

Establishing the fact of censorship: a crowdfunding campaign

“Whichever senses and meanings are constituted in a particular historical situation depends on the results of approved judgments. Judgment, according to Hannah Arendt, makes a distinction based on our attitude or our position in relation to something. Judgments have public value and performative power: by making a judgment I recognize the social status of an object, I form further opportunities for action — mine and of others — in relation to a specific object. Concepts have no absolute and unchanging substance. New forms and words are created and established at the time of their institutionalization and through the conscious activity of a society (community)”.

Preface, Method Fund, 2016

Method Fund initiates a crowdfunding campaign to support the court hearings on establishing the fact of censorship, to determine the notion of censorship, and to organize an educational program enhancing creative workers' knowledge of law.

In 2013, on a day before the exhibition “Grand and Great” in Mystetsky Arsenal museum complex in Kyiv, Ukraine was opened, a mural by Volodymyr Kuznetsov called “Koliivschyna: the Judgment Day,” created specially for this exhibition, was painted over with black paint on the order of the director of the museum complex Nataliya Zabolotna. The exhibition commemorated the 1025-th anniversary of Rus’ baptism and was accompanied by official events.

In 2015, Volodymyr Kuznetsov initiated a long series of court hearings to protect his right for freedom of expression. His last lawsuit against Mystetsky Arsenal and Nataliya Zabolotna has been concerned with establishing the facts of censorship and copyright infringement, demanding moral compensation for these violations. In February 2018, the court ordered to close the lawsuit concerning the fact of censorship. The appeal to this decision is currently under way.

The ban and destruction of Kuznetsov’s “Koliivschyna” is an act of censorship. This case became the foundation for numerous discussions in Ukraine’s cultural field. The right to freedom of thought and speech, to free expression of one’s opinions and beliefs is guaranteed by Constitution of Ukraine; however, the attempt to solve the conflict in the legal field showed that the current law of Ukraine has no clear notion of censorship and no definite punishment for acts of censorship.

A lack of legal definition of censorship and refusal to acknowledge that this case was a case of censorship presents us with a risk of emergence of a prohibitive mechanism, allowing any official or a director of any cultural institution to ban or even destroy any “ambiguous” piece of art that he or she cannot understand.

Method Fund initiates a program of solidarity action: the first stage of this program entails financial and public support of the court hearings concerning the fact of censorship and the legal definition of censorship.

The second simultaneous stage entails printing materials aimed at enhancing creative workers' knowledge of law and organizing a series of public lectures and practical seminars. We plan to gather and analyze the cases of censorship and infringement of creative workers' rights. Also, we will improve the ways of protecting rights by designing typical contracts between creative workers and state and private cultural institutions.

We offer anyone to join this crowdfunding campaign.

The gathered sum will cover:

- Legal expenses (legal expenses related to the court hearings in the case of Volodymyr Kuznetsov vs. Mystetsky Arsenal museum complex and its ex-director Nataliya Zabolotna, case no. 757/29202/17-ц).
- Designing and printing materials for creative workers' legal education.
- Preparing and holding the educational program (lectures, practical seminars).
- Coordination and management of the project.



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You can promote the campaign with any endorsement comfortable for you or by providing media

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If you have any questions, please contact the campaign's coordinator Olga Kubli, phone no. +380 93 101 58 68, methodfund@gmail.com

The Method Fund is an independent, nonprofit organization aimed at supporting and developing contemporary art and culture in Ukraine by initiating scientific, educational and exhibition projects.