different light.

If there is an issue in the back of people's minds if the U.S. exhibition is volatile and provocative, of course it is, but it is not obscene or pornographic for Turkey's standards whatever these standards may be. I assure you that there is nothing to worry about. I am in any event, responsible for the whole Biennial.

I am furthermore very pleased to see that your institution is willing to give a lesson in democracy.

Sincerely,