

**This performance is a form of violence against women and I feel very uncomfortable in front of this empty wall:** through the removal of this painting, you are silencing the Naiads, who are powerful female figures in ancient mythology and beyond, re-enacting what has been done to women in the course of history.

How do you expect to have a meaningful conversation on gender and displaying gender on this basis?

**This is also a marketing operation, which uses the #metoo campaign in order to have media's attention (it worked, but now what?).** Overall, in my opinion, this is a good example of what public engagement should not be. Instead of elevating the tone of cultural life and debate in this city, you are depressing it, creating a situation in which the audience will be even more polarized: this will not help a thoughtful and respectful conversation, quite the opposite.

**As for race, I personally question and criticise Victorian ways of representations.** Nonetheless I want the public to know and remember Victorian colonialist culture in order to understand and eventually challenge it: if we choose to hide the past, how can we know the others and ourselves?

**Roberta Mazza (Historian, Feminist, Mancunian)**