



THE BRITISH STREET PAINTER BANKSY AND HIS ART

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Street art is a visual art created in public locations. Usually it is an unsanctioned artwork executed outside the context of traditional art venues. Other terms for this type of art include independent public art, post-graffiti, neo-graffiti, and is closely related with urban art and guerrilla art. Common forms and medium for this type of painting is spray paint, graffiti, stencil graffiti, wheatpasted poster art, sticker art and street installations. 'Video projection' and 'yarn bombing' have also gained some popularity at the turn of the 21st century.

Street art is a form of artwork that is displayed in a community on its surrounding buildings, streets, and other publicly viewed surfaces. In many cases it comes in the form of guerrilla art, which is composed to make public statements about the society that the artist lives. The work has moved from the beginnings of graffiti and vandalism to new modes, where artists work to bring messages, or simple beauty, to the streets and to the audience.

Street painting is also known as the pavement art, street art, and sidewalk art. It is the art of rendering artistic designs in the street, with impermanent and semi-permanent materials.

Origins of street art

The origins of modern street painting can be traced to Britain. Pavement artists were found all over the United Kingdom by the year 1890. It was estimated that more than 500 artists were making a full-time living from pavement art in the London city alone.

The British term for pavement artist is 'screever'. The term is derived from the writing style, since the 1700s. The term screever is most commonly cited as Shakespearean slang dating from around 1500 A.D. The works of screevers often were accompanied by poems and proverbs,



lessons on morality, and political commentary on the day's events. They were described as 'producing a topical, pictorial newspaper of current events. They gained fame from the common man and also from the connoisseurs. They also appreciated the moral lessons and comments of these artists. It was important for a screever to catch the eye of the 'well to do'. These artists hoped to get some money from them for their hard work. Street painters are called in the United States as chalk artists.

The Italian street painters

These street painters in Italy country are called as Italian Madonnari, because they paint the image of Madonna on the streets and beg some money. In the earlier days in India many artists did like that by painting the image of Jesus Christ in the streets. These artists in Italy have been traced to the sixteenth century. They were itinerant artists. Many of whom had been brought into the cities to work on the huge cathedrals. When the work was completed, they needed to find another way to make a living, and thus often would recreate the paintings from the church onto the pavement. At the time of festivals and holy days held in each province and town, they traveled to join in the festivities to make a living from the masses who would throw coins if they approved of the artist's work. For centuries, many Madonnari were folk artists, reproducing simple images with crude materials such as tiles, coal, and chalk. In contrast others artists such as El Greco who painted the same Madonna would become household names and highly paid.

In 1973, street painting was being promoted in Italy by the formation of a two-day festival. In the 1980s, Kurt Wenner practiced '3-D pavement art', or one-point perspective art, otherwise known as 'anamorphic art', a 500-year-old technique, which appears in proper perspective only when viewed from a specific angle.

The first recorded street-painting competition was held in London in 1906. In India there are a few street artists, out of them Daku and yantr are the noted artists.

Banksy the street artist

In the United Kingdom a great street painter lives namely Banksy. He is basking in glory for the last twenty years. He is also known as a vandal, political activist and film director. His



satirical street graffiti is filled with ideas of over throwing the traditional things, thoughts and his paradoxical remarks combined with a dark humor. He has executed lot of his work with stencil work , so that it will easy and fast .

Banksy had began being an artist at the age of 14. He was expelled from school and served time in prison for a petty crime. His real name is believed to be Robin Gunningham. He was born on 28 July 1973 in Bristol in Britain . Banksy lived in a house in Easton, near Bristol, around which place much of his work can still be seen.

Banksy started his life as a freehand graffiti artist between the years 1990 and 1994 with two other artists known as Kato and Tes. He was inspired by the local artists and his work was part of the large Bristol underground artists . By the year 2000, Banksy had turned to the art of stenciling . He soon became more popular for his art around Bristol and London . Banksy's first known large wall mural was 'The wild wild west'. It depicts a teddy bear throwing a little fire ball at three police who are actively beating the public . This type of paintings will automatically give trouble for the police and the furious police began a hunt for the artist.

Banksy's paintings of political and social commentary have been featured on streets, walls, and bridges of cities throughout the world. Sometimes he involves other artists also into his graffiti art.

Banksy displays his art on publicly visible surfaces, such as walls and self built physical prop pieces. Banksy does not sell photographs or reproductions of his street graffiti. Many art auctioneers have been trying to sell his street art on location and leave the problem of its removal in the hands of the winning bidder.

Exit through the gift shop

Banksy created a documentary film namely 'Exit Through the Gift Shop' in the year 2000. It is titled as the world's first street art disaster movie . For this movie he was nominated for the Academy Award as the best Documentary film .

. It tells the story of Thierry Guetta, a French immigrant in Los Angeles, and his obsession with street art. The film charts Guetta's constant documenting of his every waking moment on film. He had a chance encounter with his cousin, the artist Invader, who introduced

him to a host of street artists ,especially the two artists, Shepard Fairey and Banksy. They helped him to Guetta’s eventual fame as a street artist himself. It is nominated for the Academy Award for best documentary Feature.

Banksy paints over the delicate line between aesthetics and language and then stealthily repaints it in the unlikeliest of places. His works, whether he stencils them on the streets, sells them in exhibitions or hangs them in museums on the sly, are filled with wit and metaphors that transcend language barriers. Banksy’s stencil figures depict humorous images combined with slogans. The message is usually anti-war, anti-capitalist or anti-establishment of the state . The subjects for this type of paintings included rats, apes, policemen, soldiers, children, and the so called elders.

In July 2011 one of Banksy's early works, 'Gorilla in a Pink Mask' which had been a prominent landmark on the exterior wall of a former social club in Eastville was destroyed .



A stencil of Charles Manson, the ex criminal , in a prison suit, hitch hiking to 'Anywhere', is a notable piece . In August 2004, Banksy produced a quantity of fake British £10 notes, replacing the picture of the Queen's head with the head of Diana, Princess of Wales. He changed the title of Bank of England to 'Banksy of England'.

Banksy held an exhibition called 'Barely Legal', billed as a 'three-day vandalised warehouse extravaganza' in Los Angeles, on the weekend of 16 September 2006. The exhibition featured a live elephant in a room,

painted in pink and gold floral wallpaper pattern, which, was intended to draw the attention to the issue of world poverty. Banksy said once 'there are crimes that become innocent and even glorious, through their splendor, number and excess'.

Christina Aguilera bought an original of Queen Victoria as a lesbian and two prints for £25,000 in October 2006, a set of the British model Kate Moss paintings by Banksy sold in Sotheby's London for £50,400, setting an auction record for Banksy's work. The six silk-screen prints, featuring the model painted in the style of Andy Warhol's Marilyn Monroe pictures, sold for five times their estimated value. His stencil of a green Mona Lisa with real paint dripping from her eyes sold for £57,600 at the same auction. Journalist Max Foster coined the phrase the 'Banksy effect', to illustrate how the interest for the works of the street artists, was growing behind the success of Banksy.

Naked man

'Naked Man' image is a notable painting by Banksy found on the wall of a 'sexual health clinic' in the Park Street, Bristol. Basing on the support of the public, the City Council has decided it will be allowed to remain there.





In this painting, the aged husband who came from the office, got doubt on his wife who appeared in his bed room with a two piece on her body. Then he searches for the absent man from the window. Actually the absent lover is hiding naked outside, hanging to the same window, un seen by the husband. It is a caricature and a caustic criticism on the marriage system and the situation of the lovers in the society.

Once Banksy had asked the couple of a wagon house if he could use the side of their home as a large canvas. They agreed and in return, artist gave them two free tickets to the Glastonbury Festival. The mobile home was purchased by the couple eleven years ago for a cheap price of one thousand Pounds. After Banksy painted some thing on the wagon, the price of the same wagon went for an unbelievable 500,000 (five lakhs) pounds.

The cans festival

In the year 2008, Banksy hosted an exhibition in London called The Cans Festival. It was situated underneath the Waterloo railway station. Graffiti artists with stencils were invited to join in and paint their own original artwork. Banksy invited artists from around the world to exhibit their works at the same place.

In 2009, Banksy marked the end of the '2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference' by painting four murals on global warming. One included the phrase, 'I don't believe in global warming;' the words were submerged in water. A feud and graffiti war between Banksy and King Robbo, another London based street artist broke out when Banksy allegedly painted over one of Robbo's tags. The feud has led to many of Banksy's works being altered by graffiti writers.



Better Out, Than In

On 1 October, Banksy began a one-month 'show on the streets of New York', in the year 2013 for which he opened a separate website and granted an interview to The Village Voice. A pop-up boutique of about 25 spray-art canvases appeared on Fifth Avenue near Central Park on 12 th October. Tourists were able to buy Banksy art for just \$60 each. In a note posted to his website, the artist wrote: Please note this was a one-off. The stall will not be there again. The BBC estimated that the street-stall art pieces could be worth as much as \$31,000. The booth was manned by an unknown elderly man who went about four hours before making a sale. It was reported that then-New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg called Banksy a vandal, whose work is not the definition of art, and that the N.Y.P.D.'s vandal squad was on the hunt for Banksy over his various graffiti art and installations

The Son of a Migrant from Syria

In December 2015, Banksy created several murals in the vicinity of Calais, France, including the so-called Jungle, where migrants live as they attempt to enter the United Kingdom. One of the pieces is named as the The Son of a Migrant from Syria, depicts Steve Jobs as a migrant.

In addition to his graffiti, Banksy has claimed responsibility for a number of high-profile artworks. At London Zoo, he climbed into the penguin enclosure and painted 'We are bored of fish' in 7-foot-high letters. There he left the message 'I want out. This place is too cold. Keeper smells. Boring, boring, boring' in the elephant enclosure. In May 2005 Banksy's version of a primitive cave painting depicting a human figure hunting wildlife, while pushing a shopping trolley, was hung in gallery 49 of the British Museum, London.

Banksy does all this and stays anonymous. Banksy's name and identity remain unknown. It has been stated that the reason for this secrecy is, doing graffiti on the public buildings is a crime and he knows it very well.

There has also been speculation that Banksy is a team of seven artists. In October 2014, an internet hoax circulated that Banksy had been arrested and his identity is revealed.



In August 2016, Scottish journalist Craig Williams published an investigative article, in which he suggested that Banks's work could be the work of a collective. In August 2005, Banksy painted nine images on the Israeli West Bank barrier, including an image of a ladder going up and over the wall and an image of children digging a hole through the wall.

Since the year 2014, Banksy was regarded as a British cultural icon. A group of people associated with British culture, included Banksy one among the British great men such as, William Shakespeare, Queen Elizabeth II, David Beckham, The Beatles, Charlie Chaplin, J. K. Rowling.

Recently several artworks by Banksy were vandalised, painted over or destroyed. In 2008, in Melbourne, paint was poured over a stencil of an old-fashioned diver wearing a trench coat. In April 2010, the Melbourne City Council reported that they had inadvertently ordered private contractors to paint over a rat descending in a parachute adorning the wall of an old council building behind the Forum Theatre. Many works that make up the 'Better Out Than In' series in New York City have been defaced.

Banksy mentions in his book 'Wall and Piece' that, as he was starting to do graffiti, he was always too slow and was either caught or could never finish the art in one sitting. So he devised a series of intricate stencils to minimize time and overlapping of the color.

Shop until you drop

Once Banksy has said 'We can not do anything to change the world ,until capitalism crumbles. In the meantime we should all go shopping to console ourselves'.



Banksy once characterised graffiti as a form of underclass revenge, or guerilla warfare that allows an individual to snatch away power, territory and glory, from a bigger and better equipped enemy. Banksy sees a social class component to this struggle, remarking 'If you don't own a train company ,then you go and paint on one instead'.

Banksy's work is also an indication to show the public about the centralized power . He hopes that his paintings will show the people that the bigger power is not working efficiently. Banksy's works have dealt with various political and social themes, including anti-war, anti-consumerism, anti-fascism, anti-imperialism, anti-authoritarianism, anarchism, nihilism, and existentialism.

The works of Banksy commonly critique poverty, hypocrisy, boredom, despair, absurdity, and [alienation](#). Banksy's works usually rely on visual imagery and iconography . In ummarizing his list of 'people who should be shot' , he listed 'Fascist thugs, religious fundamentalists, and 'people who write lists telling you who should be shot'.

While humorously describing his political nature, Banksy declared that 'sometimes I feel so sick at the state of the world, i can not even finish my second apple pie.'



During the United Kingdom general election, 2017, Banksy offered voters a free print if they cast a ballot against the Conservative candidates.

Banksy has also been long criticised for copying the work of Blek le Rat, who created the life-sized stencil technique in early 1980s Paris, and used it to express a similar combination of political commentary and humorous imagery. Blek has praised Banksy for his contribution to the urban gorilla art .

Public acceptance.

This type of graffiti art has become a staple of most cities around the world. In recent years, street art has undergone a major transformation. In public opinion this is also a form of art. It even become a socially accepted and respected accent on the part of the artist. Today the street art is common and it is growing in acceptance. Though it is against the law, it is a beautifully respected act of artistic expression.

At first it is thought that it was widely considered to be a crude way of messaging . The works are subject to change or destruction may come due to the fact that they are created on public or private surfaces. This is the age of the subaltern studies and also the age of the free expression . When the artist is interested in showing his power or commentary in the street , like the dancers and musicians , he will have his ways of reaching to the public . The graffiti artist is nothing but the insider of everybody.

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