



Banksy: The Man Behind the Wall

By Will Ellsworth-Jones

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While hiding from the limelight, Banksy has made himself into one of the world's best-known living artists. His pieces have fetched millions of dollars at prestigious auction houses. He was nominated for an Academy Award for his film *Exit Through the Gift Shop*. Once viewed as vandalism, his work is now venerated; fans have gone so far as to dismantle the walls that he has painted on for collection and sale.

But as famous as Banksy is, he is also utterly unknown?he conceals his real name, hides his face, distorts his voice, and reveals his identity to only a select few. Who is this man that has captivated millions? How did a graffiti artist from Bristol, England, find himself at the center of an artistic movement? How has someone who goes to such great lengths to keep himself hidden achieved such great notoriety? And is his anonymity a necessity to continue his vandalism?or a marketing tool to make him ever more famous?

Now, in the first ever full-scale investigation of the artist, reporter Will Ellsworth-Jones pieces together the story of Banksy, building up a picture of the man and the world in which he operates. He talks to his friends and enemies, those who knew him in his early, unnoticed days, and those who have watched him try to come to terms with his newfound fame and success. And he explores the contradictions of a champion of renegade art going to greater and greater lengths to control his image and his work.

Banksy offers a revealing glimpse at an enigmatic figure and a riveting account of how a self-professed vandal became an international icon?and turned the art world upside down in the process.

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

The British artist known as Banksy creates illegal street paintings with superhero daring and political conviction. But his most impressive feat is his anonymity, which is zealously protected by his cultish followers and ace organization, Pest Control. Ellsworth-Jones had no intention of revealing Banksy's identity when he sought an interview with the artist, but he was refused. So be it. Secrecy feeds the flame of this thought-provoking, irony-steeped, unauthorized investigation into how a regular guy from Bristol elevated graffiti to a fine art only to find himself trapped in the paradox of becoming a commercially successful, anticapitalist guerrilla artist. While he gamely searches for extant street paintings, Ellsworth-Jones chronicles ludicrous battles over wall removal, the tagging of Banksy's work by rival street artists, pop-up exhibits, and the lengths to which fans go to purchase Banksy prints. Formerly chief reporter for the *Sunday Times* of London, Ellsworth-Jones redresses his lack of an art historian's fully dimensional perspective by candidly sharing his learn-on-the-go adventures and discoveries in a thoroughly ensnaring, eye-popping account of the paradigm-shifting innovations of a bold and brilliant masked artist. --Donna Seaman

Review

"Provides an intriguing account of the making of the acclaimed Banksy film 'Exit Through the Gift Shop'... and efforts by Banksy and his team to control and shape the mythology around him. . . . Mr. Ellsworth-Jones's book is at its most fascinating in tracing Banksy's evolution from outsider, spraying walls in Bristol like dozens of other young graffiti practitioners, to international artist with work that 'commands hundreds of thousands of pounds in the auction houses of Britain and America.' He is adept at examining some of the existential dilemmas this success created for Banksy -- dilemmas shared by many outsider and counterculture artists, who suddenly find their work embraced by the very mainstream they'd once scorned."

?*Michiko Kakutani, The New York Times*

"[A] thought-provoking, irony-steeped, unauthorized investigation into how a regular guy from Bristol elevated graffiti to a fine art only to find himself trapped in the paradox of becoming a commercially successful, anticapitalist guerrilla artist.... A thoroughly ensnaring, eye-popping account of the paradigm-shifting innovations of a bold and brilliant masked artist." ?*Booklist*

"A fluent, enjoyable discussion of an important contemporary cultural phenomenon; this book will appeal especially to readers who are fans of Banksy's world and is an essential title for devotees of pop culture and outsider art... Ellsworth-Jones does a superb job." ?*Library Journal*

"Whether a Banksy follower or not, a reader will find this excellent contemporary art story speaks volumes about celebrity." ?*Publishers Weekly*

"Entertaining." ?*Kirkus Reviews*

"A fascinating portrait that elicits admiration for a man who, despite his increasingly unconvincing efforts to retain some shreds of his vandal status, has had an undeniable impact on art." ?*The Times (UK)*

"A credible and intelligent portrait of a unique artist, reluctant capitalist, and control freak." ?*The Independent (UK)*

"An accomplished investigative reporter, [Ellsworth-Jones] casts a detailed and enthusiastic eye over all

aspects of Banksy's career." *?London Evening Standard*

"Ellsworth-Jones writes perceptively about the 'ethical dilemmas' created by Banksy's marketing techniques, yet still communicates the excitement of a 'treasure hunt' for traces of his work in the scruffier purlieus of London." *?The Observer (UK)*

"What makes [this book] intriguing is a relentless following of the money, and the exploration of the tortured interface between art and commerce." *?The Guardian (UK)*

"A fascinating history of a wholly likeable art phenomenon." *?The Sunday Times (UK)*

About the Author

Will Ellsworth-Jones was chief reporter and New York correspondent for *The Sunday Times*. He has written for *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Independent*, *The San Francisco Examiner*, and *The Anniston Star*. His last book, *We Will Not Fight*, was a history of conscientious objectors in the First World War. He lives in London.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Judith Jordan:

Book is to be different for every single grade. Book for children until eventually adult are different content. We all know that that book is very important for us. The book Banksy: The Man Behind the Wall was making you to know about other expertise and of course you can take more information. It is very advantages for you. The publication Banksy: The Man Behind the Wall is not only giving you much more new information but also being your friend when you really feel bored. You can spend your own personal spend time to read your reserve. Try to make relationship with all the book Banksy: The Man Behind the Wall. You never experience lose out for everything in case you read some books.

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The book untitled Banksy: The Man Behind the Wall is the publication that recommended to you you just read. You can see the quality of the book content that will be shown to a person. The language that author use to explained their way of doing something is easily to understand. The writer was did a lot of analysis when write the book, to ensure the information that they share to your account is absolutely accurate. You also could get the e-book of Banksy: The Man Behind the Wall from the publisher to make you much more enjoy free time.

Helen Massey:

Typically the book Banksy: The Man Behind the Wall has a lot of knowledge on it. So when you make sure to read this book you can get a lot of benefit. The book was compiled by the very famous author. The author makes some research ahead of write this book. This kind of book very easy to read you can get the point easily after reading this article book.

Travis Smith:

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