

Warren B. Kanders



June 25, 2019

To the Board of Trustees of the Whitney Museum:

It is with great sadness and disappointment that I inform you of my decision to resign from the Board of Trustees of the Whitney Museum, effective immediately.

Unfortunately, the targeted campaign of attacks against me and my company that has been waged these past several months has threatened to undermine the important work of the Whitney. I joined this board to help the museum prosper. I do not wish to play a role, however inadvertent, in its demise.

Long before I found success in business, I had a love and appreciation for art. My wife, Allison, also shares this passion. The power of art lies in its ability to express, to push boundaries, and to ask questions. Art, as I know it, is not intended to force one-sided answers, or to suppress independent thinking. And yet, these recent events have illustrated how a single narrative, created and sustained by groups with a much larger and more insidious agenda, can overwhelm that spirit. The vibrant art community that this institution has been able to support since the days of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney is clearly at risk.

I remain grateful to Leonard Lauder for inviting me onto this Board in 2006, and for his steadfast support ever since. It has been my honor to serve alongside my many friends. I am proud of what we have accomplished, and for our service to the public and to our community. I believe the Whitney is in a better position today than it was when I began this work thirteen years ago. However, the politicized and oftentimes toxic environment in which we find ourselves across all spheres of public discourse, including the art community, puts the work of this Board in great jeopardy. I hope you assume the responsibility that your position bestows upon you and find the leadership to maintain the integrity of this museum.

Allison will also be resigning from her role as Co-Chair of the Painting and Sculpture Committee. Nonetheless, our support of the arts will continue, and we wish the Whitney and all our artist friends our very best.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Warren B. Kanders".

Warren B. Kanders