

November 3, 2021

To: Metropolitan Museum of Art  
Board of Trustees

As artists we come together to call for the removal of the Sackler name from the walls of the Metropolitan Museum.

Last year, Purdue Pharma, the makers of OxyContin, pled guilty in federal court to three criminal conspiracy charges. They admitted that they defrauded the United States government, lied to the Drug Enforcement Agency, and violated federal anti-kickback laws — paying providers to prescribe more of Purdue's products. The company also pled guilty to federal criminal charges in 2007, as did the company's President, Chief Legal Officer and former Chief Medical Officer.

Purdue Pharma is a private company owned by a single family, the Sacklers. This is not a third-party investment, this is a one-to-one relationship. The Sackler family — several of whom trained as medical doctors — were active members of Purdue's board and micro-managed the company. As was revealed in court proceedings, despite knowing about the addictive dangers of OxyContin for over twenty years, the company aggressively marketed their opioids as less addictive and engaged in schemes to defraud doctors and the U.S. government.

The opioid epidemic has killed over half a million people in the United States alone. Last year, 69,710 people died from opioid related overdoses.

Given these facts, we are horrified by the recent bankruptcy settlement reached in September 2021, which would provide civil immunity to the Sackler family, their unborn heirs, their lawyers, and hundreds of associates. The Sacklers will continue to profit while paying off the settlement. While the Sacklers publicly distance themselves from Purdue, in private the Sacklers secretly entered into a Joint Defense Agreement with Purdue's legal team, resulting in a \$1,000,000 fine by the U.S. Department of Justice. The Department of Justice stated the immunity deal is unconstitutional and illegal and is already appealing the bankruptcy settlement.

We stand alongside the many investigative journalists including Patrick Radden Keefe, and with the artist Nan Goldin, and the direct action group P.A.I.N. (Prescription Addiction Intervention Now), who have worked to hold the Sackler family accountable despite being subjected to legal threats and other forms of intimidation.

The Metropolitan Museum is a public institution dedicated to art, learning and knowledge that generations have created to benefit our society. Honoring the Sackler name on the walls of the Met erodes the Met's relationship with artists and the public. Given the federal crimes committed by Purdue Pharma and the staggering national death toll, this is a situation of force majeure.

The bankruptcy settlement bans the Sacklers from putting their name on institutions for nearly a decade, recognizing the connection between their name and the crimes that their company committed. The Louvre, Tufts Medical School and other institutions have removed the Sackler name from their walls. We call upon the trustees to take down the Sackler name on or before its next board meeting of November 9, 2021.

Sincerely,

Signed as of November 3, 2021

Ai Weiwei  
Laurie Anderson  
Leonor Antunes  
Yto Barrada  
Huma Bhabha  
Dara Birnbaum  
Linda Goode Bryant  
Zoe Buckman  
Maurizio Cattelan  
Dan Colen  
Anne Collier  
Tacita Dean  
Rineke Dijkstra  
Jim Dine  
Roe Ethridge  
Eric Fischl  
Jedd Garret  
Jim Goldberg  
Nan Goldin  
Goldin+Senneby  
Dan Graham  
Jenny Holzer  
Jonathan Horowitz  
Pierre Huyghe  
Arthur Jafa  
Anish Kapoor  
William Kentridge  
Barbara Kruger

An-My Lê  
Glenn Ligon  
Ari Marcopoulos  
Ryan McGinley  
Julie Mehretu  
Marilyn Minter  
Jamie Nares  
Gabriel Orozco  
Trevor Paglen  
Jack Pierson  
Laura Poitras  
Robert Polidori  
Richard Prince  
Rob Pruitt  
Walid Raad  
Adrián Villar Rojas  
Anri Sala  
Lucy Sante  
Matt Saunders  
Collier Schorr  
Cindy Sherman  
Laurie Simmons  
Hito Steyerl  
Billy Sullivan  
Wolfgang Tillmans  
Anne Turyn  
Eyal Weizman

Updated as of November 8, 2021

Janet Cardiff  
Nicole Eisenman  
Lawrence Abu Hamdan  
Charline von Heyl  
Roni Horn  
Josh Kline  
Brice Marden

Helen Marden  
George Bures Miller  
Richard Serra  
Cecilia Vicuña  
Kara Walker  
Christopher Wool

Updated as of November 15, 2021

Liz Deschenes  
Marlene Dumas  
Rachel Harrison  
Robert Longo  
Sally Mann

Peter McGough  
Cameron Rowland  
Ed Ruscha  
Rirkrit Tiravanija