

# Principal defies order to suspend art school

Renowned Durban political cartoonist Nanda Soobben has defied a directive from the Higher Education Department to shut his school.



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Soobben, founder of the Centre for Fine Art, Animation and Design, was instructed to halt lessons after the department told him his accreditation to operate as a private higher education institution had been suspended for the second time within weeks.

Soobben has appealed against the decision, but has refused to stop tutoring his 20 students - half of whom are studying free of charge.

His work was included in Nelson Mandela's private collection and held by The Smithsonian Institute.

An online petition has been launched to save the school.

Soobben said the first time his accreditation was suspended was because he could not provide the department with a student database.

"I was robbed four times and forced to move premises. The department suspended the accreditation because the school didn't have a students' database; it and the school's computers were stolen. We set up a new database, appealed and were reinstated."

This time the school's accreditation was suspended after it moved to new premises. The department said the school had failed to provide a health and safety report.

"We moved in a hurry because of crime. But we got the [health and safety] report done and sent it within the specified time.

"The department said the appeal is pending but the school is still suspended."

Soobben said he was prepared to fight the matter in court.

The department failed to respond to questions.

**Source:** The Times

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