

# [If you want to achieve greatness, stop asking for permission essay sample](https://assignbuster.com/if-you-want-to-achieve-greatness-stop-asking-for-permission-essay-sample/)

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The topic chosen for this case study is “ Can illustration be unethical?” based on the lecture given by Bruce Ingman on week 14. The aim of that session is to think about plagiarism, how it can happen, what are the consequences and a debate with our colleagues about many cases shown in the classroom. As I think it is a really interesting subject matter, I decided to look for a recent and relevant case. After some research I found out about an artist called Eddie Colla who has been plagiarized multiple times in recent years. Eddie Colla is a Californian street artist that can resemble really well known Banksy’s work, here is how he defines his own work; “ Some people view what I do as vandalism. I assume that their objection is that I alter the landscape without permission. Advertising perpetually alters our environment without the permission of its inhabitants. The only difference is that advertisers pay for the privilege to do so and I don’t. So if you’re going to call me anything, it is more accurate to call me a thief.” the aim of his work is really similar to Banksy’s as well, trying to fight capitalism and social issues in general. The case I am going to concentrate my case study in is, specifically, one related to Wal-Mart, what leads to the great discussion about big corporations “ stealing” from artist that are not too well known. To know more about this case I had a look to Colla’s social network sites as well as his own website and few articles about him and his work and how he is dealing with plagiarism. Methodology

As a main resource to obtain information about this case in particular I used digital resources due to the nature of the case and how recent it is. Resources like articles, blog posts, and a series of websites have made the understanding, accuracy and reliability of my findings consistent since all articles even though from different people concur in their conclusions. On the other hand to put myself in the dynamic of this topic I researched with a few books pursuing a better understanding of plagiarism, as well as reading through the Code of Ethics provided on Weblearn. The main focus of this case study has been on articles found talking about this specific case. Some of these articles include short interviews with the artist involved and even a response of Wal-Mart towards this issue. I felt like this was more relevant than other resources seeing as this actually caused quite a lot of media response in the US due to the popularity of Wal-Mart. Research and findings

387096019685It all started when the Californian artist Eddie Colla produced one of his best known pieces of work around 2009 called “ Ambition” that includes a quote that says “ If you want to achieve greatness, stop asking for permission” (See picture number 1). This piece of work could be understandably confused with one of Banksy’s work since the style is quite similar. -228601798320Image 2 – Screechot from Wal-Mart’s website selling Colla’s print under the name of Banksy Image 1 – Colla’s “ Ambition”

Around November 2013 the artist received a message through Facebook alerting him that Wal-Mart was selling replicas of the mentioned piece of work, and attributing it to Banksy. (See picture number 2). The artist did not take this news very well, here are a couple of quotes from the artist; “ I fucking hate Wal-Mart and everything they stand for,” Colla told me a few weeks after he first discovered the listing. “ I guess this is the natural chain of events. It can only keep getting worse. And what’s the pinnacle of bad? Wal-Mart. Fucking really? It’s like why don’t you just piss in my face?”, “ That’s the irony, isn’t it? I made a piece about individuals controlling their own fate and not making their success contingent on the approval of others. It then gets adopted by a neo-feudal corporation like Wal-Mart. “ After these events, the news started to spread on social media, and Colla created a response to Wal-Mart revisiting his piece “ Ambition” and calling it “ It’s only theft if you get caught” (See image number 3).

After all the uproar, Wal-Mart released a statement regarding this issue; “ Wal-Mart has these items are sold through our Marketplace third-party sellers Wayfair and PlumStruck. We’ve taken action to disable the one item in question by Callo, and it will be unpublished later tonight around midnight PT. 3768725-662305Image 3 – Colla’s come back to Wal-Mart after the Banksy incident We will also instruct Wayfair and Plumstruck to review their artwork to ensure the descriptions are accurate. They’ve provided great products and experiences to our customers and are contracted to comply with product copyright, safety, testing and certification requirements. We’ll work closely with them on the review.” Colla is now taking in consideration legal action towards Wal-Mart. This case is a great example of unethical illustration. Wal-Mart, a big corporation that takes a piece of artwork that they thought they could go away without asking the owner for permission to use it since they probably have a considerably good team of lawyers for this kind of situations.

What personally I find most interesting about this case, apart from the fact that it has happened over the last months is that, it is entirely ironic. A piece of work that states the quote “ If you want to achieve greatness, stop asking for permission” turned into a canvas and sold through a capitalist corporation. No doubt that the artist was not pleased with these events, but at the same time, the fact that it was supposedly mistaken for another street artist like Banksy and that Colla reacted in such an aggressive way makes it even more ironic since street art is theoretically illegal and should have not been produced in the first place. Also, the fact that his prints are sold for an average of $150 makes the whole situation even more ironic. Analysis and discussion

Since this case is really recent, the legal actions are still to be taken and therefore we still do not know what will or would be the outcome if there is any litigation. Even though, I think it would be a fair assumption to think that in this case the artist would win the case seeing that he has so many people supporting and standing for him and his rights over the artwork. Wal-Mart had to discontinue the product and apologized for the mistake made so they already accepted the blame. Searching for information about this case I stumbled upon numerous articles and blog posts of people talking about this, and not mentioning the amount of supportive responses that the artist received through all different social media platforms. All the articles I found agreed on how frustrating it is that a big corporation would “ steal” your work and try to get away with it, and adopt the attitude “ It’s not theft if you don’t get caught” which is as I mentioned before, the title of the response to Wal-Mart from Colla. As expected, after reading thoroughly around this case, I came up with my own conclusions, and I was glad to discover that I am, in fact, not the only one thinking of the same thing.

As posted in the article “ Wal-Mart: if you want to achieve greatness, stop asking for permission” on the website Clancco in relation to attributing the work to Banksy “ This Salon article quotes the website, Death and Taxes, as stating that Wal-Mart can do so because Banksy “ doesn’t copyright his work.” Not so sure about that; under US law the “ copyrightability” attaches the moment the work has been fixed in a tangible medium of expression (read: once the graffiti paint has hit the wall). I think what Death & Taxes really meant was that Banksy may not police his pieces of work and enforce his copyrights. That’s a different story.” Before reading this I thought about the option that maybe Wal-Mart did know that the work was not Banksy’s work but since he never claims his rights over his work they could get away with it more easily, after all, Banksy is completely anonymous. This case is obviously not isolated, as seen in the lecture, TOPMAN also took a pattern of a not that well known artist and used it almost without variation for their own profit. Conclusion

For this case I used mainly digital resources, this might be a problem sometimes, as most of the time you cannot know entirely that the information is completely reliable. Knowing this, before making any conclusion I made sure to look into many different resources, such as the original accounts on social media of the artist affected and his own website. Also, seeing that all of the articles agreed on the outcomes of the issue even though these were from completely different websites and completely unrelated individuals, I thought it would be fair to assume that the information was accurate. This case has made me realise that this industry is really competitive and you must be vigilant at some point if you want to preserve your work. It also has made me realize how powerful the social media is, after all, the reason why Wal-Mart has removed the item for sale is because of all the support the artist has received from all over the web.

Bibliography

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Facebook:   
https://www. facebook. com/MrEddie510? ref= ts   
Twitter:   
https://twitter. com/eddiecolla   
Wordpress:   
http://eddiecolla. wordpress. com/   
Flickr:   
http://www. flickr. com/photos/eddieicon/   
Tumblr:   
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