

Statement from Olga Viso, Walker Art Center Executive Director, and Jayne Miller, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Superintendent:

Out of respect for the process of mediation and resolution that is yet to unfold, the Walker Art Center and Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board announce today the official re-opening for the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden will be postponed until Saturday, June 10, 2017. Both partners agree that this is the most appropriate course of action to honor the dialogue that is underway between Dakota Elders, the Walker, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, and artist Sam Durant regarding the sculpture *Scaffold* in the Garden.

A private mediation with a group of Dakota Elders is planned for the morning of Wednesday, May 31, 2017, with leaders from the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, City of Minneapolis, and the artist and his representatives. In advance of this mediation, Dakota Elders will be meeting with a broader cross-section of the Dakota community on Tuesday evening. This meeting is being organized by Dakota Elders and will inform the mediation process. Their announcement is available below and is being posted on the All My Relations gallery website.

Dakota Elders leading the mediation process have respectfully asked that others who feel allied in this endeavor, but who are not Dakota, or whom may represent other communities across the state and region, to please be patient and respect the process that is currently underway. There is concern from all parties involved in the mediation process that pre-emptive actions in advance of these discussions would be counterproductive.

A public statement at 2 pm on Wednesday, May 31, will provide an update on the status of the mediation.

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## **DAKOTA OYATE**

### Dakota Elders Announcement

On Tuesday 7:00 PM May 30, 2017 all Dakota traditional spiritual elders are invited to meet to discuss how to respond to the “Scaffold” sculpture that is currently under construction by Walker Art Center on Minneapolis Park and Recreation Land in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The intent of the Elder meeting is to share the information about the structure, to hear a timely written update from the Walker Art Center, and to make decisions about the priorities for next steps for the structure, specifically:

- 1) Elders’ wishes regarding the structure
- 2) who will be in the working group to plan a ceremony
- 3) how to involve the Dakota community including the youth as well as Native artists in this historic event, and future discussions of the important role that art plays in truth-telling
- 4) which twelve Elders are available/willing to attend the first face to face meeting with the Walker Art Center and Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, the Minneapolis administrator and the artist, Sam Durant, on Wednesday May 31.

All Dakota are encouraged and invited to respond with their insights in this process. This is an opportunity for parents to engage the children in learning about their history and for the students and professions to use their position to help share our truth, our history. Because of the quick timing of this first meeting and the fact that many Dakota cannot travel to this meeting, you may send/share your response to an Elder who will carry that intention forward in prayer to the meeting.

This Elder meeting will be open to all Dakota elders on **Tuesday May 30th 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm** at All My Relations Gallery, 1414 Franklin Ave Minneapolis Minnesota. We welcome all Dakota who come with a good heart, with respect for the ancestors, the elders, our traditional ways and our Sacred sites for the opening prayer and announcements. No press please. This is only the first of many meetings to help create a process of healing and to help educate through Dakota truth-telling of our own history.

The next step will be the face-to-face meeting of Dakota spiritual and traditional elders with the related parties Wednesday morning 9:30 to 12:30 to discuss next steps, followed by a joint press announcement at 2 PM of any logistic decisions made. Recognizing that the presence of the sculpture is very volatile to our community, that timeliness and participation by all related parties is very important, the focus of this part of the mediation process will be discussing the logistics. Broader education for the staff and public will come later. The Walker Art Center and Park Board have agreed to push back the Grand Opening of the sculpture garden until Saturday June 10 to allow for more attention to this process and for good faith efforts at dialogue by all parties.

We call upon all Dakota to pray for wisdom and for healing. We request that all press wait for the joint announcement on Wednesday after our private mediation meeting rather than seeking individual statements from our community. We ask all non-Dakota allies to not take action on our behalf; please respectfully allow us space to conduct our process in our way and timing, that we may heal.

Pidamayayedo

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