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**Artists called for the resignation of a
Kemper Museum trustee because of his
ties to ICE detentions.**

Wallace Ludel

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A Tom Otterness sculpture outside the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art in Kansas City. Photo by jpellgen (@1179_jp), via Flickr.

In the wake of Warren Kanders’s resignation from the board of the Whitney Museum and ongoing furor directed at members of the Sackler family who profited from the opioid crisis while supporting museums financially, the art world has become increasingly aware about the issue of toxic philanthropy within institutions.

In the latest instance, artists are calling on Mariner Kemper, a trustee of the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art in Kansas City, Missouri—which was founded in 1994 by his parents R. Crosby Kemper, Jr. and Mary “Bebe” Hunt—to step down in light of his connections to U.S. President Donald Trump’s immigration policies. Kemper is CEO and chairman of the UMB Financial Corporation, which represents bondholders for

the Wyatt Detention Facility, a center in Central Falls, Rhode Island that has been holding undocumented immigrants detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) since March. Artist June Kramer, a member of activist group the FANG Collective, told *Hyperallergic*:

The Kemper Museum has five people on their Board of Trustees who either currently or recently worked for UMB: Mariner Kemper, Sandy Kemper, L. Joshua Sosland, Clyde Wendel, and Dennis Rilinger [. . .] UMB and Kemper, and by association the Kemper Museum, are complicit in the inhumane detention of people by ICE and the prison system. When confronted with this reality, they have ignored it, thereby condoning it.

The Wyatt Detention Center has held ICE detainees in the past, but stopped after its harsh conditions left one detainee, Hiu Lui “Jason” Ng, dead in 2008. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) filed a wrongful death lawsuit at the time and the suit was settled in 2012.

Social media outcry, led by artists including Molly Crabapple, Sarah Ray, and the Fang Collective, sparked protests at the museum. *Uprise RI* reported that 40 to 50 people attended a protest at the institution on September 1st, where a banner was unfurled reading: “Kempers Make Money Off ICE Detainees & Private Prisons.”