

A letter from the Charlotte Street Foundation Board of Directors and Staff:

Charlotte Street Foundation was founded on the belief that artists play a critical role in a healthy and vibrant society. To that end, we provide direct resources to support, challenge, and empower artists of exceptional vision, and work to cultivate an environment where artists can thrive. We believe that one of the most important roles that artists play in society is to call upon the public to reflect upon the environment, systems, and contexts of our human experience, and to shed light on issues that would otherwise go undiscussed.

Recently, a group of Kansas City-based Latinx artists [initiated a demonstration](#) at the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, calling attention to connections between a Museum trustee and a [controversial lawsuit](#) regarding [Wyatt Detention Center in Central Falls, Rhode Island](#). We are grateful for the dialogue this group of artists has initiated, and the courageousness with which they have addressed a complicated issue. Their actions have prompted necessary and uncomfortable conversations about the ways in which we are all linked to and are complicit in systems of oppression (including racism and xenophobia) that perhaps we were neither fully aware of, nor have clear answers as to how to unravel. We believe that by operating in openness and by listening and acting with a true desire to impact the core issues at hand, actionable steps can be identified that can effect real change.

[This evening, the Kemper Museum is opening three solo exhibitions featuring the work of the 2019 Charlotte Street Award Fellows](#). This fellowship award recognizes the work and vision of three Kansas City-based artists selected through a highly competitive juried process, who have spent the greater part of this year working hand-in-hand with curatorial staff of the Kemper to develop these exhibitions. We believe that these artists have powerful stories, vision, and messages worth sharing, and that giving them our full support is central to our mission. We trust that this plays an important role in building empathy, understanding, and awareness that can ultimately impact change.

Cultural spaces offer an especially appropriate platform for open, critical dialogues around complicated issues, especially those that are difficult to distill within the limitations of social media. We are committed to taking thoughtful actions in this process, engaging in open dialogue around oppressive systems, and evaluating Charlotte Street's role in reinforcing these systems, as well as the ways in which we can focus our work and resources on amplifying the voices of marginalized communities. We anticipate the possibility of developing public programming to follow as determined in partnership with the exhibiting artists, protesting artists, and the Kemper Museum.

Charlotte Street Foundation encourages the community to research important and actionable ways in which we can collectively help children and families who are being detained and separated by ICE at the border and in our communities, and placed into camps. You can learn about different organizations who are working directly on this issue by donating and/or researching through this link at: <https://www.nnirr.org/drupal/border-groups>.