

# Frieze

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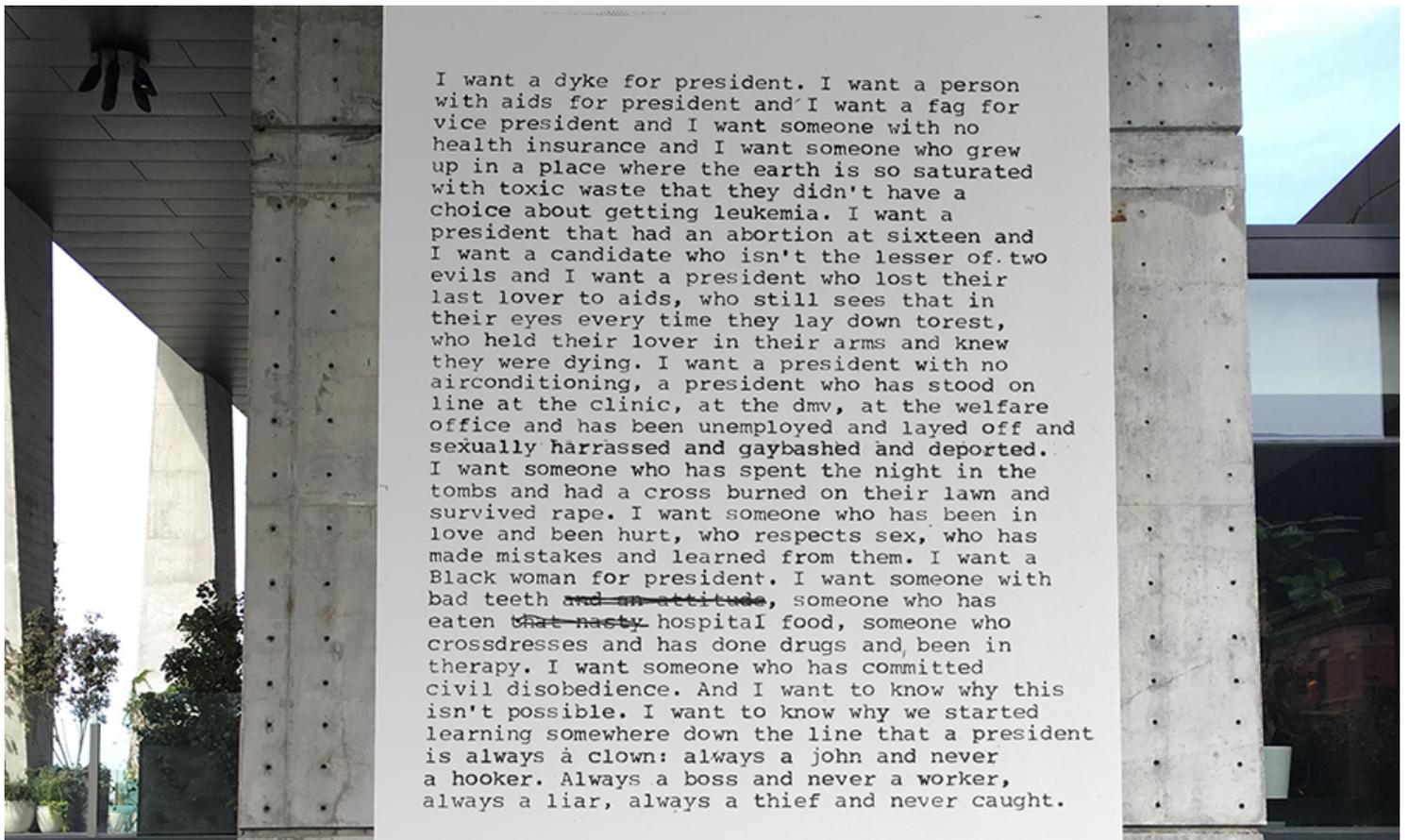
News /

## 'I Want a Dyke For President': Zoe Leonard's Landmark Poem Revived Following US Midterms



20 NOV 2018

In further news: Turkish arts workers arrested for 'seeking to overthrow the government'; union protests at MoMA PS1



Zoe Leonard, *I Want a President*, 1992, The High Line, New York, installation view, 2016. Courtesy: The High Line

**Zoe Leonard has released a new edition of her seminal 'I Want a President' poem in support of an HIV activist group.** The artist's 1992 text work, written in celebration of poet Eileen Myles's 'openly female' presidential bid that year, begins: 'I want a dyke for president. I want a person with aids for president and I want a fag for vice president and I want someone with no health insurance and I want someone who grew up in a place where the earth is so saturated with toxic waste that they didn't have a choice about getting leukemia.' Now, **Artnet News** reports that it has been revived for a series of 100 prints following the US midterm elections. Produced by Leonard's gallery, Hauser & Wirth, each print costs USD\$1,000 and has been created in aid of activist organization Treatment Action Group which supports treatment for patients with HIV, tuberculosis and Hepatitis C. Unveiled at the Treatment Action Group's Research in Action Awards last week, half of the edition will be sold exclusively to museums. Leonard's poem, which was originally supposed to appear in an LGBT magazine, gained recognition after being distributed among friends who photocopied and shared the work with others. 'Now more than ever, it is painfully obvious that Leonard's wishes are firmly ensconced outside of the realm of possibility,' Chris Wiley writes, reviewing the artist's retrospective at the **Whitney Museum of American Art** earlier this year.

**Thirteen Turkish cultural workers have been detained for 'seeking to overthrow the government', in a series of coordinated raids.** On 16 November, Turkish police arrested board members and staff of Anadolu Kültür, an Istanbul NGO, as well as academics and other advocates of human rights and free expression. Detainees included the general coordinator of Anadolu Kültür, Asena Günal, former director general and co-director of the Truth Justice Memory Center Meltem Aslan, and the film producer and coordinator of the Armenia-Turkey Cinema Platform, Çiğdem Mater, **Art Asia Pacific** reports the government-run Anadolu Agency initially reported that the charges against the detainees included 'creating chaos and mayhem' by supporting key figures in the 2013 Gezi Park protests. A statement released by the Istanbul Security Directorate states that the arrested cultural workers had spread information designed to continue the anti-government demonstrations 'via their own media outlets.' Currently, 12 of the 13 have been released but are banned from leaving the country.

**In New York, art installers and maintenance crew have protested low wages at the entrance of MoMA PS1.** Along with supporters, approximately 40 Local 30 union members gathered on 18 November to raise awareness of their ongoing battle with the museum regarding pay rises for union

art handlers and maintenance workers at PS1. The workers argue that their wages are not in line with those at sister museum MoMA despite all being a part of the same union. PS1 workers are paid between USD\$20–\$30 per hour, while those at sister institution MoMA are paid up to USD\$47. Chris Haag, a PS1 shop steward and Local 30 representative **told *Artnews***: ‘It’s just pretty amazing that an institution that, on its façade, is trying to be a progressive institution or promote progressive ideas, and yet is refusing to pay a living wage to workers in New York City’. In a statement, the museum said: ‘MoMA PS1 has a terrific team of installation and maintenance staff, and we are committed to reaching a new contract with Local 30.’

**Art in space received a setback today after it was announced that the launch of a SpaceX rocket in California would be delayed.** The rocket was scheduled to carry two artworks, Trevor Paglen’s Malevich-inspired *OrbitaReflector* sculpture and Tavares Strachan’s bust of Robert Henry Lawrence Jr., the first African American astronaut. SpaceX said that the launch had been cancelled in order to ‘conduct additional pre-flight inspections’. Don’t miss Cody Delistraty writing on how sending artworks into outer space **allows us to dream of a cosmos freed from surveillance and warfare.**

**Gavin Turk was arrested for civil disobedience during a climate change protest in London.** The British artist was among 82 people arrested during a coordinated occupation of five bridges in the city organized by the environmental-activist group Extinction Rebellion. He had been one of many obstructing the public highway on Lambeth Bridge in a mass protest to push the government to reduce climate change. According **to *The Guardian***, Turk was held for several hours before being released. ‘It seems like everyone is in an odd sense of denial about climate change,’ the artist commented. ‘I was in a quandary about what I could do. I felt taking part was a way of putting my name down and doing something for the environment. It was an incredibly peaceful demonstration and I think we put down some kind of marker.’

**The Kolkata Centre for Creativity opens to the public tomorrow.** The 6,500-square-metre hub includes a commercial gallery space, Emami Art, the Museum of Contemporary Culture, as well as a conservation studio and library. Emami Art is opening with the inaugural exhibition ‘School’, a retrospective of the Indian sculptor Dashrath Patel, curated by Pinakin Patel, which runs until 29 December.

**Members of the multibillionaire philanthropic Sackler family are facing mass litigation and a possible criminal investigation over their alleged role in the US opioid crisis.** Purdue Pharma, producers of the controversial prescription painkiller, OxyContin, is owned by members of the Sackler family, some of whom were personally sued by Suffolk county on Long Island, New York for deaths caused by addiction to the painkiller. **Speaking to the *Guardian***, legal sources have said that

prosecutors in Connecticut and New York are considering criminal fraud and racketeering charges due to the way OxyContin has been overprescribed and deceptively marketed. Despite its relationship with the opioid crisis, the Sackler name is tied to various arts institutions which have accepted donations from family members, including New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art and London's Serpentine Gallery. Don't miss Rafia Zakaria writing on what the Sacklers's presence in the artworld **tells us about self-deification and patronage.**

And finally, a study commissioned by French president Emmanuel Macron is to recommend the full restitution of pieces held in French museum collections which were seized 'without consent' from former African colonies, the *Art Newspaper* reports. Historian Bénédicte Savoy and economist Felwine Sarr argue in the report that full restitution, rather than long-term loans, should be the principle for such works unless there is evidence that they were taken 'legitimately', and also recommend applying pressure on other cultural institutions across Europe to adopt similar policies. 'We are dealing with the case of a continent which has almost nothing left of its history when we have it all,' Savoy said.

BRIEFING

NEWS

ZOE LEONARD

TURKEY

MOMA PS1

GAVIN TURK

SACKLER

KOLKATA

EMMANUEL MACRON

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