



May 30, 2017

Olga Viso - Director
Walker Art Center
725 Vineland Pl
Minneapolis, MN 55403

Dear Ms. Viso:

We appreciate that the Walker Art Center has decided to remove the art work entitled *Scaffold* and that the Walker is taking steps to have a dialogue between management, artists and the Dakota people. However, we're writing to convey our deep disappointment that Dakota communities were not consulted before the Walker made the decision to exhibit *Scaffold* in the Sculpture Garden. While we agree that we must educate people about capital punishment, white supremacy and criminal justice issues, we view the *Scaffold* as an extremely offensive representation of historical trauma that perpetuates historical wounds of Dakota people.

The manner in which public contemporary art represents the historical trauma and loss suffered by Dakota people matters. Dakota people should have been consulted about how their history of oppression and the mass murder of their people is expressed to the public. The appropriation and depiction of historical trauma suffered by Dakota people through the visual representation of a gallows, which also serves as a play structure for children adjacent to a mini golf course, was extremely disturbing to many. Context matters.

We encourage the Walker to seek an understanding of how perceptions of historical trauma impact the contemporary experience of all communities of color and American Indians. To this end, the Walker cannot simply have one meeting between Dakota elders and the artist. We urge the Walker to reassess the institutional structure that allowed this to happen and carefully consider how the narratives of American Indians and communities of color can be integrated, rather than assimilated, with the Walker's representation of contemporary art.

The Walker isn't just a museum, it's a part of our community and state. The institution has benefited greatly from state general obligation bonds, paid for by taxpayers, and should be respectful of the history and culture of all Minnesotans. It's your duty as an institution in our community, supported by us, that you uphold that promise.

We're hopeful that you will take this painful experience as a learning opportunity that results in structural change at the Walker and an understanding of the need for American Indian communities to be consulted when you're publicly representing their history.



Sincerely,



Susan Allen
State Representative – Minneapolis



Jamie Becker-Finn
State Representative – Roseville



Karen Clark
State Representative – Minneapolis



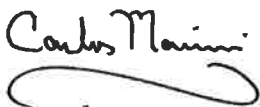
Peggy Flanagan
State Representative – St. Louis Park



Mary Kunesh-Podein
State Representative – New Brighton



Fue Lee
State Representative – Minneapolis



Carlos Mariani
State Representative – Saint Paul



Rena Moran
State Representative – Saint Paul



Erin Maye-Quade
State Representative – Apple Valley



Ilhan Omar
State Representative – Minneapolis



Raymond Dehn
State Representative – Minneapolis



Liz Olson
State Representative – Duluth



Jim Davnie
State Representative – Minneapolis



Sandy Masin
State Representative – Eagan



Jennifer Schultz
State Representative – Duluth



Mike Freiberg
State Representative – Golden Valley



Cheryl Youakim
State Representative – Hopkins



Tina Liebling
State Representative – Rochester