

# [***A new Banksy mural sprouts beside a cropped tree in London. Many see an environmental message***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BK8-FGK1-JC5B-G0R3-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

LONDON — A new [*Banksy*](https://apnews.com/hub/banksy) mural drew crowds to a London street on Monday, even before the elusive graffiti artist confirmed that the work was his.

The artwork in the Finsbury Park neighborhood covers the wall of a four-story residential building and shows a small figure holding a pressure hose beside a large cherry tree. Green paint has been sprayed across the wall, replicating the absent leaves of the tree, which has been severely pruned in a technique known as pollarding.

Banksy claimed the work by posting before and after photos of the location on his official Instagram account.

The new attraction drew a stream of onlookers who took photos and snapped selfies. Many discerned an environmental message in the vibrant green artwork, which appeared on Sunday — St. Patrick’s Day.

“The tree looks very sad without branches and without greenery,” said Pura Lawler, on her way to a gym class. She felt Banksy was saying something about "destroying the forests, destroying the greenery.”

Former Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn, who represents the area in Parliament, said the work "makes people stop and think, ‘Hang on. We live in one world. We live in one environment. It is vulnerable and on the cusp of serious damage being done to it.’”

“Environmental ***politics*** is about densely populated urban areas like this, just as much as it is about farmland and woodland and hedges," he added.

Banksy, who has never confirmed his full identity, began his career spray-painting buildings in Bristol, England, and has become one of the world’s best-known artists.

His mischievous and often satirical images include two policemen kissing, armed riot police with yellow smiley faces, and a chimpanzee with a sign bearing the words, “Laugh now, but one day I’ll be in charge.”

Banksy’s work has [*sold for millions of dollars*](https://apnews.com/article/business-lifestyle-london-banksy-arts-and-entertainment-2afc1f803d58f96dc21e485e40d785f0) at auction, and past murals on outdoor sites have often been stolen or removed by building owners soon after going up. In December, after Banksy stenciled military drones on a stop sign in south London, a man was photographed taking down [*the sign with bolt cutters*](https://apnews.com/article/banksy-stop-sign-drones-london-5c4e3bcbac02fe89f9295ea2d66d58c6). Police later arrested two men on suspicion of theft and criminal damage.

The latest work would be harder to take down since the piece relies on the tree for its impact.

“It’s good to see it before it gets vandalized,” said Geoff Gardner, who stopped by on his way to work. “I suppose if someone comes and sprays red paint over it, you could call that art as well.”

Alex Georgiou, whose company owns the building, said “it’s quite mad to be honest, to come down here and just to see all the crowds of people looking at the building.”

“I definitely plan on keeping it on there and letting people enjoy it," he said. “Everyone’s loving it, which is great.”

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