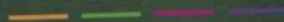




Bank2y

Joyful joker or
political activist?





A pseudonymous artist, with his name and identity silenced from the rest of the world. His art speaks such volumes to have his message linger incessantly in our minds without a murmur from his mouth, or even his physical presence.

Banksy is a curious individual and one that many are equally disturbed by as curious about. Through solely a simplistic, two-coloured spray-paint, Banksy uses the power of implicit unease within his message to visually convey a meaning to passers-by in a fashion mere words cannot emulate. 'A picture says a thousand words' especially if that picture challenges global societal values by presenting heavily controversial opinion through visual satire. His pictures speak a billion words at once, each with the impact of a brick wall. Yet it seems Banksy's intentions have remained a universal question for some time. Is it for passion or

transformation? Is it for fun or for change? For his own amusement or for others' attention? Many artistic experts interpret Banksy's work to be creating a new generation of political activists against the social norm, yet how can we be so sure that Banksy's work isn't actually a light-hearted expression of his artistic flair? An initial childhood passion that spiralled into a plethora of propagandists.

Many have pinpointed Banksy's utilisation of 'satirical humour' within his work. In other words, he criticises people or ideas in a humorous way, often to make a political point. There is inherent humour tied in his

work, purposefully to make the underlying meaning even more terrifying.

This light-hearted sheen integrated into the art contrasts the dark, anxiety-inducing message beneath it, giving us a laugh but inherently daunting us deep down. However, this addition of humour makes some of us question: was it meant to be satirical?

In other words, how are we sure Banksy's incorporation of humour was to trigger societal movement against the injustices of today, rather



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than just to set people off for his own amusement? Did Banksy accidentally initiate a movement of political controversy from simply spray painting with empty justification? Is he a political activist, or simply a joyful joker?

Art's greatest and worst asset is that it has no right or wrong. Whether it be the artist's intentions, or the viewer's interpretation, you can't be faulted. One could say Banksy struck the match that lit up the fire in furious protesters with his art, others could say he's simply there to vandalise buildings and move on, like any other graffiti artist. However, the way I interpret Banksy's work is that his genius doesn't lie in the work itself. How can that be?

Well, any famous work nowadays is only famous because of its popularity. Why does a local artist sell their work at a much lower price than the Mona Lisa? As beautiful as the painting is, what makes a piece of work what it is, is what others take from it. There are many pieces technically and symbolically a lot better than the Mona Lisa, that go completely unrecognised. But that is simply my opinion. And that is the true genius of Banksy.

Why people feel genuinely deprived from the mystery of this curious individual? It is because this deprivation is in fact the art of Banksy. The spray paints, humorous or haunting, are simply spray paints. No one but the viewer has given them a meaning, not even Banksy. No one even knows who he is. Art, especially political-based art, is there to cause a sensation.

The utter mania and disturbance triggered by the impromptu illustrations on prison walls or sides of buildings is what makes Banksy such an incredible artist. It is the explosion that others create surrounding his work, based on their own inner conversation about the comic/controversial artwork. I believe Banksy isn't a comedian, nor is he an activist. He is an artist that ignites the freedom of political expression within others.

He creates the images that walks on eggshells, since anyone can interpret anything from his work, and still be correct. Banksy's art isn't the spray paint. It is the sensation he creates within modern society.





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