



UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN

Faculty of Fine Art, Music and Design

Head office
Samherji
Glerargotu 30, IS-600 Akureyri, Iceland

Your ref.

Our ref. 2024/12915-ANTH

Date 27.09.2024

Open Letter

Dear Managing Directors at Head Office Samherji,

At the Art Academy at Faculty of Fine Art, Music and Design, University of Bergen, Norway, we have been informed of the ongoing court case between our Master student ODEE and your company. We understand that you are suing ODEE at the High Court of London, in a dispute over the artwork, 'We are Sorry'. An artwork created by ODEE as part of his Bachelor project at Iceland University of the Arts.

At the Art Academy we see freedom of speech as a cornerstone of a free society and we implore you to reconsider this court case, where a single individual, an art student – is taken to court by a large powerful corporation. The optics of this power imbalance cannot benefit you. We appeal to your generosity of spirit and desire to operate as a business in a free world.

That art works like 'We are Sorry' can exist, is necessary. A sign of a healthy democracy is where free speech is seen not as a threat, but as a contribution to discourse held in common - which in turn benefits all.

If this case succeeds for you - there will be much that is lost. Firstly, this will be a significant loss to ODEE whose career will be affected and who may be left with a personal financial debt. Secondly, it is a loss for 'culture jamming' and free speech. It may be used as a test case for other corporations to limit artistic expression and other forms of free speech.

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As an Art Academy we strive to educate free and independent artist who are ready to speak from their hearts and minds through their work. Artists who are not afraid and who are motivated by a need to address situations that they find problematic.

Artists do a very important job in a free democratic society. We live at a time where free speech is under threat by governments, but also by big corporations and sometimes by both. No one will benefit in the long run by narrowing the space of possibility for criticality in the world.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours Sincerely

Åsil Bøthun
Acting Faculty Dean

Katrine Hjelde
Head of Department.
The Art Academy – Department of
Contemporary Art