

Press Coverage | June 4, 2026

# FIFA Spat Over Dallas Whale Mural Tests Power of Artists' Rights

## RELATED PROFESSIONALS

[Austin Padgett](#) | [Christopher C. "Rusty" Close, Jr.](#)

---

[Austin Padgett](#) and [Rusty Close](#), partners in Troutman Pepper Locke's [Intellectual Property](#) Practice Group, were quoted in the June 4, 2026, *Bloomberg Law* article, "FIFA Spat Over Dallas Whale Mural Tests Power of Artists' Rights."

An artist's VARA rights last their lifetime and aren't erased if a new owner buys the building, [Austin Padgett](#) of Troutman Pepper Locke said.

...

[Rusty Close](#), also of Troutman Pepper Locke, said some may think the landowner's rights are paramount, but VARA is based on a mindset focused more on the artist.

...

Artists could also receive fees for restoration and reputational harm, attorneys' fees, and possibly an injunction, Padgett said.

...

Padgett said he would advise landowners to do research when deciding to buy a building containing art, including identifying the artwork and determining whether there's an existing agreement.

"If I'm the building owner, I want to get to know this artist and make sure we have some sort of communication level of understanding about what needs to be done because artwork needs to be kept up," he said.

...

Padgett said he would advise landowners to do research when deciding to buy a building containing art, including identifying the artwork and determining whether there's an existing agreement.

"If I'm the building owner, I want to get to know this artist and make sure we have some sort of communication level of understanding about what needs to be done because artwork needs to be kept up," he said.

## RELATED INDUSTRIES + PRACTICES

- [Intellectual Property](#)