

Monday, October 23
Account on Instagram was created with the handle @community_in_eka_for_palestine



Friday, October 27
Postmees published "Kunstiakadeemia niinell toetatakse Palestiina, hoop no'ub v'ite eemaldamist"

Friday, November 3
Fundraiser at EKKA

19h15, Reading of In a Sideways Manner bulletin

19h35, Sign making workshop
19h50, INTENSIO DJ Set

Sunday, November 5
15h, Freedom Sq. Citizens called for a demonstration In Solidarity With Palestine

On October 19, an open letter undersigned by the art community to cultural organisations, was published in the contemporary art magazine Artforum. Declaring support of Palestinian liberation, the letter condemned the institutional silence of the art world to the crimes against humanity that the Palestinians are facing, while also endorsing a ceasefire in Gaza. Following a week of speculation since the letter was published, David Velasco, who worked as editor of the magazine for eighteen years, and who had also signed it, was called into a meeting with Penske and fired immediately after that.



Penske, a conglomerate that also owns Artnews, the Hollywood Reporter, Variety, Rolling Stone and other publications, bought Artforum in December 2022. The firing of David Velasco by a man who controls leading publications in the arts and entertainment world, and the pressure put on artists and cultural institutions by wealthy collectors underscores the fact that cultural life is held in the grip of the wealthy rich.

The horrific events in Gaza are exposing the social rot in our world, which sadly is a cultural edifice that hinders the open and democratic airing of views at every point. Artists, students, and educators have had their jobs, careers, and futures threatened for speaking out against the crimes that Palestinians have been subjected to for the past 75 years. The incident at Artforum is part of the wave of anti-Palestinian censorship that includes, among many other incidents, the deafening silence by cultural institutions across Estonia, including our school, the Estonian Academy of Arts.

On October 23, an account in solidarity with Palestine, was created by "a group of students, staff and alumni from the Estonian Academy of Arts (EKA)" with the aim of organising a fundraiser and penning an open letter to the governing body of the academy. After the university demanded that the creators of the account remove the school's name from the handle, the latter was changed to "Community in EKA for Palestine." A few hours later, an email was sent to all students and staff, stating that "as a university, the Estonian Academy of Arts is apolitical," and that "political statements made on behalf of EKA (messages published for or against certain countries) be immediately removed from social media and the public." A day later, Estonian news outlet Postimes released an article titled "Palestine is supported on behalf of the Academy of Arts, the school demands that its name be removed."

Freedom, much less the right of artists, art educators and students to openly oppose the genocide in Gaza and Palestine in general, has run up against the brick wall of private ownership of the

means of communication and the control by capitalistic greed embedded in cultural and educational institutions. There is a clear dissonance apparent in the actions of Artforum firing their editor for signing a letter in support of a Free Palestine, while having featured Black Panther artist, Emory Douglas on their cover, and of EKA's claim to be "apolitical" while its student body often produces politically engaged art. The academy has previously taken a commendable political stance by mobilising resources in solidarity with Ukraine, integrating scholarships into study programs and waving a symbolic Ukrainian flag in front of the school.

The worldwide struggle against oppression and the defence of the Palestinian people, require an end to prejudice about which lives we deem important and the death of the capitalist and corrupted sway over academia and the art world.

Dear colleagues and students, 25 October 2023 16:46

As a university, the Estonian Academy of Arts is apolitical. EKA members, including students and employees, may not speak on political issues on behalf of the Estonian Academy of Arts in the media, social media, in public or in any other way unless the messages have been approved by the governing bodies of the Estonian Academy of Arts (council, senate, rector).

We ask that political statements made on behalf of EKA (messages published for or against certain countries) be immediately removed from social media and the public!

Kind regards,
Department of Communications

EKA
Tallinn
Estonia

