



LETTER FROM ABU DHABI DECEMBER 19 & 26, 2016 ISSUE

## THE GULF ART WAR

*New museums in the Emirates raise the issue of workers' rights.*

**By Negar Azimi**

*The Louvre Abu Dhabi dome and the site of the Guggenheim's troubled project.*

In October, 2005, Thomas Krens, the director of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, flew from New York to Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates. In the gilded lobby of the Emirates Palace hotel, Mohammed bin Zayed al Nahyan, the crown prince, described his vision for Saadiyat Island, a twenty-seven-billion-dollar development not far from the city's downtown. Saadiyat, which Emiratis refer to as "the island of happiness," would include luxury hotels, Marbella-style villas, and a boutique shopping quarter. Most important was a vast cultural district, which Zayed hoped would position Abu Dhabi—both the city and the Emirate that bears its name—as the patron of a modern Arab Renaissance. A new Guggenheim was to be a centerpiece of this effort.

Sixty years ago, Abu Dhabi was a twenty-six-thousand-square-mile expanse of desert, without paved roads, electricity, or running water. The population consisted mostly of Bedouin tribes, who subsisted on pearl diving, pirating, and occasional smuggling. In 1971, thirteen years after the discovery of oil, Zayed's father—the charismatic modernizer Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al Nahyan—joined neighboring tribes to create the United Arab Emirates. Abu Dhabi accounts for eighty-six per cent of the federation's landmass and more than ninety per cent of its oil reserves.

For Krens, Saadiyat represented an irresistible opportunity. Six feet five, with an M.B.A. and the habit of referring to art as an asset class, he had led the museum for nearly two decades. In the art world, he was a polarizing figure, known for popular, middlebrow shows like “The Art of the Motorcycle,” in 1998, and, two years later, an exhibition of the couture of Giorgio Armani, sponsored by Giorgio Armani. Krens had also taken on dazzling capital projects, such as a Guggenheim museum in Bilbao, designed by Frank Gehry, which turned a sleepy Basque town into a global art-pilgrimage site. Still, the Guggenheim’s endowment was much smaller than that of similar institutions: some fifty million dollars, compared with the Museum of Modern Art’s five hundred million.

Krens and Zayed reached an agreement shortly after their meeting. The Emiratis would be responsible for building a Guggenheim on Saadiyat, as part of a deal that would eventually bring the museum about a hundred and fourteen million dollars in fees. (The museum won’t comment on the financial arrangement.) Guggenheim curators would staff the museum, and Krens would be the master planner of Saadiyat’s cultural district. He envisaged a group of landmark buildings by the world’s most prominent architects.

Gehry, commissioned to design the new Guggenheim, imagined a massive jumble of concrete forms, seven times the size of the museum’s Frank Lloyd Wright building, in New York. Soaring gallery spaces would be enclosed by giant cones, open at the top like the “wind catchers” that were once found in the region. The blueprint for the district also included a serpentine performing-arts center, by the Iraqi-born Zaha Hadid, who died this spring; a maritime museum arching delicately over the ocean, by the Japanese architect Tadao Ando; the Zayed National Museum, designed by Norman Foster to evoke the feathers of a falcon; and the Louvre Abu Dhabi, by Jean Nouvel, topped by a white latticed dome almost six hundred feet in diameter. The island would also be home to a New York University campus, designed by the Uruguayan Rafael Viñoly.

Krens often spoke of the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi as a means of promoting dialogue between the West and the Middle East after 9/11 and the invasion of Iraq. With a reputed acquisitions budget of six hundred million dollars, the museum set out to

collect the work of international figures, such as Anselm Kiefer and Ai Weiwei, in addition to notable regional artists like the Emirati conceptualist Hassan Sharif and the Iranian modernist Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian. (I worked for Krens briefly, in 2010, as a consultant on Middle Eastern art, and, five years later, as a researcher on his memoir.) Zaki Nusseibeh, a Palestinian-born Emirati who has advised the crown for decades, told me recently, “Here is an opportunity to demonstrate that creativity is not a gift from the West.”

Although the N.Y.U. campus was finished in 2014, the cultural projects on Saadiyat Island were significantly delayed by the collapse in oil prices and by regional destabilization after the Arab Spring. The opening of the Louvre, originally scheduled for 2013, has been postponed until next year. The Zayed National Museum is several years behind schedule, and the Hadid and Ando buildings appear to be stalled indefinitely. The Guggenheim, which was supposed to be completed in 2013, has not yet broken ground. Today, the site is nothing more than a scatter of concrete pilings.

**M**onumental architecture requires capital, vision, and whimsy. From Suleiman the Magnificent to Benito Mussolini, heads of state have often made ideal patrons. Some of the most ambitious building projects in the world are now underwritten by governments in the Gulf. In Doha, Qatar, the Museum of Islamic Art, a stylized ziggurat designed by I. M. Pei, opened in 2008; a national library by Rem Koolhaas is under construction nearby. Dubai, the flashiest of the Emirates, boasts the world’s tallest skyscraper, the Burj Khalifa.

According to U.N. estimates, there are about twenty-five million migrant workers in the Gulf, the majority of them construction workers from the Indian subcontinent. (Migrants also work as doctors, nurses, accountants, cleaners, and beauticians.) Drawn by wages that are as much as three times higher than what they can earn at home, foreign laborers send back more than a hundred billion dollars a year to their families. It is not uncommon to hear rags-to-riches stories, such as that of B. R. Shetty, who tells of arriving in the Emirates, in 1973, as a young pharmacist with “a mere couple of dollars,” and is now the billionaire owner of one of the largest Emirati health-care firms.

Most low-wage foreign workers in the Gulf are bound to their employers by an informal system known as *kafala*, or “sponsorship.” In the mid-aughts, journalists and human-rights groups began documenting lax safety regulations and substandard living conditions across the region. Since December, 2010, when Qatar won its bid to host the 2020 World Cup, more than seven hundred Indian migrant workers have died in that country, according to a 2014 investigation by the *Guardian*.

Around the time of the Saadiyat discussions, Abu Dhabi began to pass some of the most progressive labor laws in the region. In 2005, the state banned outdoor work during the blistering middays of summer, and, a few years later, it introduced a law requiring employers to provide health insurance for all low-skilled workers. Yet, according to a 2009 report from Human Rights Watch, many problems associated with *kafala* persisted. Although recruitment fees are illegal in the Emirates, migrant laborers were said to have paid as much as forty-one hundred dollars to middlemen in exchange for airfare and visas. Often, workers arrived significantly indebted, and were paid less than they had been promised. Their passports were sometimes confiscated by employers, making it difficult for them to leave or to change jobs. Unionization is forbidden.

*When Emirati officials are challenged about their labor policies, they often point to the Saadiyat Accommodation Village, where most of the island's workers are required to live.*

Human-rights activists saw the high-profile projects on Saadiyat as an opportunity to strengthen labor standards across the region. In 2008, as N.Y.U. prepared to break ground on its new campus, Andrew Ross, a professor in the university's Department of Social and Cultural Analysis, began publicly criticizing N.Y.U.'s international expansion under John Sexton, who was then its president. Ross told *New York* that the university was “behaving exactly like a corporation that is entering its mergers-and-acquisitions phase.” Fifty-two years old, with muttonchops and two silver earrings, Ross had become known in the nineties as an activist in the anti-sweatshop movement and as a campus agitator, organizing faculty support for an effort to unionize the university's graduate students, which proved successful. In March, 2009, he assembled a faculty-student alliance to advocate for laborers on its Abu Dhabi campus. Paul Boghossian, a philosopher at N.Y.U., told me that the critics of the Abu Dhabi project

“tend not to mention a mitigating factor, which is that the Emirates is spending enormous amounts of money providing a free, first-class education to some very talented and, in many cases, very needy kids, who are recruited with great effort from all over the world.” In the end, Ross’s agitation seemed to work: in February, 2010, N.Y.U. announced unusually strong contractual safeguards for workers on the site.

Soon, the Guggenheim plans came under scrutiny. By the spring of 2010, Krens had spoken with Jeff Koons, Jenny Holzer, and Lawrence Weiner about producing commissioned works for the new museum. Krens was also approaching artists from the Middle East. That March, he arranged to talk with Walid Raad, a conceptual artist of Lebanese descent in his mid-forties. The previous year, Raad had been a finalist for the Hugo Boss Prize, a hundred-thousand-dollar honor bestowed by the Guggenheim. His mysterious, meticulous work—including fabricated photographs, videos, and documents pertaining to the Lebanese Civil War—tends to point out the unreliability of official histories.

One afternoon, Krens recalls, the lanky, bookish Raad met him in an East Village *shisha* bar. Krens showed Raad slides of Gehry’s design on an iPad. The timing was canny: Raad had recently begun studying the rise of arts institutions in the Middle East, including galleries, auction houses, and biennials. For the new building, he proposed a series of architectural cutouts, replicas of entranceways to other museums around the world, which would cast moving shadows on the floor, in the manner of a Calder mobile. Krens seemed to like the idea, and they agreed to continue talking.

The following month, Raad reconsidered. At Home Works, a conference for artists and intellectuals in Beirut, he convened a panel on the cultural implications of Saadiyat Island. The speakers included Andrew Ross, with whom he was casually acquainted. As Ross described his campaign at N.Y.U., Raad, whose father worked in construction in the fifties in Saudi Arabia, realized that Krens’s offer gave him influence over the Guggenheim. What if he and other artists refused to make their work available? What would an art museum be without art?

**T**hat June, after further discussion with Ross, Raad sent a letter to the Guggenheim. It was co-signed by forty-two other artists, including the eminent

conceptualists Barbara Kruger and Hans Haacke and the Iranian-born multimedia artist Shirin Neshat. The signers suggested that they would not sell work to the new museum, or have work shown there, unless the Guggenheim agreed not only “to follow N.Y.U.’s example but to raise the bar” for working conditions. They demanded independent monitoring of construction firms and a system for penalizing contractual breaches. “No one should be asked to exhibit or perform in a building that has been constructed and maintained on the backs of exploited employees,” they wrote.

By this time, Krens was quarrelling with members of the Guggenheim’s board over his ambitions for the new museum. He left his post shortly before the activists sent their letter, which was addressed to his successor, Richard Armstrong. A soft-spoken, scholarly Midwesterner who had previously been the director of the Carnegie Museum of Art, in Pittsburgh, Armstrong told the activists that the museum would relay their concerns to its Emirati partners, and asked that the letter be kept private for the time being.

While those discussions were under way, Armstrong and Nancy Spector, the Guggenheim’s chief curator, reached out to Raad about presenting a retrospective of his work at the New York Guggenheim—his first major museum show in the United States. Raad countered with two conditions: the Guggenheim must satisfy the activists’ demands and apologize publicly for an earlier offense against Haacke. In 1971, the museum had cancelled an exhibition of Haacke’s work after he insisted on including “Shapolsky et al. Manhattan Real Estate Holdings, a Real-Time Social System, as of May 1, 1971”—a series of photographs and documents that detailed the operations of one of the city’s largest slumlords. The talks about Raad’s show were inconclusive, and it eventually went to MOMA.

In September, 2010, the Guggenheim endorsed a new set of labor standards that apply to Saadiyat’s cultural district, set by the state-owned Tourism Development & Investment Company. The museum emphasized that it was “deeply committed to safeguarding the rights and welfare of employees.” Raad, Ross, and the Palestinian-born artist Emily Jacir responded with an e-mail to the museum. “We acknowledge that some progress has been made,” they wrote, but “much more needs to be done.”

On March 16, 2011, the activists went public with their letter. Within two months, they had sent a delegation to Abu Dhabi and met with Guggenheim representatives in New York. That June, the Emiratis announced that they had appointed PricewaterhouseCoopers to be an independent monitor for many Saadiyat projects, including cultural ones. Gulf Labor, as the activists now called themselves, said that the decision was a “step in the right direction,” as long as the oversight proved rigorous.

Sarah Leah Whitson, an executive director at Human Rights Watch who has collaborated with Gulf Labor, suggested to me that the activists had intuited the value of strong public pressure on Gulf governments: “The country spends tens of millions of dollars—probably hundreds of millions—on P.R. firms to improve its image. A single human-rights report can undo the work of fifty million dollars.” She went on, “When we first raised the issue of independent monitoring, the Emiratis balked. ‘That’s an offense, that’s an insult,’ they argued. Gulf Labor upped the game.”

Over time, a core group of about fifteen Gulf Labor members has emerged, most of them of South Asian or Middle Eastern heritage. They have conducted hundreds of interviews with laborers in the Emirates, and tracked down others in their home countries of India, Nepal, and Pakistan. The group’s Web site contains a large archive that includes their often critical commentary on the annual reports of Pricewaterhouse, and the many letters—sometimes hectoring, sometimes coaxing—that they have sent to the Guggenheim and to the Emiratis.

The members of Gulf Labor insist that they want to see the museum built. Their demands have centered on three main issues: recruitment debt, fair wages, and worker representation. More than twenty-four hundred people have added their signatures to a version of the group’s first public letter, including Anish Kapoor, Isaac Julien, and Louise Lawler. Michelle Kuo, the editor of *Artforum*, told me, “Not since the Art Workers Coalition picketed museums for failures like ignoring the Vietnam War has there been such a visible, and truly international, political movement of artists.”

Armstrong has exhibited a mixture of patience and exasperation in his dealings with Gulf Labor. He and Spector and other museum staff members have met with the activists on more than a dozen occasions. Each time, they reiterate the museum’s

commitment to workers' rights, while pointing out that the Emiratis are in charge of construction and of national labor policy. They often note that work on the building has not even begun; the activists counter that this is precisely the point.

*Inside the Louvre Abu Dhabi, designed by Jean Nouvel. The building is topped by a white latticed dome almost six hundred feet in diameter.*

Western architects, who are paid handsomely for their work in the Gulf and are often granted unusual artistic freedom, have kept their distance from the disputes. In 2014, Zaha Hadid told the *Guardian* that it was not her “duty” to account for workers on a stadium that she had designed in Qatar. Rem Koolhaas told me that his library “would make a whole generation eager to read,” adding, “I find it surprising that countries like Qatar and the Emirates are attacked when they are trying to make Islam and modernity compatible.” Among the Saadiyat architects, only Gehry has tacitly acknowledged the potential for abuse: in 2009, he retained a human-rights lawyer. When I asked him whether his contract with the Emiratis included labor stipulations, he replied that he was not at liberty to say.

Anwar Gargash, the Emirati minister of state for foreign affairs, told me recently, “We understand there is criticism. It is our duty as a state to improve the labor environment. But we have a pace we have to move at.” This year, new reforms were implemented that grant millions of workers the right to leave their jobs before their contracts are up, providing a degree of labor mobility unmatched in the region.

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Mishaal al Gergawi, an Emirati intellectual, elaborated on the government's perspective: "You sit there on the throne, thinking, My country is only forty-five years old, and I'm trying to fight ISIS, develop a post-oil economy, foster a tolerant society by building museums and universities, and I'm getting criticized for labor issues? Give me a break."

**W**hen Emirati officials are challenged about their labor policies, they often point to the Saadiyat Accommodation Village, where most of the island's workers are required to live. The T.D.I.C. characterizes the village, which opened in 2009, as "state-of-the-art," an improvement on typical labor camps in the region, which tend to be sprawling and ramshackle. Today, the village officially houses some eight thousand men.

This past February, I visited the complex, which is ringed by cypress trees, with checkpoints manned by private security guards. It was lunchtime, and five escorts ushered me into a cavernous cafeteria, where I drank sugary tea and ate soupy dal. Workers slept six to a clean, spacious room; there was door-to-door laundry service, an on-site barber, and a cell-phone shop. A modest library held English-language biographies of Eric Clapton and Andre Agassi, and a full set of Danielle Steel. A grassy cricket field shone in the sun. "You will never get this facility any other place," the village's manager, who was Lebanese, told me.

In May, 2013, clashes broke out at the village after some five hundred Bangladeshi laborers were deported for striking and were replaced by Pakistanis. During my visit, I spoke with a twenty-four-year-old Pakistani who arrived in 2014 to work on the Louvre Abu Dhabi. He said that he had paid more than twenty-two hundred dollars to a Lahore-based recruiter, and that it would take him four years or more to break even. At the village, he said, "I have only time to eat and sleep."

The Guggenheim has toured the village and praised its "elevated standards." Members of Gulf Labor have also made official visits, but they tend to characterize its relative luxuries as something of a stunt. "Workers aren't there to play table tennis," Paula Chakravartty, an N.Y.U. professor of media studies who is a Gulf Labor member, told me. "They're there to make money for their families." They also argue that traditional

labor camps, for all their faults, offer a kind of community, with street life, outdoor markets, and transport to nearby malls. Gulf Labor, during talks this winter with the museum, argued that Saadiyat workers should be able to live wherever they choose.

**B**y the fall of 2013, Ross had grown impatient with the pace of reform. Two years earlier, he had been active in Occupy Wall Street, and now he approached two veterans of that movement, the artists Amin Husain and Nitasha Dhillon. With three others, they founded a guerrilla offshoot of Gulf Labor, which they named GULF, short for Global Ultra Luxury Faction. The group staged its first action on a Saturday afternoon in February, 2014, at the Guggenheim's Fifth Avenue branch.

In the crowded rotunda, forty protesters took up positions on the corkscrew ramp, unfurling Mylar banners with messages such as "1% Museum" and "Wage Theft." Some museumgoers applauded, as though it were performance art. Noah Fischer, a sculptor and a GULF member, told me, "We treated the Frank Lloyd Wright building as a canvas." Shortly afterward, the T.D.I.C. cut off direct communication with Gulf Labor.

On May 18, 2014, an alarming story about worker abuse on the N.Y.U. site, by Ariel Kaminer and Sean O'Driscoll, appeared on the front page of the *Times*. Based on interviews with dozens of workers, it reported that laborers had been routinely underpaid, and that hundreds of them had been deported after going on strike. Later, an independent report showed that the university's labor safeguards, though instituted in good faith, had indeed been insufficient: a third of workers, mainly those employed by subcontractors, were left unprotected. The university issued a public apology, and began to track down workers who were owed money. In June, Gulf Labor addressed the revelations in a letter to the Guggenheim: "Is Gulf Labor simply a public-relations problem for the Guggenheim, as were the students and faculty who struggled at N.Y.U.?"

That fall, GULF activists crashed a black-tie benefit at the New York Guggenheim, and the group mounted its most ambitious protest the following May, during the Venice Biennale. With the help of local anarchists, GULF protesters travelled up the Grand Canal on motorboats, installing themselves on the landing dock of the Peggy

Guggenheim Collection, which is housed in an eighteenth-century palazzo. Some fifty activists waved banners and chanted at curators, collectors, and gallerists, forcing the museum to close for a few hours. They left only after Tina Vaz, the Guggenheim's acting deputy director of global communications, agreed to ask the Guggenheim to grant Gulf Labor a meeting with members of the museum's board.

Gulf Labor and GULF say that they operate autonomously, yet the distinction can seem specious: GULF's six core members are also members of the original group. As debate continues over what it would take to end the protest, some members have been more inclined to negotiate, others to take direct action. Although Walid Raad has not demonstrated with GULF, he was turned back at the Dubai airport only a few days after the Venice protest; Andrew Ross and Ashok Sukumaran, another Gulf Labor member, had also recently been banned. In June, 2015, more than sixty art-world professionals sent a letter to the Emiratis and their Western partners, urging them to overturn the travel restrictions. (I signed the letter, as did Glenn Lowry, the director of MOMA, and Nicholas Serota, the director of the Tate, in London.)

**B**efore I returned to New York, I stopped in the South Indian state of Kerala, one center of the subcontinental "Gulf Boom." According to a 2014 report, nearly a million workers in the Gulf come from Kerala. Remittances make up thirty-six per cent of the state's G.D.P.

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*Inside the state-owned Tourism Development & Investment Company offices on Saadiyat Island, in Abu Dhabi.*

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On the way to Kannur, a city of some two hundred thousand on the Arabian Sea, grand "Gulf-style" homes, painted in pastel colors, line the road, which is shared by rickshaws, eighteen-wheelers, and elephants. Restaurants serve Sharjah shakes, and sandwiches are wrapped in *kuboos*, a variation on the Arabic word for bread. Migration is a frequent theme in local Malayalam-language films. On a popular TV interview show called "Pravasa Lokam," or "Migrant Universe," weeping families describe loved

ones who have gone missing in the Gulf. The host, P. T. Kunhimohammed, told me, “The migration has caused a revolution here. It has also brought horrors.”

I paid a visit to a Kannur carpenter in his mid-forties. Jitesh, as I’ll call him, greeted me in his modest workshop, dressed in a traditional sky-blue Keralan sarong. He had done many stints during the past fifteen years, most recently on the N.Y.U. campus for a subcontractor. In June, 2012, Jitesh said, he and his team stopped getting paid. Four months later, some sixty workers staged an impromptu strike: they simply sat in the mess hall, refusing to get on the bus to the work site. “There was no leader,” Jitesh told me. “It was collective. We didn’t have a choice.” Jitesh told the manager that they would not work until they were paid. Two days later, he said, he was given twenty-four hours to leave the country.

And yet Jitesh was fearful of not being allowed back, which is why he’d asked me not to use his real name. Before I left, he showed me pictures of him and friends in the Gulf, on their Fridays off—embracing, drinking beer, talking on the phone. In another photo, I recognized the sail shape of a building under construction: the Burj Al Arab hotel, in Dubai. “I built many of the interiors,” he told me. “We built the United Arab Emirates.”

**O**n April 13th, after three meetings between Gulf Labor and members of the Guggenheim’s board, Armstrong informed the activists that the negotiations were over. Four days later, he sent a mass e-mail to his art-world colleagues and friends: “Gulf Labor continues to shift its demands on the Guggenheim beyond the reach of our influence as an arts institution.” Raad wrote me a clipped note: “No more meetings. No more anything. They’re done talking to us.”

I met with Armstrong at the museum’s Hudson Street administrative offices, on the day of the last board meeting with the activists. He did not distinguish between GULF and Gulf Labor, calling the protesters “zealots” who had “opted for shenanigans and drama.” Armstrong described the action in Venice as “a homecoming parade, or Halloween—a bunch of puerile theatre.” Gulf Labor, he said, had vastly overstated the Guggenheim’s leverage over workers’ rights in the region. He added, “In a place like Abu Dhabi, they’re not used to public humiliation.”

Anwar Gargash, the Emirati minister, told me much the same thing: “We want you to come with us, not to come at us, with your naming and shaming.” Sultan al Qassemi, a progressive Emirati commentator and art collector, said, “Given Gulf Labor’s narrative, you’d think the Guggenheim is on its way to being built, and there’s a death every other day.”

Bryan Waterman, who teaches literature at N.Y.U. Abu Dhabi, told me, “I sympathize with Gulf Labor’s concerns, but I have issues with the tactics, which seem to be more about performance and publicity in New York or about an attempt to stick it to the Emirati government than about actual dialogue or possible outcomes for workers’ lives.”

A former member of Gulf Labor asserted that the group’s recent provocations had been too costly: “They had access to the Emiratis and lost that. Now their access to the Guggenheim is gone, too. If you’re going to negotiate in good faith, you have to be willing to give something up. It may not be splashy, but it gets you somewhere. Sometimes I think Gulf Labor has undermined itself through its intransigence. There’s no question it’s made a difference. But at some point you have to ask, What’s next?”

**T**he future of the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi appears uncertain, amid insecurity in the region and the persistence of the global oil slump. There is no longer an official date for the groundbreaking, let alone for completion. Members of Gulf Labor have expressed dismay at the idea of cancellation. “We want this project to succeed,” the artist Naeem Mohaiemen insisted to me. “That’s why we’ve put six long years into this campaign. We saw an opportunity to make this a great museum—a model institution in every sense.”

Whatever the fate of the museum, Gulf Labor has made it difficult for arts institutions to ignore the human-rights dimension of their work. “I admire them,” Glenn Lowry, of MOMA, told me, of the group’s members. “They have been very effective in galvanizing attention around the issue and keeping it in play.”

GULF’s latest action took place one night in April, two weeks after the break in contact. Arriving at the New York Guggenheim around 10 p.m., I saw slogans in four languages

flickering across the white building: “ULTRA LUXURY ART,” “ULTRA LOW WAGES,” “MAY DAY.” Next came a series of glowering faces—Armstrong and the members of the board—and then the whole ensemble, arranged in a gangster-like lineup.

Afterward, a dozen or so activists, including Andrew Ross, walked toward the former home, on Park Avenue, of William Mack, a real-estate developer who is the chairman of the Guggenheim’s board. A projected message rolled across the brick façade: “SHAME ON YOU WILLIAM MACK.” On a street corner, a woman walking her dog paused to look. ♦

*Reporting and photography for this piece were facilitated by a grant from the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting.*

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