

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON SYSTEM

Dona Hamilton Cornell

Vice Chancellor for Legal Affairs, University of Houston System

Vice President for Legal Affairs, University of Houston

General Counsel, University of Houston System, University of Houston

March 12, 2024

Graham Piro

Program Officer, Campus Rights Advocacy

Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression

510 Walnut Street, Suite 900

Philadelphia, PA 19106

Mr. Piro,

The University of Houston is in receipt of your letter dated March 8, 2024 relating to our on-campus art exhibit featuring the work of Shahzia Sikander. Your organization is familiar with our Freedom of Expression policy and our FAQs related to it which can be found here: <https://uhsystem.edu/legal-affairs/general-counsel/freedom-of-expression/index.php> We stand by these policies and our commitment to the First Amendment.

If you take time to research the various speakers, visitors and exhibits that have been held in recent years, you will see that we do indeed invite what some would consider “controversial speakers.” The decision to cancel the opening was based on the statement by the artist that she was not coming to Houston. We respected that decision. Your conclusions, by reading news reports about what occurred, are erroneous and we do NOT censor.

The exhibition of the statue will go through some minor conservation in the coming days and upon completion, we expect to remove the current orange construction fence and finalize the installation of the animated film which will be displaying until October.

Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,



Dona H. Cornell

Cc: Rachel Mohl, Executive Director and Chief Curator, Public Art UHS