

Sample Response Templates

Clear, practical communication templates for artists and cultural organisations under pressure.

For Artists

Quick Reference: Artist's Rights

- You **cannot be compelled** to take a political stance as a condition of work.
- You have a **right to freedom of expression** under the **Human Rights Act (1998)** and **Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights**.
- Refusing to engage in a boycott **does not justify discrimination** or exclusion under the **Equality Act 2010**.

If in doubt, **seek confidential legal advice** before responding.

These short, adaptable statements allow you to stand firm on artistic integrity **without escalating conflict**

1. Declining a Boycott Request (Private Message or Email)

Thank you for reaching out and sharing your perspective. I respect your right to take a stand, but I don't believe that boycotting cultural or artistic work is the right approach. My focus is on connection and dialogue through art, not withdrawal.

I hope you can respect that this is my position.

2. Responding to a Public Campaign (Social Media or Press)

I believe that art should be a space for open dialogue and exchange, not exclusion. While I respect others' right to protest, I've chosen to continue with my participation because I value creative freedom and the opportunity for audiences to engage directly with art. I won't be making further comment beyond this statement.

3. Responding to an Institutional Cancellation or Request to Withdraw

Thank you for your message. I'm concerned by this request and would like clarification on what policy or legal advice it is based upon. My understanding is that I have contractual and creative rights to present my work as agreed. Please confirm in writing the reasons for any cancellation or withdrawal and the decision process that led to this request. I reserve the right to seek further advice on this matter.

4. If You've Already Been Cancelled or Publicly Targeted

I regret that recent events have led to my work being cancelled or criticised. My intention has always been to create art that encourages thought, empathy and conversation. I reject all forms of discrimination and believe that cultural exchange is vital for mutual understanding. I'm grateful to those who continue to support freedom of expression in the arts.

5. Neutral Holding Statement (for immediate press or PR use)

I'm aware of recent discussions regarding my participation in [event/project]. I'm taking time to review the situation and seek advice. I remain committed to open artistic dialogue and the right to creative freedom.

I won't be commenting further at this time.

For Venues

Before You Respond: A Note to Senior Leaders

Institutions in the arts are increasingly subject to boycott pressure, public campaigns and demands to withdraw or cancel work. These situations often feel urgent, emotive and reputationally risky.

Most such situations are not legal crises. They are reputational and political pressures that test governance, leadership and process.

- This module is designed to help senior leaders and boards:
- Slow decision-making under pressure
- Distinguish protest and disagreement from genuine risk
- Protect artists, staff and institutional integrity
- Avoid decisions that cause long-term harm

Panic causes more damage than protest. Strong leadership maintains process when others demand speed.

You are not required to resolve geopolitical disputes, adjudicate moral purity or take positions on contested political questions in order to present art. Your responsibility is to act lawfully, fairly and proportionately and to protect the conditions in which artistic work can be made and seen.

These examples can be adapted for your organisation's tone and brand.

1. Holding Statement (for immediate media use)

We are aware of recent correspondence concerning [artist/event/sponsor]. Our organisation is committed to freedom of artistic expression and open dialogue. We are reviewing the situation carefully and will communicate further once all facts are confirmed. In the meantime, our priority remains the safety of our audiences, artists and staff.

2. Statement Upholding Artistic Freedom

We support our artists' right to express themselves freely, even where views may differ or cause debate. Our role as a cultural institution is to present work that reflects the diversity and complexity of society. We reject discrimination or exclusion based on nationality, identity or belief. While we respect peaceful protest, we will not cancel or censor artistic work due to political pressure.

**3. Statement Announcing a Postponement
(if safety genuinely compromised)**

Due to concerns about the safety of our artists, audiences and staff, we have made the difficult decision to postpone [event]. This decision was not taken lightly. We continue to affirm our support for artistic freedom and open exchange and will work with all parties to ensure that the work can be presented safely at a later date.

If an event genuinely must be delayed:

FITA has advised us on how to manage security and communications to ensure the event can go ahead safely at a later date.

4. Internal Staff Briefing Note (for confidential circulation)

You may be aware of recent public debate regarding [artist/event/sponsor]. We are monitoring the situation closely and following our Freedom of Expression Policy. Our approach is based on fairness, safety and due process. Please direct any press or social media inquiries to [name/contact]. We ask all staff to refrain from public comment while the situation is being assessed.

5. Communication to an Artist or Partner Under Pressure

We're aware you may be receiving external pressure or criticism related to your participation in [event]. Please know that we fully support your right to creative freedom and will continue to present your work as planned. We are handling all communications centrally and are happy to provide media support or guidance. Your safety and wellbeing are our priority.

6. Post-Event Review Summary (for board, leaders, stakeholders, funders)

Following recent boycott-related pressure surrounding [event], we implemented our Freedom of Expression Protocol. The institution upheld its contractual and ethical commitments while ensuring safety and lawful conduct. This case has informed our ongoing risk management and staff training. We remain committed to presenting challenging work and supporting artists under pressure.

For Agents

When boycott pressure arises, clarity and consistency prevent panic. These templates provide adaptable examples for maintaining control and credibility.

To a Venue or Festival Under Pressure

We understand that you are receiving correspondence regarding [artist/event]. Our client's participation is based solely on artistic merit and creative collaboration. We trust that the event will proceed as agreed, in line with your public commitment to artistic freedom. Please confirm that the performance remains scheduled as planned.

Private Support to an Artist Under Fire

We're aware of recent criticism and are monitoring the situation closely. Please avoid direct online engagement while this is being addressed. Your artistic integrity remains the priority and we will manage external communications professionally. You are not expected to handle this alone.

To Sponsors or Funders Expressing Concern

We recognise the sensitivity of reputational concerns. However, withdrawing from artists due to political or identity-based pressure risks unfair treatment and reputational harm. We propose continuing with the planned collaboration, supported by clear and fair messaging.

Press/Media Holding Statement

We are aware of recent public discussion surrounding [artist/event]. Our focus remains on ensuring that the performance proceeds safely and professionally. We are committed to creative freedom and respectful exchange and we will not be commenting further at this time.

Internal Team Briefing Note

There has been external commentary concerning [artist/event]. All media or public enquiries should be directed to [designated contact]. Please avoid social media comment or speculation. Our agreed position is one of professionalism, fairness and support for lawful artistic expression.