

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

FILED

OCT 05 2017

Clerk, U.S. District & Bankruptcy
Courts for the District of Columbia

TATYANA ISHUTKINA, *et al.*,)
)
Plaintiffs,)
)
v.) Civil Action No. 17-1949 (UNA)
)
FANNIE MAE,)
)
Defendant.)

MEMORANDUM OPINION

Plaintiffs Tatyana Ishutkina and Nikolay Synkov appear to bring this civil action in their capacities as the Executive Director and Founder, respectively, of the Fermata Arts Foundation, Inc. Neither plaintiff appears to be an attorney. As a general rule applicable here, a *pro se* litigant can represent only himself or herself in federal court. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 1654; *Georgiades v. Martin-Trigona*, 729 F.2d 831, 834 (D.C. Cir. 1984). Therefore, to the extent that these plaintiffs purport to represent the Fermata Arts Foundation, Inc. before this Court, they cannot do so. *See 180 East Broad Partners LLC v. Ohio Dep't of Taxation*, 193 F. Supp. 3d 1, 2 (D.D.C. 2014). Even if these plaintiffs were representing their own interests, their complaint must be dismissed on a separate ground.

The Court has reviewed the complaint, keeping in mind that complaints filed by *pro se* litigants are held to less stringent standards than those applied to formal pleadings drafted by lawyers. *See Haines v. Kerner*, 404 U.S. 519, 520 (1972). *Pro se* litigants still must comply with the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. *Jarrell v. Tisch*, 656 F. Supp. 237, 239 (D.D.C. 1987). Rule 8(a) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure requires that a complaint contain a short and plain statement of the grounds upon which the Court's jurisdiction depends, a short and

plain statement of the claim showing that the pleader is entitled to relief, and a demand for judgment for the relief the pleader seeks. Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(a). The purpose of the minimum standard of Rule 8 is to give fair notice to the defendants of the claim being asserted, sufficient to prepare a responsive answer, to prepare an adequate defense and to determine whether the doctrine of *res judicata* applies. *Brown v. Califano*, 75 F.R.D. 497, 498 (D.D.C. 1977).

As drafted, the plaintiff's complaint does not comply with Rule 8(a). It does not set forth a valid basis for this Court's jurisdiction or include a short and plain statement showing that these plaintiffs are entitled to relief they demand – donation of certain real property as an office for the Fermata Arts Foundation – from the named defendant.

The Court will grant the plaintiff's applications to proceed *in forma pauperis* and dismiss the complaint and this civil action without prejudice. An Order is issued separately.

DATE: *Oct. 4, 2017*


United States District Judge