

ART, BROOKLYN, MUSEUMS

Brooklyn Museum's iconic 'OY/YO' sculpture is wrapped in blue fabric to show support for Ukraine

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Deborah Kass (American, born 1952). OY/YO, 2015. Painted aluminum, 96 x 19 5 x 54 ½ in (243.8 x 495.3 x 138.4 cm). Courtesy of the artist. © 2018 Deborah Kass/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo: Courtesy of the Brooklyn Museum

The bright yellow OY/YO sculpture that sits in front of The Brooklyn Museum has been partially wrapped in blue fabric to show solidarity with Ukraine. Deborah Kass, the New York artist behind the piece, joined museum staff on Wednesday to cover the letter “O” with the fabric, a nod to the blue and yellow Ukrainian flag. According to an Instagram post published by the museum, Kass’ activation “aligns with her original motivation in creating this sculpture—to connect communities and to see our commonalities.”



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Kass, who lives in Brooklyn, reflected on her grandparents, who lived in a small Jewish community near Kyiv, according to the museum. The idea to show support for Ukraine during Russia's invasion came from a community member.

The fabric wrapping was inspired by the late Christo, a Bulgarian artist who wrapped major cultural monuments in fabric, including the Arc de Triomphe and the Reichstag Building in Berlin.

The eight-foot-tall sculpture first debuted at Brooklyn Bridge Park in 2015. In 2018, the OY/YO installation moved to its current home in front of the Brooklyn Museum on Eastern Parkway. In 2020, it was reported the museum decided to permanently acquire the statue.

"As a New Yorker, as a Brooklynite, the OY/YO installation in front of the magnificent Brooklyn Museum is a dream," Kass said in an interview in 2020.



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“The plaza has been a rallying place during this inflection point of rage and activism, for Black Trans Lives Matters and Juneteenth. I couldn’t march or rally—too vulnerable and also broke a toe. But I felt like the best of me was there in solidarity. Nothing has moved me more than seeing OY/YO surrounded by 10,000 of my sisters and brothers in love and power and pride. So incredibly emotional. It made me cry.”

Other New York City landmarks, like the Empire State Building, Grand Central Terminal, and the World Trade Center, lit up last week in blue and yellow to show unity with the people of Ukraine.

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