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Dear Editor,

The University of Cape Town was not asked to respond to Mr Chumani Maxwele's claim that he and the Rhodes Must Fall (RMF) movement were singularly responsible for the review of artworks on campus ("RMF wants credit for UCT's removal of art", 13 April 2016). Your readers deserve to have a balanced report on this matter.

Transformation is a strategic value at UCT and we applaud students and staff members who have brought attention to transformation issues, including the artwork issue, whether through the protest actions of RMF or by other means. The fact is that the selection and placement of artwork has been in discussion at UCT for some years now.

On 21 October 2014, Vice-Chancellor Dr Max Price spoke at Baxter Theatre during a public debate on transformation in higher education. He specifically mentioned efforts to review artworks at UCT as well as the names of buildings and the Rhodes statue as examples of symbolism that needed to be reviewed to address the diverse culture of the university. He added that he felt what was most important about the university and the process undertaken was the "openness of the debates" around such issues.

The removal of some artworks from UCT's public spaces, which has attracted largely poorly informed attention, is part of the review and consultation process that was set in motion last year with the appointment of the Artworks Task Team.

Amongst other matters, the review seeks to look at how UCT has curated its entire art collection to ensure that all our students and staff see our country's diversity reflected to them. It is not in response to pressure by RMF and absolutely not because of the wholly unacceptable burning of some paintings in February this year. It is rather because we recognise that there are many voices that need to be heard on this matter – not just the voice of RMF.

Sincerely,

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