

An analysis of Banksy



Without a doubt, the most popular graffiti artist in the world is Banksy, real identity unknown. His art can be traced back to the early 1990's, but it wasn't until the turn of the decade when he really started to establish himself as a popular artist.

His work strikes a chord with many people for the blunt usage of messages within an art-form that was often regarded as existent only within the margins of society. Banksy isn't seen as just an artist, but also as a philosopher and political spokesman against capitalism, war, theism, totalitarianism and fascism. By stirring the youth with broad and direct statements, as well as through his constant subversion of authority, Banksy has managed to develop a large following.

The seductive nature of Banksy's work within the hip-hop community is easy to understand, and can be attributed to two significant factors: 1) the fact that graffiti never had a universal flag-bearer and 2) the ease of his artwork. Although there have been numerous graffiti artists who gained some notoriety prior to Banksy, none have had a similar universal following.



As a draftsman* Banksy is nothing less than solid. His work tends to be bold and sweeping, his style so distinct that it is difficult to mistake his work for anyone else. Through his incorporation of elements of surrealism, such as a dog shooting a record player, Banksy allows his vision to remain fresh. This side to his artwork is doubtlessly what makes him so attractive to people around the globe. He also makes heavy use of irony, cleverness, wit and archness*. Banksy's street art is often centred around a single key idea. Indeed his view of the world is quite simplistic, and in that very agreeable to many, especially youth. Instead of using ideas as a pretext for his art, his art is a pretext for his ideas.



The ease of Banksy's work has much to do with his popularity. His work often lends itself to reduction, frequently his work is little more than a simple idea covered by an active imagination. A quick glance at Banksy's gallery is revelatory of this, his work can be decoded effortlessly. A man throwing a bouquet is symbolic of peace, a depiction of graffiti removal is a tongue-in-cheek* reference to the treatment of his own work. With Banksy art is simply a matter of knowing; of understanding the reference, the clear message or the clever joke. *The Find Mag 2014*



Help:

Draftsman = artist / **Archness**: malice / **tongue-in-cheek**=ironical

Read the text and answer the following questions.

1. Choose between the two statements below and justify with an element from the text.

- ☐ 'Banksy' uses a pseudo
- ☐ 'Banksy' uses his real name.

2. Find at least two expressions showing his popularity.

3. When did he become a popular artist?

4. Find who he is mostly popular with:

5. Find examples showing that he has several different statuses:

6. Find some elements showing the positive aspects the author sees in his work:

7. Find some elements showing the negative aspects the author sees in his work: