

= Better Out Than In =

Better Out Than In was a residency undertaken by pseudonymous graffiti artist and political activist Banksy in New York City during October 2013 . Banksy unveiled at least one work of art daily , documenting it on both a dedicated website and an Instagram account . The majority of the works were stencil graffiti and chiefly political , a distinctive characteristic of Banksy . Other pieces and multimedia exhibits toyed with dark humor and satire .

The unpredictability of the show and Banksy 's elusive nature stirred excitement amongst fans , while defacement from competing street artists and vandals became an imminent problem . While Banksy 's works were inherently illegal , no official complaints were reported to the police ; most property owners praised the art and some took measures to protect it . The month @-@ long residency drew controversy amongst some locals for its more politically strong pieces , and received mixed reviews from critics . In 2014 , a documentary film called Banksy Does New York came out regarding the whole ' residency ' .

= = Background = =

On 1 October 2013 , Banksy announced on his website that he would be attempting to host a show in New York City for the entire month . This came after posters promoting an October event started showing up in Los Angeles .

The title Better Out Than In is a reference to a quote by impressionist Paul Cézanne , " All pictures painted inside , in the studio , will never be as good as those done outside . "

In an interview with The Village Voice , Banksy said " New York calls to graffiti writers like a dirty old lighthouse . We all want to prove ourselves here , " and that he chose it for the high foot traffic and hiding places .

= = Works = =

The works Banksy has included in Better Out Than In primarily consist of stencil graffiti , much of which are political in nature . His first installment , which he captioned " the street is in play " , depicted a child reaching for a bottle of spray paint on a sign reading " graffiti is a crime " . The sign was stolen and later replaced by Queens @-@ based graffiti group Smart Crew with a new sign that read " street art is a crime " . Like most of his other works , the piece has audio accompaniment that can be heard either on the website or by calling a toll @-@ free 800 number .

On 2 October , Banksy stenciled a piece in Chelsea that read " This is my New York accent " in the traditional typography of New York street art and below in a more typical handwriting style read , " ... normally I write like this " . Allowing for the ironic abstraction between traditional graffiti style and regular writing .

In south Midtown Manhattan on 3 October , Banksy produced a piece that depicts the symbiotic relationship between a dog and a hydrant . This stencil artwork depicts a dog urinating on a hydrant with a thought bubble saying , " you complete me " .

On 4 October Banksy added " the musical " below seemingly already existing graffiti in the Lower East Side , Williamsburg , and Bushwick . Making them read " Occupy ! The Musical " , " Dirty underwear The Musical " and " Playground Mob The Musical " .

In the East Village , Banksy 's fifth work was housed in a delivery truck as a " mobile garden " , which included theatrical property showing a rainbow , waterfall and butterflies . The following day Banksy posted a photo of a tracking device he found under the vehicle .

Banksy 's installments are located all across the five boroughs , with some being purely multimedia exhibits . On 6 October , as a way to have made an installment in Dumbo , Brooklyn , a primary arts district of the city , Banksy posted a video featuring the Walt Disney character Dumbo being shot down by Syrian rebels , the meaning behind which puzzled many .

On 7 October Banksy unveiled a piece in Red Hook that stood out from his typical stencils . The piece was a beautifully shaded red heart balloon patched up with band @-@ aids . An homage to a

piece he had done previously in response to the Syrian conflict which depicted a heart shaped balloon floating away from a little girl .

On 8 October , Banksy 's piece in Greenpoint was simply a quote , " I have a theory that you can make any sentence seem profound by writing the name of a dead philosopher at the end of it -Plato "

On 9 October , Banksy unveiled one of the more elaborate and politically strong pieces of the series . It featured armed soldiers and horses spray @-@ painted on a car and trailer in an empty lot in the Lower East Side . Instead of commentary about the work , the accompanying audio was that of a classified video from the July 12 , 2007 Baghdad airstrike . After being dismantled , the car was towed away to prevent further defacement .

In East New York on 10 October a Banksy piece was found depicting a stenciled beaver who seemingly caused a street sign to fall . Indicative of people 's greed there were soon men charging the people to view and take pictures of the artwork .

Day 11 saw an elaborate political display questioning the " casual cruelty " of the meat industry . Entitled Sirens of the Lambs , Banksy drove around a military @-@ style cargo truck filled with squealing , stuffed animatronic livestock . The truck fittingly made its debut in Meatpacking District , Manhattan , but toured the rest of the city in the following weeks .

On 12 October the ' Concrete Confessional ' piece was done on 7th Street near the Cooper Union , depicting a religious figure framed by a hole in the concrete wall standing in front of it .

On 13 October , Banksy made headlines when it was revealed that the art an older man was selling outside Central Park was actually authentic , signed Banksy canvases , sold for only \$ 60 each . Having not announced this beforehand , tourists and park goers were unaware of the value the paintings had , which the BBC estimated could be upwards of \$ 32 @,@ 000 each . Banksy posted a video on his website chronicling the surprise sale , which revealed that a total of seven paintings were sold for \$ 420 taking .

On day 14 Banksy made a piece in Queens depicting a stenciled cleaner wiping a quote from the movie Gladiator " What we do in life echoes in Eternity " .

Banksy unveiled one of his most controversial pieces of the series on 15 October , with a depiction of the Lower Manhattan skyline featuring the former Twin Towers , with a burnt @-@ orange chrysanthemum in place where one of the hijacked airplanes struck the North Tower . The silhouette appeared on the side of a building in TriBeCa , with an identical depiction along the Brooklyn Heights Promenade , facing the downtown skyline . The Brooklyn Heights piece was eventually buffed out by the city , requiring chemicals and a high @-@ powered pressure washer . The removal followed a taunt Banksy had directed toward the city on his website . Meanwhile , the sister piece in TriBeCa served as a shrine , people placing flowers next to it and as well as a letter asking no one to touch the painting . Acrylic glass was eventually installed to protect the piece , before someone painted over it .

Banksy extended his work beyond the canvas and city street with other political statements , including on 16 October , when he crafted a giant fiberglass sculpture of Ronald McDonald , with a real live Banksy assistant shining its shoes . It was unveiled in the Bronx but was moved outside of a different McDonald 's restaurant across the city around lunch time for several days . The work criticized the " heavy labor required to sustain the polished image of a mega @-@ corporation " , as the narrator of the audio accompaniment put it .

On 17 October in East Williamsburg , Banksy 's Japanese Bridge piece was revealed and graffitied over .

On 18 October there was a pair of paintings Banksy collaborated on with Os Gemeos depicting a single soldier amongst masked citizens and vice versa . " The audio commentary Banksy provided suggests that this piece functions both as situational criticism of the art world as well as a tribute to the Occupy movement . Yet it also recognizes that the installation may be unsuccessful at actually advancing any agenda " .

On 19 October Banksy released another video for his tour of New York potentially to convey the movement in nature that we are blind to but it is truly just a vagina with ants crawling out of it .

On 20 October in the Upper West Side , Banksy stencilled a picture of a young boy with a hammer

swinging down towards a fire hydrant . This piece was one of the few from the Better Out Than In project that was preserved . The owners of the store on which this piece was placed put a fiberglass pane in order to protect and preserve the piece .

Banksy 's second trip to the South Bronx was on 21 October and resulted in a piece depicting a child spray @-@ painting the words " Ghetto 4 Life " on a wall , while a butler waited on him with a platter of spray paints . The work immediately drew a crowd from fans , despite angering many residents , who found the message offensive . The piece may insinuate appreciation of graffiti art by high society .

The Sphinx sculpture appeared on a worksite in Willets Point on 22 October and was quickly swarmed by eager Banksy fans . The attention caught the workers interest and onlookers watched as it was loaded into a truck and taken away . The fate of this piece was heavily chronicled by the HBO documentary Banksy Does New York . The piece was taken from its original site , kept in a garage and ultimately sold in an art show for hundreds of thousands if not millions .

The 23rd installment was cancelled due to police activity , according to Banksy 's official website , which stirred rumors that he had come under arrest . That same day , an outlined canvas with the caption " Better Out Than In # AnonymousGuestbook " appeared on a building in Red Hook . The idea of an open @-@ canvas collaborative piece was presented to Banksy two weeks prior by a community art director . The story then lead many to believe the " anonymous guestbook " was outlined by Banksy himself , however this was later debunked to have been the work of a group under the name Anonymous Guestbook .

" Waiting in Vain " was the show 's 24th installment . Located outside a strip club in Hell 's Kitchen , it illustrated a man in a tuxedo holding flowers , presumably jilted by his date . After some of the club 's entertainers posed in front of the piece , the owner had it carefully cut from the shutter gate before vandals could deface it . It is planned to go on permanent display inside the club .

The 25th piece came suitably Halloween @-@ themed . Located on the Bowery , it exhibited a Grim Reaper riding a bumper car in circles to an elaborate light show , fog machine and Blue Öyster Cult 's (Don 't Fear) The Reaper . The accompanying audio guide offered a self @-@ mockery interpretation , with Banksy stating that often " the role of art is to remind us of our mortality , " implying that with this mounted art show that goes on " for so long we wish we were dead already . " The site of the exhibit was once that of an antique shop , some remains of which were placed in a coffin that occupied the lot for months . This prompted other interpretations of the installations message , paying homage to the " ghosts of Bowry , " as the antique store owner suggested .

On 26 October Banksy 's work appeared in Sunset Park of the back of a truck and read , " The grumpier you are , the more assholes you meet ... " which was ultimately removed and sold in auction .

The 27 October piece was a message on a wall in Greenpoint that read " This site contains blocked messages . " It made reference to an unpublished column Banksy had submitted to The New York Times . The controversial essay criticized the city 's decision in approving the One World Trade Center , which he described as " vanilla " and looking like " something they would build in Canada . " In what became his second reference to the September 11 attacks , Banksy argued the building was a betrayal to everyone who lost their lives that day , and that its blandness is a sign the terrorist won .

Day 28 came with a simple stencil in Coney Island of a robot spray @-@ painting a barcode onto the wall .

On 29 October Banksy 's art was displayed in a shop window , unbeknownst to the owners . Banksy had purchased a very basic painting of a landscape , added his own special touch in the form of a Nazi in full uniform resting on a bench and enjoying the view , and donated it back to the store , drastically increasing their patronage for the day .

On day 30 Banksy 's art could be found on Yankee Stadium in the form of a jaguar draped on a line on the wall . This piece was quickly covered up .

The final piece of the month @-@ long series was a group of balloons that together read " BANKSY ! " , tied to the wall of a building alongside the Long Island Expressway in Queens . Banksy included the message " Save 5pointz " in the caption for the piece on his website , referring to 5 Pointz , a

nearby outdoor art exhibit considered to be a focal point of such culture that had recently been approved by the New York City Department of City Planning to be demolished to make way for condominiums .

= = Defacement = =

Most of the works that make up the Better Out Than In series were defaced , some just hours after the piece was unveiled . At least one defacement was identified as done by a competing artist , OMAR NYC , who spray @-@ painted over Banksy 's red mylar balloon piece in Red Hook . OMAR NYC also defaced some of Banksy 's work in May 2010 .

As a result of the continued defacement , fans rushed to the sites of the installments as soon as they are announced . A group of men took advantage of this and threatened to deface a stencil painting of a beaver in East New York , charging money for people to take photographs . Some took matters into their own hands by guarding the works , others restoring them once defaced . In part because of the defacement , but also because of the great value of the artworks , property owners have also gone to extreme measures to protect the art . Some hired security guards , others covered the art with acrylic glass , and yet others installed metal roll @-@ down gates .

= = Response = =

The month @-@ long show was widely publicized and covered by the media . Mayor Michael Bloomberg , while supporting the arts , criticized Banksy 's work , calling him a vandal , contending that defacing property was not his definition of art .

On 17 October the New York Post wrote under the front @-@ page headline " Get Banksy ! " that police were pursuing Banksy , but noted the hunt is difficult because he has never been positively identified in public . In response Banksy posted an image of the front page on his website with the caption " I don 't read what i believe in the papers . " The NYPD later denied they were actively looking for Banksy as no property owners had filed any formal complaints .

= = = Controversy = = =

Bronx Borough President Rubén Díaz , Jr. called Banksy a " modern @-@ day Picasso " and praised him for choosing to unveil his 16 October Ronald McDonald replica in the South Bronx . This came before Banksy 's 21 October piece , which brought discontent to the President and other residents . The piece featured a child spray @-@ painting the words " Ghetto 4 Life " on a wall . Díaz stated it reinforced " outdated negative stereotypes , " and defended that Banksy should become aware that graffiti art and culture originated in the Bronx . The owner of the graffitied wall and his partner , however , praised the work and its message , calling it " beautiful " and owning its preservation to the artist 's fame .

Banksy 's op @-@ ed article about One World Trade Center , posted on his website on 27 October , came as an insult to many across the city . Former FDNY Deputy Chief Jim Riches wrote that it was a " disgrace to New York City and all the families who lost loved ones on 9 / 11 . " Sally Regenhard , a leading voice for families of 11 September victims , expressed concerns about Banksy 's 15 October depiction of the Twin Towers in TriBeCa , saying the piece was " horrific " and that the placed flower looked more like an explosion . A Century 21 department store near Ground Zero had planned to show Banksy 's work on 29 October , but cancelled due to the controversy .

= = = Critical reception = = =

Banksy 's Better Out Than In series has received mixed reviews . Many fans raved over his work , flocking to each site everyday of the show .

New York magazine art critic Jerry Saltz wrote Banksy 's well @-@ executed work stood out from other graffiti , but that the meaning behind the pieces aren 't as deep as fans like to believe . " No

other graffiti artist has a PR machine remotely like Banksy 's , " he writes , arguing Banksy is more of a " promo man " than an artist .

Will Ellsworth @-@ Jones , author of Banksy : The Man Behind the Wall writes that Better Out Than In shows Banksy 's range of mediums has grown to incorporate multi @-@ media and performance @-@ based works . He pointed out the " wonderful commentary on money and art " displayed with hiring an anonymous salesman to sell Banksy paintings in Central Park for \$ 60 .