

Who is the street artist Banksy?

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/27050301>

Two new pieces of artwork by Banksy have appeared in London, to mark the opening of an exhibition by an American artist called Jean-Michel Basquiat.

But who is Banksy and why is his artwork such a big deal?

Graffiti is one of the few tools you have if you have almost nothing. Banksy, Artist

Who is Banksy?

Banksy is a famous - but anonymous - British graffiti artist. He keeps his identity secret!

He produces pieces of work which pop up in public places, such as on the walls of buildings.

A lot of his art is done in a particular style which people can easily recognise.

He began spray-painting trains and walls in his home city of Bristol in the early 1990s. Bristol is well known for its colourful street art and graffiti.

But in the 2000s, he expanded his work beyond Bristol and was soon leaving his artistic mark all over the world.

He quickly became well known as an artist who would poke fun at big companies and send political messages through his work.

Why does no one know who he is?

His identity is unknown, despite lots of people trying to guess who he is.

In 2008 the newspaper, The Mail on Sunday revealed who they thought he was.

In June 2017, a DJ referred to a Banksy as a man called 'Rob' in an interview.

But despite rumours about who he might be, Banksy's true identity has never been revealed.

If you want to say something and have people listen then you have to wear a mask. Banksy, Artist

What is his style?

Banksy was heavily influenced in his early days by a French graffiti artist called Blek le Rat. Not only did this artist inspire Banksy politically, but Banksy was also inspired by his use of stencils.



This is one of the new pieces of work that has appeared in London



This is the other new piece of work that has appeared in London



This piece of a girl letting go of a heart-shaped balloon is one of Banksy's most famous artworks. It was created using a stencil and originally painted onto the wall of a printing shop in Shoreditch in London in 2002. In 2017, it was voted the nation's favourite artwork

Banksy took on this visual style for himself and, to this day, uses stencils to do a lot of his work. This allows him to create his paintings with great detail in a short amount of time - and has also helped him to remain anonymous.

Why is he controversial?

His artwork can be rebellious and is known for delivering a political message. There are lots of people who love what he does, paying many thousands of pounds for it and considering it to be incredible art. But there are others who don't support what he does and consider it to be vandalism. Some of his graffiti has been painted over soon after it appeared. There is a debate about why Banksy's work can be protected as 'art' when other graffiti artists are prosecuted and sometimes even put in prison for doing the same thing. Some of his work is also controversial because of what he does with it. At an exhibition of his work in London in 2005, he released 200 live rats in the gallery. Rats are a common theme in his work.

How expensive is his work?

Banksy was enough of an artistic celebrity by the early 2000s that his work would sell for a lot of money. In an auction in 2008, a piece of work called Keep It Spotless was sold for \$1.8m - that's just over £1 million. In the same year, a mobile home that had a piece of Banksy artwork on it was given a £500,000 price tag. This was all because of the artwork that it had on the side. When Banksy leaves his artwork on buildings, there can sometimes be arguments about who owns the pieces and what should be done with them, as they are very valuable. Sometimes people want to sell them to raise money for a cause, while others think the works should be left to be enjoyed by others.



He has also done installation work, such as this piece called 'Fish Sticks' from an installation in New York in America. An installation is when an artist builds or constructs works of art in a particular space to make a special exhibition there



In May 2017, a mural showing a workman chipping away at one of the EU flag's stars appeared at the ferry port in Dover. It is believed to be the work of Banksy



This picture appeared on the side of a classroom at a primary school in Bristol during half-term in June 2016. It turned out to be the work of Banksy

Questions

1. Which city is well known for its colourful street art and Graffiti?

2. In which year was this piece of artwork created?



3. What word in the text tells you that he rapidly became famous?




4. Tick the synonyms of anonymous.

nameless	<input type="checkbox"/>
unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>
identified	<input type="checkbox"/>
unidentified	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. What does Banksy do before painting on buildings to help him save time and remain anonymous?

6. What did Banksy set free during an exhibition of his work?

7. In which order were these pieces of artwork created? Number them 1-3

8. Why do you think Banksy painted the picture on the side of a school during half-term and not during term time?

9. Which artist inspired Banksy?

10. How much was a mobile home worth after a piece of Banksy artwork was added?