

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

January 26, 2017

Museum of the Moving Image statement about HEWILLNOTDIVIDE.US:

The participatory performance HEWILLNOTDIVIDE.US, by LaBeouf, Rönkkö & Turner, is an art work that provides a forum for public expression and reflects important values of inclusion, artistic expression, and community participation. At its core, the mantra "He Will Not Divide Us" embraces the idea of unity. It is a work of art that combines real-time participation both on- and offline and invites a wide range of media response—from social media as well as news outlets. As such, it is open to interpretation and discussion. The piece is what the audience/participants make of it. We welcome participants of all political viewpoints to be part of the work and expect all to behave with common decency and respect for others. HEWILLNOTDIVIDE.US draws additional significance from its location in the borough of Queens, the most diverse county in the nation with over 135 languages spoken.

The response to the work has been overwhelmingly positive from the millions of people who have experienced it either in person or online. The vast majority of the interactions in person have been peaceful, sometimes breaking into impromptu concerts, featuring people of different ages, ethnicities, races, and political positions connecting in productive dialogue. Some in the media and others have misconstrued the work as an "anti-Trump protest." That is not the intention of the artwork. We have had both supporters and critics of President Trump participate in the performance; these interactions have been almost entirely peaceful.

There have been some incidents of hate speech. As an institution devoted to inclusion and diversity, and as a site for everyone, the Museum condemns hate speech in all its forms. Out of concern for the safety of all participants, Museum visitors and staff, and the surrounding community, we are monitoring the situation in partnership with local law enforcement.

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Press contact: Tomoko Kawamoto, tkawamoto@movingimage.us / 718 777 6830