

Historian with baby banned to enter museum stirs controversy

ISTANBUL

The Museum of Innocence, named after Nobel prize winner Orhan Pamuk, has been facing backlash after its employees' approach toward art historian and curator Didem Yazıcı and her baby.

Yazıcı, who has been residing in Germany for some time, visited Istanbul with her husband and 10-month-old baby Teo.

As this was her husband's first time in Istanbul, Yazıcı wanted to take her family to visit the Museum of Innocence.

According to her article in Art Unlimited, when the family purchased two tickets, one of the employees of the museum said they need to go in one by one, while one of them was inside the museum, the other one needed to stay outside with the baby.

"Would Füsün and her family, described at length in Orhan Pamuk's book 'The Museum of Innocence,' turn away a visitor with a baby? I asked myself this question when I was thrown out of the Museum of Innocence in Boğazkesen with my baby in my arms on Sunday, May 8, Mother's Day..." Yazıcı wrote.

Yazıcı, who said that she had worked in a myriad of different positions in the art and museum world "never encountered such a harsh attitude fed by the patriarchal authority in any museum before."

"It is especially painful to have had this unpleasant experience in my own country," she added.

Yazıcı said that even though she tried to reason with the employee, they did not try to find a middle ground.

"Whether you're a curator or know Orhan Pamuk, it doesn't mean anything," the employee said. "We do not allow children," they added.

In the series of discussion and exhibition programs titled "Mothers, Warriors and Poets," which she curated last year, Yazıcı had brought up a conversation about the discrimination female artists face from art institutions, curators and art workers.

Little did she know, she would experience this discrimination a year later in Istanbul, and not only as a female artist but also as a mother.

"I don't remember a sign that said 'Children are not allowed' in the Museum of Innocence. We don't know who set up this rule, but we know who applies it," Yazıcı said.

“This doesn’t suit the innocence of the Museum of Innocence,” she added.