

Apple apologises for iPad ad criticised as ‘destruction of the human experience’

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Apple has apologised after an online backlash to an advert for its new iPad that features an industrial-sized hydraulic press crushing a collection of creative objects including musical instruments and books. The ad, launched by Apple's chief executive, Tim Cook, on Tuesday, shows the machine squashing various items – ranging from a piano and a metronome to tins of paint and an arcade game – before a single iPad Pro then appears in their place. A voiceover then states: “The most powerful iPad ever is also the thinnest.” The implication that an iPad can squeeze humanity's cultural prowess into an object with a depth of 5mm was viewed differently by commentators on social media. The actor Hugh Grant wrote on X that the advert represented “the destruction of the human experience, courtesy of Silicon Valley”. Justine Bateman, a US film-maker who has criticised the impact of artificial intelligence on her industry, wrote on X: “Why did Apple do an ad that crushes the arts? Tech and AI means to destroy the arts and society in general.” Apple later apologised and acknowledged that the advert was misjudged. “Creativity is in our DNA at Apple, and it's incredibly important to us to design products that empower creatives all over the world,” said Tor Myhren, Apple's vice-president of marketing communications, in a statement sent to the trade publication Ad Age. “Our goal is to always celebrate the myriad of ways users express themselves and bring their ideas to life through iPad. We missed the mark with this video, and we're sorry.” It was reported that although the advert remains online on Cook's X account and on YouTube, Apple has cancelled plans to show it on TV. Unfavourable comparisons were also made with Ridley Scott's 1984 Apple Macintosh ad, which portrayed an Orwellian future being challenged by a sledge hammer-wielding heroine and had the tagline “you'll see why 1984 won't be like '1984'.” Christopher Slevin, the creative director of the UK marketing agency Inking Culture, wrote on LinkedIn: “It looks like Apple has become Big Brother itself, subtly shaping our digital lives in ways we may not fully grasp or choose to ignore. The new iPad Pro ad, while stunning, hints at a future where our creativity is confined to digital screens, and all physicality is crushed beneath the relentless march of technology.” Paul Graham, a Silicon Valley investor, wrote on X that the Apple co-founder Steve Jobs “wouldn't have shipped that ad”. He added: “It would have pained him too much to watch.” Apple has been contacted for comment.