

## **An Open Letter from the Faculty of the University of North Texas College of Visual Arts and Design**

February 13, 2026  
Denton, TX

To the Office of the President and University Leadership, University of North Texas:

The faculty of the University of North Texas College of Visual Arts and Design strongly object to the abrupt and unexplained cancellation of *Ni de Aquí, Ni de Allá*, an exhibition by nationally and internationally recognized artist Victor “Marka27” Quiñonez. The removal of legally protected artistic expression from a university gallery contradicts the institution’s own commitments to academic freedom, constitutional principles, and the open exchange of ideas fundamental to higher education.

The exhibition opened on February 3, 2026. Within days, its windows were covered, its presence removed from university channels, and the work itself taken down, without explanation to the artist, to students, to gallery staff, or to the public. The artist learned of the cancellation not from the institution that invited him, but from students who noticed an absence where a conversation had begun.

Universities exist, at their best, as places where ideas are encountered rather than concealed. Art, particularly art that engages questions of identity, belonging, and lived experience, is not ornamental. It asks something of us. It invites reflection, disagreement, curiosity, and growth. These are not disruptions to be avoided; they are central to the work of education.

This concern is underscored by UNT Policy 06.035 ([Academic Freedom and Academic Responsibility](#)), which affirms that “it is not the proper role of the University to attempt to shield individuals from ideas and opinions they find unwelcome, disagreeable, or even deeply offensive,” by UNT Policy 11.012 ([Art Exhibited on Campus](#)), which states that the University “does not discriminate against works of art based on its content or the viewpoint(s) expressed,” and by UNT Policy 07.006 ([Free Speech and Public Assembly on Campus Grounds](#)), which provides that “nothing in this policy may be construed to limit or infringe on a person’s right to freedom of expression protected by the United States and Texas Constitutions.”

For students, particularly those preparing to enter creative fields, the message matters. When a completed, approved exhibition can disappear overnight, it raises urgent questions about whose voices are vulnerable, whose stories are treated as conditional, and whose work may be erased without dialogue. When such an exhibition centers the lived experience of a marginalized community, its unexplained removal signals that certain voices are more easily set aside within our institutional spaces, and that artists are disposable. As a faculty community, we reject this implication and affirm the

University's responsibility to protect the expression and dignity of those whose histories and identities have too often been rendered invisible.

This concern carries particular weight given that the University of North Texas is a federally designated [Hispanic-Serving Institution](#). That designation reflects not only enrollment metrics, but an institutional responsibility to support, protect, and meaningfully engage the communities such a designation represents. When an exhibition rooted in Latino cultural experience is removed without explanation, it undermines that responsibility and the trust it implies.

*Ni de Aquí, Ni de Allá* speaks to the experience of living between places, languages, and histories. Its removal, carried out silently and without accountability, echoes the very condition the work sought to illuminate. In this moment, we find ourselves occupying that same in-between space: caught between institutional values that are publicly affirmed and actions that remain unexplained. From this position, we call for clarity, responsibility, and accountability from the UNT administration.

We do not ask for unanimity of opinion, nor for art to be insulated from critique. We ask for transparency, integrity, and courage. Decisions that shape the academic and cultural life of this university must be communicated clearly and grounded in the principles the institution claims as its own.

We respectfully call upon the University of North Texas administration to explain the rationale and decision-making process that led to the cancellation of this exhibition, to demonstrate how that decision aligns with constitutional protections and university policy, and to reaffirm its commitment to academic freedom, artistic expression, and the public trust entrusted to it.

We are providing this request in stewardship of our students, our disciplines, and the values that define higher education.

This letter is offered as an open statement and may be shared and endorsed by members of the university and arts community who feel aligned with its concerns.

Respectfully,

Faculty of the College of Visual Arts and Design  
University of North Texas