Transcript of text associated with the exhibition of “Don’t Shoot” by Mike L’roy at Madison Public Library.

NOTE
The artist of this piece, Mike L’roy, fully supports posting the response statement by the Wisconsin Professional Police Association/Madison Professional Police Association next to his artist statement on the wall. Viewers are encouraged to look at the painting and read both statements.

ARTIST STATEMENT
Mike L’Roy
Don’t Shoot
Acrylic and Spray Paint on Canvas
2015

Artist Statement

This is reality. While many white people have the privilege of ignoring racial disparities and the killing of unarmed black men, this is a reality for countless black communities around the U.S. including Madison, WI. The aim of my piece “Don’t Shoot” is twofold. For those who have had the privilege of ignoring these gross injustices, I hope to startle, shock, and interrupt your reality. By visually representing the militarization of police through a painting, one cannot keep scrolling through a timeline or find another news station to watch; I will not allow this reality to escape without stirring emotion and provoking reflection. My second aim is to empower black individuals who are feeling angry, forgotten, and demonized by the mainstream narrative. Art is a positive outlet for expression, emotion, and activism. While viewing my piece, I challenge you to reflect on your identity and to engage in meaningful, critical, and genuine dialogue with others about the social and political causes that have led to actions like the one depicted in “Don’t Shoot.”

Mike L’Roy is a Madison based artist and is currently a muralist for the ArtWrite Collective. See more of Mike’s work at MikeLroy.com or contact him at Lnaprkco@gmail.com. Read more about ArtWrite Collective at theartwritecollective.org.

POLICE STATEMENT
Wisconsin Professional Police Association
Madison Professional Police Officers Association

Law Enforcement Statement in Response to Anti-Cop Public Library Display

(MADISON, WI) – Jim Palmer, the executive director of the Wisconsin Professional Police Association (WPPA), and Dan Frei, president of the Madison Professional Police Officers Association (MPPOA), issued the following joint statement in response to the “Don’t Shoot” painting currently on display at the Madison Public Library:
“Although law enforcement officers have the utmost respect for the value of artistic expression and free speech, we are deeply offended by the “Don't Shoot” painting and the message it sends. While we appreciate that the anti-law enforcement sentiment expressed in this piece represents the feelings of some, this “stormtrooper” portrayal of police officers who appear to threaten a small child only serves to advance patently negative law enforcement stereotypes at the expense of the important and selfless jobs that our dedicated officers perform.

“This is a sensitive time in our nation. Strengthening the relationship between law enforcement and the people it serves is a serious matter that will require the balanced collaboration of many diverse views. The biased and hostile message advanced by this painting does little to contribute to that important public dialogue.

“Each day, officers wake up and go to work to protect their communities and its families. There is no greater calling. The men and women of the Madison Police Department are committed to one thing—protecting this city every day they put on the uniform, so that it can be safe for all of us.”

Wisconsin’s largest law enforcement group, the WIPPA represents nearly 10,000 members from almost 300 local association affiliates, including the MPPOA. The MPPOA represents approximately 400 law enforcement professionals who serve the City of Madison as police officers, detectives, investigators, and sergeants.