

The Accidental Iconoclasts

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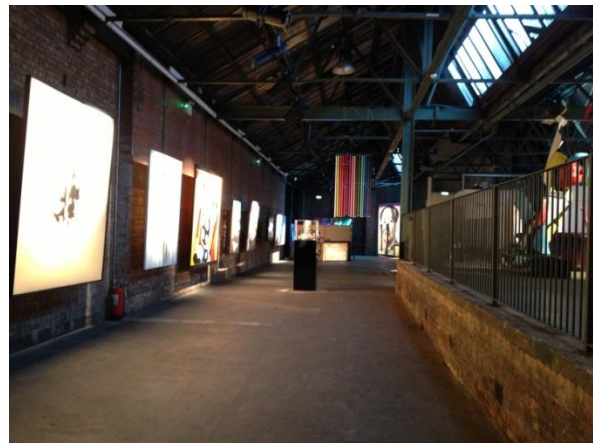
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Paper Ruins and Plastic Salvation



¹ “Art cannot be criticized because every mistake is a new creation”: this is the poster-dogma of self named Street Artist “Mr. Brainwash” for his first UK show, a reinvention of his premier show in L.A., *Life is Beautiful* (Old Sorting Office, New Oxford Street, Bloomsbury, London). Initially the stenciled image invokes an avant garde battle cry; yet this call to arms may actually be an act self-defense, given the Artist’s back-story. Mr. Brainwash came into the public eye via the documentary *Exit Through the Gift Shop*

(2010)². Mixing the mythologies of Emperor Claudius and Darth Vader, an odd but otherwise harmless shop-owner becomes seduced by hype, media, and the benefits of being a dangerous Street Artist via his cousin, the Artist Space Invader. To mark the metamorphosis, Thierry Guetta changes his name to “Mr. Brainwash” and via a large public show, betrays the Street Art community by stealing their ideas to gain notoriety. At the end of the film the viewer, like the other Artists, is meant to mix revulsion and indignation at the commercial success of Mr. Brainwash. He is portrayed as someone who never truly suffered for his Art or developed a style - a fraud. We’re meant to be mad not because he made money, but because he cheated.³



⁴ In another warehouse across town from *Life is Beautiful* is its counterpoint: *Urban Masters* (Factory 7, 13 Hearn Street, Shoreditch, London). While *Life* takes place in a massive space nominally dedicated to the work of one

¹ Figure 1 – Molly McCormick picture taken October 11th 2012

² *Exit Through the Gift Shop* Directed by Banksy (London, UK : Paranoid Pictures, 2010), DVD

³ The concluding moral of *Exit Through the Gift Shop*, (that of profit made through unoriginality being wrong) is vaguely similar to a common criticism of Banksy’s work, in particular his early pieces as they relate to French stencil Artist, Blek Le Rat. This aspect has led many to suspect a hoax conspiracy theory: that Mr. Brainwash is a fabrication of Banksy.

⁴ Figure 2 – Molly McCormick picture taken November 10th 2012

person, *Urban Masters* is in a much leaner area that seems to have gathered an entire community of international Artists in alliance against Mr. Brainwash: including Shepard Fairey, Blek Le Rat, Sweet Toof and, of course, Banksy. Hidden down an alleyway, behind a car park, in a nondescript urban setting, signified only by a small cardboard sign, *Urban Masters* wants you to know this is where the wild things are. One can't help but identify this as a slap to *Life*, which stands beneath a 35' billboard depicting a punk version of a young Queen Elizabeth II that begs for viewer attention. This juxtaposition is a visual conversation about what the two opposing forces think the movement should be about. For *Life*, it's a furtive, certified pre-owned series of pop culture references and in-jokes. For *Urban Masters* it's a wry and satirical commentary on aesthetics and western experience. Mr. Brainwash may have a Gainsborough reference featuring Posh and Becks but Joe Black has a Chairman Mao made of Seurat-style plastic army men. Despite *Masters* having the clout, and quite frankly the brains, to pull off what could potentially be an unfocused mess of a show, if you are new to the conversation both galleries may come off less as a war of rhetoric and more as a battle of the one-liners. The most important part of these shows is what neither gallery seems to address, the glaring change from what initially made the Street Art movement so fascinating and so famous: both shows are inside.

The movement from outside to inside marks a change in how Street Art is being made and viewed. Besides being generally more accepted by both curators and the auctioning market, Street Art seems to be becoming ever more aware of its own mortality in the medium of exterior spray paint and stencil. The nature of time, climate, and building management is to wear excessive materials down, this is as much true for paint and paper as it is for bricks and mortar. 50 years from now, all that will remain of original Street Art may be pictures and gallery pieces. It is a lesson that other Graffiti movements have known since the 1970s: that to paint or plaster



an image on the exterior of a building is to doom it to a brief life. Still, this is not entirely a bad thing.⁵ The temporality reminds the viewer about the preciousness of a physical experience and the fragility of beauty. It isn't meant to last forever, but then again, neither are we. However, there are forces that seem to be, willing or unwilling, consciously or unconsciously, helping the extinction along.

⁶**The Judgment of Islington**

According to an article published by the Islington Gazette in June 2012, two pieces by Banksy had been painted over⁷ within quick succession by the council, resulting in a public outcry. The first was a stencil depicting Charles Manson, the second a large pair woman's legs in between some strategically

⁵ Atkins, Robert *Art Speak: A Guide to Contemporary Ideas, Movements and Buzzwords* (New York, NY Abbeville Press Publishers, 1990, 2007) 84-86

⁶ Figure 3- Harper, Paul "Double Blow for Banksy's Creations in Islington", *Islington Gazette Online* (June 5th 2012) http://www.islingtongazette.co.uk/news/double_blow_for_banksy_s_creations_in_islington_1_1398752

placed foliage. When asked about the decision to paint over these works by the Gazette, Islington Council's executive member for environment Cllr Paul Smith stated: "We don't have an official policy, but respond with every case individually restoring several when they have been tagged," adding "It is now an eyesore and we agreed with a resident that it should be removed...Sadly, as Banksy himself acknowledges, if someone is intent on permanently defacing his work, there isn't much anyone can do."⁸⁹



This message is slightly different than the one made by Kenny Wilks, Head of Street Environment Services at Islington Council, in the BBC 4 documentary 'Graffiti Wars' which first aired in the summer of 2011.

"Within Islington we try to make our boroughs as clean, green and attractive as we possibly can. Our policy on graffiti is that we don't allow graffiti. Graffiti is criminal damage so people who are spraying graffiti walls or tagging are committing a criminal act ... yes we have arrested people successfully having taken a few people to court and two or three people have been sent to prison for the mindless vandalism that they caused."¹⁰

Though as the documentary pointed out, Kenny Wilks is not entirely without discretion as to what would or would not be a mindless criminal act when it comes to paint on public walls.

"As head of service I do have some discretion and with regards to Street Art if there are pieces of very attractive Street Art that feature in books and calendars and magazines and on websites. Banksy, in my personal opinion, is very artistic. I genuinely believe that it does add value."¹¹

When asked to clarify what he meant by 'value' Wilks responded:

"There are groups of people who come to look at this kind of work because works by Banksy have been sold off for huge amounts of money."¹²

Following up in the autumn of 2012, a spokesman for the Islington Council clarified:

⁷ Or 'buffed' as it referred to by Street Artists

⁸ Harper, Paul "Double Blow for Banksy's Creations in Islington", *Islington Gazette Online* (June 5th 2012) http://www.islingtongazette.co.uk/news/double_blow_for_banksy_s_creations_in_islington_1_1398752

⁹ Figure 4 Ibid

¹⁰ *Graffiti Wars* Directed by Jane Preston (London, UK :One Productions , Two Four Television Productions, Distributed by Channel 4 Television, 2011), TV

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

“The council makes no subjective judgment as to what constitutes street art and what is graffiti. We will remove either from private property at the request of the owner and will remove either from our own buildings to keep them clean, accessible and welcoming. In the case of obscene graffiti, this is often reported via a public complaint and we will send our rapid response teams to remove within 24 hours.”¹³

The last, more diplomatic statement prompts a discussion about Art in a truly public sphere and by proxy references some very old concerns regarding aesthetics, the kind which were discussed by Immanuel Kant and challenged by Marcel Duchamp. Questions like: ‘Should we protect Art we don’t like because it speaks to our culture?’ ‘Is Art only ever really Art when viewed inside a gallery?’ and the worst of all possible questions: ‘Is it beautiful?’ With these heavy-handed intellectual debates in the mix, the removal of Street Art or Graffiti Writing might be a topic that an environmental employee for the local council may not be qualified to answer with satisfaction to the Art community. As stated by a spokesman for Transport for London in 2007: “Our graffiti removal teams are staffed by professional cleaners, not professional Art critics.”¹⁴

These sentiments were reflected again in “Graffiti Wars” when two Islington council employees, weighed in on the debate while painting over a piece of Graffiti Writing, leaving a work by Stik untouched. As Darren (no surname listed) so aptly stated “Yeah, that is the argument with Art or what you call Art-graffiti, to me, personally, you should remove everything.” Martin (also no surname listed) followed up “It’s hard to decide what is Art and what is vandalism or criminal damage.”¹⁵

The Islington Council is certainly not alone in its predicament, as stated by a spokesperson for the Hackney Council:

“In summary, Hackney Council supports owners in the removal of graffiti and in a large majority of cases removes free of charge. In some cases it is not possible to remove and in those cases an advisory letter or notice may be issued to a property owner and there may be a charge associated with removal. The question of is something “Street Art” is not straightforward however guidance is that unless the permission of a property owner is sought before a painting is made and the council has not been advised or consulted then the offending painting will not be considered as Art and may be removed. Any Art must not be a detriment to the environment and an assessment is made on a case by case basis. The council does remove offensive graffiti.”¹⁶

With the growing legitimization of Street Art and Graffiti Writing, the response cannot be indecisively addressed, if nothing else (as Kenny Wilks pointed out) for financial reasons. When

¹³Islington Council Representative, response email to Molly McCormick, November 30th, 2012.

¹⁴ BBC News UK “Iconic Banksy Image Painted Over” *BBC News Online* (April 20th 2012)

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/6575345.stm>

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶ Hackney Council Representative, response email to Molly McCormick, November 28th, 2012.

it was painted over in 2007, *Pulp Fiction* was estimated to be worth over £300,000.¹⁷ Since then Street Art, Banksys in particular, have generally gone up in value. In 2005 a set of six *Kate Moss* prints sold for \$3,000, in 2006 another set was sold for \$17,000¹⁸ and in 2012 just one print was expected to sell for somewhere between £30,000-50,000 (about \$49,000 – \$81,000) at Bonham's Urban Art Auction.¹⁹ It may be argued that this is merely a symptom of "The Banksy Effect", that his Art somehow has jurisdictional immunity²⁰. Yet the popularity of work by Vhils, Swoon, the Artists in *Urban Masters*, indeed even the King Robbo show²¹ argues for the opposite. As Robbo once remarked "He's not the Messiah, He's a very naughty boy."²²

This Month - Barabbas: A Retrospective

The public sphere's responsibility regarding Street Art is littered with tactile and delicate issues. Asking a government, especially government officials, to endorse Artwork that they themselves have not commissioned or had input on is highly impractical in the current media-savvy and salacious sound-bite environment. Further, there is the darkly practical issue of cost. If a government is responsible for maintaining a piece of Art, then the funding for that maintenance will come from taxes. Using taxes to pay for Art is a debate which is as prickly as it is tedious. So the easiest solution seems to be the one that Councils have started using, leaving it up to an eventual public complaint and/or private ownership. As a spokesperson for Hackney Council stated in an interview:

"...Under law it is the owner of the properties responsibility to remove graffiti - protection is an option although not required by law. Any Artwork must not be allowed to become a detriment to the area and again this is the property owner's responsibility. The council will take action against those found to be applying graffiti if they are identified as doing so..."²³

The Hackney Council was at the center of its own Street Art debate in 2009 when a piece had begun to be painted over without the building owner's consent. Though in the Council's defense, there had been several attempts to contact management with their intent to no reply.²⁴ The growing trend for public officials to not get involved in the Art movement beyond responding to complaints has a distinctive consequence. It moves figures like Kenny Wilks away from the role

¹⁷ BBC News UK "Iconic Banksy Image Painted Over" *BBC News Online* (April 20th 2012)

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/6575345.stm>

¹⁸ Foster, Max "The Banksy Effect" *Your World Today* Cable News Network (CNN) Aired December 4th, 2006 – 12:00 ET

<http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0612/04/ywt.01.html>

¹⁹ MacDiarmid, Peter/Getty Images "Banksy Paintings up for Auction at Bonham's Urban Art Sale" *The Telegraph* (April 3rd, 2012)

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/Art/Artsales/9181766/Banksy-primed-and-all-set-for-take-off.html>

²⁰ Foster, Max "The Banksy Effect" *Your World Today* Cable News Network (CNN) Aired December 4th, 2006 – 12:00 ET

<http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0612/04/ywt.01.html>

²¹ King Robbo 'New Paintings' Aug-Oct 2011, Pure Evil Gallery 108 Leonard Street Shoreditch, London EC2A 4XS,

²² Which is, as King Robbo acknowledges, a reference to the Monty Python Film, *Life of Brian* (1979)

Graffiti Wars Directed by Jane Preston (London, UK :One Productions , Two Four Television Productions, Distributed by Channel 4 Television, 2011), TV

²³ Hackney Council Representative, response email to Molly McCormick, November 28th, 2012

²⁴ Gabbatt, Adam "Banksy Artwork Painted over in Hackney", *The Guardian Online* (September 3rd, 2009)

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/Artanddesign/2009/sep/03/banksy-Artwork-painted-over-hackney>

of Paris, a single man being asked to choose which of the Goddesses will be favored, and closer to something more like reality TV. The council members become equal parts Pontius Pilot and Terry Wogan, with the debate becoming a little less Grand Salon De Versailles and a little more X-Factor.

Putting the public in charge of Street Art's fate has a systematic logic and an inherent contradiction. An outraged public laments over the loss of Artwork and decry the officials who carried out the execution, but this is the same public who complained and asked for the work to be removed in the first place. 'Public opinion' therefore is a wily entity, as real as it is mythological. It makes 'the public' seem like a homogenous being, rather than a vast collection of entities. As if the 'Third Estate' the 'Hoi Polloi' the 'Unwashed Masses' were a group in constant agreement. What's more, 'public opinion' can lead to the same problems that face the councils now; Art that is deemed not worth protection because no one asked for it and deserving removal when it becomes an 'eyesore', except this time we are without a party to blame. This is particularly dangerous for new Artists, as public shock is a very old enemy to aesthetic innovation²⁵ yet rarely has singular public complaint of 'eye-sore' meant the Art's destruction.²⁶ If an individual grievance was the only means of determining the course of Art History then we might be today without the Pre-Raphaelites, the Impressionists or basically anything by Van Gogh.²⁷ Then again, Dante Gabriel Rossetti didn't paint *Bocca Baciata* on the side of a building, which makes this current problem a new take on a very old theme. For the councils it seemed to be damned if you do, damned if you don't and opting for the better solution they turn to the camera and say "Britain, You Decide!" hoping that the fabled force can make a thoughtful choice.

Giving Matches to Paper Dolls

It would be convenient to blame the systematic elimination of Street Art solely on Council members and their increasing decision to abstain from involvement, but it should be noted that rivalry within the Street Art community has its role to play as well. The most prominent example is probably the King Robbo/Banksy feud. This rivalry became the subject of 'Graffiti Wars'²⁸ which followed the story in a manner as entertaining as it is tragic. If taken out of context, the premise sounds less like Art criticism and more like boxing-match hype: the build up between opposing forces, the champ vs. the underdog, experts discussing tactics and speculating on the outcome, all while hinting at the ironic outrage over 'defaced Street Art'.

²⁵ One example was this crowd-shocking vulgarity was Edouard Manet's *Olympia* when it was first exhibited in 1865. Ross King *The Judgment of Paris: The Revolutionary Decade That Gave the World Impressionism* (London, UK: Random house Publishing, 2007) 148-154

²⁶ For Example, in the Islington Gazette Article from 2012 (footnote 8), the quote was 'It is now an eyesore and we agreed with a resident that it should be removed.' Implying that one outspoken resident condemned the work, and the council merely agreed.

²⁷ It should be noted that in these examples, it was the contemporary critics who had a problem with the paintings, not so much a public response, which was rarely recorded.

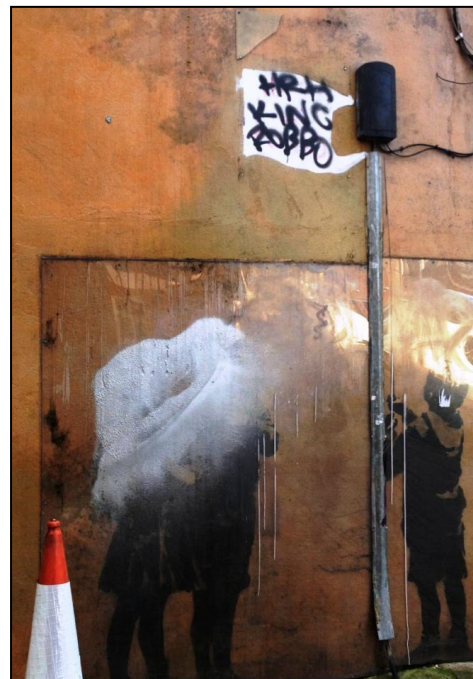
²⁸ *Graffiti Wars* Directed by Jane Preston (London, UK :One Productions , Two Four Television Productions, Distributed by Channel 4 Television, 2011), TV

One example of this feud is a Banksy piece of school children saluting a Tesco bag which first appeared on the side of a pharmacy on Essex Road in 2008. Given the fame of the Artist, the shop's owner, Raj Chavda, was initially pleased and stated in a BBC interview "I think we have something in common. I think he [Banksy] dislikes Tesco, the supermarket, as much as I do."²⁹ Now 4 years later, the spray paint has been tagged several times, most notably by King Robbo. The first reported incident of tagging was in 2010³⁰ as a possible response to some of the latter's work being painted over in Camden³¹. Following up with Chavda in autumn 2012, the stenciled Artwork seemed to be an equal source of pride and frustration. "It's been vandalized several times and each time we repair it, it happens again. So for now we're just waiting." "Waiting until?" "I don't know." ³²he said apologetically as he served another customer. The council responded to the matter stating:

"This image is on private property. The Council has no remit to remove this unless at the request of the owner/or if it is obscene."³³



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²⁹ "New Banksy" *BBC News – London* Aired March 5th 2008 Full Transcript Not Available

Reproduced on YouTube channel of the Pure Evil Gallery in Shoreditch, London

BBC News - London, "New Banksy," YouTube video, 1:36, posted by Pure Evil Gallery "Pure Evil Charly" May 16th 2008

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CYsr-O6fp-w&feature=related>

³⁰ Topping, Alexandra "Banksy Graffiti Feud Given A Fresh Coat", *The Guardian Online* (April 23rd, 2010)

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/apr/23/banksy-graffiti-world-feud>

³¹ Banksy Homepage "This" <http://www.banksy.co.uk/QA/camden/camden4.html>

(Accessed Nov 10th 2012)

³² Raj Chavda Interview with Molly McCormick, November 10th 2012

³³ Islington Council Representative, response email to Molly McCormick, November 30th, 2012.

The plastic covering that once protected the *Tesco Generation* has been partially removed and where it could not be, a thick layer of grey paint covers the figures. This altering, albeit vicious, is now as much part of the piece as the original. For better or worse, these changes add to the story. Other examples of this kind of evolving narrative in Art might be Duchamp's *The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Bachelors, Even* which was damaged during transit in 1926³⁶ or the countless fig leaves added to nude statues and paintings following the Council of Trent in the mid-16th century.³⁷ It may be unfortunate, even criminal, but it is nevertheless compelling. For the most part, the Artists themselves don't take much responsibility in the curating of their own work. That is unless it becomes a matter of territorial pride. As Ben Eine, an Artist who specializes in text-based images has been quoted: "It's about male ego and damage. Graffiti's got a lot of self-imposed rules"³⁸ later stating "The irony of councils cleaning Graffiti off of Street Art and then protecting it is pretty mad."³⁹ When asked if the Islington Council had ever been contacted by a Street Artist in response to a piece being painted over, the answer was a definite but flexible "Not to our knowledge."⁴⁰ It seems that like Mr. Chavda, the name of the game for the Councils is 'patience'. An idea the Hackney Council reflected on:

"Any Artwork or graffiti will naturally fade with time or be painted over by another Artist. On private property, some owners have attempted to protect the Artwork/graffiti by affixing a Perspex screen. Or removing it altogether to another place." ⁴¹

Certain mediums of Street Art are inherently going to last longer than others, a tiled work is naturally going to last longer than a glued paper image. Still, the rapidity at which Street Art can fade without upkeep seems to be an incredibly apt metaphor for authorial intent. It may have meant something to the Artist at one time but unless its creator is willing to constantly chauffeur it, or have someone pay to take possession of it, then the world will do what it will. As Banksy once stated: "If you want things to last, you shouldn't paint them under a bridge on the canal"⁴²

³⁴ Figure 5- Associated Press, Distributed by the London Telegraph Franklin, Kate (and agencies) "Banksy 'backs ban on plastic bags' *The Telegraph Online* (March 6th 2008) <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1580844/Banksy-backs-ban-on-plastic-bags.html>

³⁵ Figure 6- Molly McCormick, Picture taken November 10th, 2012

³⁶ Tate Modern Homepage: Artworks Catalogue "The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Bachelors, Even"

<http://www.tate.org.uk/Art/Artworks/duchamp-the-bride-stripped-bare-by-her-bachelors-even-the-large-glass-t02011/text-catalogue-entry> (Accessed January 4, 2013)

³⁷ Hollingsworth, Mary *Art in World History* (Amrok, New York: M.E. Sharpe Inc. Publishing) , 280

³⁸ *Graffiti Wars* Directed by Jane Preston (London, UK :One Productions , Two Four Television Productions, Distributed by Channel 4 Television, 2011), TV

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Islington Council Representative, response email to Molly McCormick, November 30th, 2012.

⁴¹ Hackney Council Representative, response email to Molly McCormick, November 28th, 2012

⁴² *Graffiti Wars* Directed by Jane Preston (London, UK :One Productions , Two Four Television Productions, Distributed by Channel 4 Television, 2011), TV

I May Not Know Much About What I Like, but I Know About Art.

Temporality is the natural risk of anonymous, curator-less Art. So the preservation of Street Art seems then to be either on the owner (in the case of private property) or the community (in the case of public), without government or academic authority taking any direct responsibility. This means that there is, in a sense, a kind of anarchy to Street Art criticism. If the wall displaying the Art cannot be privately controlled, then the decision of 'Good Art' and 'Bad Art' is on the viewer alone, free from curatorial influence. The only close comparison to this phenomenon might be the New York Graffiti Movement which had its zenith in the 1970 and 1980s, though the aesthetics of that time seem to exist under the attentive gaze of Andy Warhol.⁴³ One might argue that Banksy, or possibly D*Face (Artist and owner of the Stolen Space Gallery in Shoreditch), now fills that position but neither one plays the role of leader/mentor to the same scale as Warhol did. Further, when the first movement tried to enter into the gallery set, it met with a community not quite ready to accept it. As Robert Atkin assessed:

"Norman Mailer romanticized it [1970-80s Graffiti Art] as the anarchic manifestation of social freedom, while such critics as Suzi Gablik charged that ghetto youths were being exploited by a novelty-crazed Art market. Graffiti's move to the galleries proved fatal: by the mid-1980s, it already seemed outmoded...Like the latest trend in fashion, graffiti was imported from the streets, commercialized, and then quickly pushed aside."⁴⁴

Therefore there is reason to suspect that this period of self-governance will be historically brief, and in fact, may already be over. By moving Street Art inside, the control of what's good and what's bad is now re-establishing itself, albeit in an evolved way. For example, The Tate Modern has started the 'Gallery of Lost Art', a year-long exhibition (beginning July 2012) which collects and categorizes Art that has been any of the following:

- Attacked
- Destroyed
- Discarded
- Ephemeral
- Erased
- Missing
- Rejected
- Stolen
- Transient
- Unrealized

⁴³ One might look at the work of Jean-Michel Basquait for an example of this mentor-mentee relationship, as well as Warhol's undeniable influence in pop-Art in general.

Hoban, Phoebe *Basquait: A Quick Killing in Art* (New York, NY: Penguin Publishing, 2004) 93, 201-204

⁴⁴ Atkins, Robert *Art Speak: A Guide to Contemporary Ideas, Movements and Buzzwords* (New York, NY: Abbeville Press Publishers, 1990, 2007) 84-86, Also reproduced on MOCA (Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles) website, <http://www.moca.org/pc/viewArtTerm.php?id=15>, Accessed January 2nd, 2013

As the curator Jennifer Mundy explains: "Art history tends to be the history of what has survived. But loss has shaped our sense of Art's history in ways that we are often not aware of. Museums normally tell stories through the objects they have in their collections. But this exhibition focuses on significant works that cannot be seen."⁴⁵ The gallery covers 40 Artists, including Marcel Duchamp, Keith Haring, Willem De Kooning and Joan Miro. While there are currently no examples from any of the major London Street Artists in the Gallery of Lost Art, one can't help but notice that in the Tate Modern gift shop there are at least 2 books being sold about Street Art as well as a myriad of "Space Invader" key chains. The writing, or rather, the tag, is on the wall.

So is the Street Art exodus towards interior space inevitable given the removal of official responsibility and fickle "public opinion"? Does this domestication castrate the movement or is it just a change that should be explored as a separate entity? The answer to both lies in the movements' only real aesthetic problem: that the majority of Street Art and Graffiti Writing is charmingly clever but fairly shallow. The precedent is a quick image that seems to be specifically designed for someone who can't possibly spare more than three seconds to look at it. This Art is not supposed to be read for any deeper meaning than the commentary it presents, be it political, societal or economic. There's a word for it: Snarky. Snark is inherently topical and not what most gallery pieces aspire to be: timeless. Upon entering the interior setting, Street Art will presumably require more insight, more complication and more ideas for viewers to contemplate, as it will be looked at for a longer period of time. Yet, unlike a lot of gallery Art, the grass-roots exterior work of Street Art and Graffiti Writing allowed for a larger forum to want to see and protect it, because it means something to them. These movements encourage a more educated viewer, someone who can be enraged when one person gets to dictate what gets taken down and what is preserved. Street Art and Graffiti Writing was never meant to last forever, but its exterior run allows for the public, even if it is imaginary concept, to make a choice on what Art matters to them. It lets everyone, not just critics and councils, decide what is or isn't good in a physical and very real way. Out of the street and into their lives or vice versa.

The hope being that this new, more personally involved viewer continues to follow the work into the gallery and, eventually, the museum. It is dangerous and naive to assume that the machinations of one movement are drastically different from any other, however at the risk of it: exterior Street Art and its legacy present a unique opportunity for a new kind of criticism. It's neither pop-Art, nor abstractionism, neither neo-realism, nor digital. It isn't any other familiar kind of "ism", so how we qualify it is new territory. The most common complaint on 'Modern Art' is that it doesn't mean anything viewers; that the product is so personal to the Artist it does not translate into the universal experience. And though no studies have been done to confirm this theory, it may be safe to assume that the number of people who can laugh at and enjoy a picture of a naked man hanging out a window outnumbers those who can find the intent of Robert Rauschenberg's *Untitled Combine* without assistance. This movement may be the most democratic Art criticism that we have seen in recent memory, not only in its subject matter, but

⁴⁵ Tate Modern Homepage: Gallery of Lost Art "Gallery of Lost Art" <http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/exhibition/gallery-lost-art> (Accessed January 4, 2013)

also in its audience. So now we will see whether that ideal, or any notion so conceived, can long endure.



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⁴⁶Figure 7- Molly McCormick, Picture taken January 4th, 2012. Paper Image by the Street Artist, Swoon - placard satirically installed by the fictional "Street Museum Art" group.

Work Cited

1 - Figure 1 (See IMAGES)

2 - *Exit Through the Gift Shop* Directed by Banksy (London, UK: Paranoid Pictures, 2010), DVD

3- The concluding moral of *Exit Through the Gift Shop*, (that of profit made through unoriginality being wrong) is vaguely similar to a common criticism of Banksy's work, in particular his early pieces as they relate to French stencil Artist, Blek Le Rat. This aspect has led many to suspect a hoax conspiracy theory: that Mr. Brainwash is a fabrication of Banksy.

4- Figure 2 (See IMAGES) IMAGE – Molly McCormick picture taken November 10th 2012

5- Atkins, Robert *Art Speak: A Guide to Contemporary Ideas, Movements and Buzzwords* (New York, NY Abbeville Press Publishers, 1990, 2007) 84-86

6- Figure 3 (See IMAGES)

7- Or 'buffed' as it referred to by Street Artists

8- Harper, Paul "Double Blow for Banksy's Creations in Islington", *Islington Gazette Online* (June 5th 2012)
http://www.islingtongazette.co.uk/news/double_blow_for_banksy_s_creations_in_islington_1_1398752

9- Figure 4 (See IMAGES)

10 -*Graffiti Wars* Directed by Jane Preston (London, UK: One Productions, Two Four Television Productions, Distributed by Channel 4 Television, 2011), TV

11- Ibid.

12- Ibid.

13 -Islington Council Representative, response email to Molly McCormick, November 30th, 2012.

14 - BBC News UK "Iconic Banksy Image Painted Over" *BBC News Online* (April 20th 2012)
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15- Ibid.

16- Hackney Council Representative, response email to Molly McCormick, November 28th, 2012.

17 - BBC News UK "Iconic Banksy Image Painted Over" *BBC News Online* (April 20th 2012)
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18 - Foster, Max "The Banksy Effect" *Your World Today* Cable News Network (CNN) Aired December 4th, 2006 – 12:00 ET
<http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0612/04/ywt.01.html>

19 - MacDiarmid, Peter/Getty Images "Banksy Paintings up for Auction at Bonham's Urban Art Sale" *The Telegraph* (April 3rd, 2012) <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/Art/Artsales/9181766/Banksy-primed-and-all-set-for-take-off.html>

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21- King Robbo 'New Paintings' Aug-Oct 2011, Pure Evil Gallery 108 Leonard Street Shoreditch, London EC2A 4XS,

- 22- Which is, as King Robbo acknowledges, a reference to the Monty Python Film, *Life of Brian* (1979)
Graffiti Wars Directed by Jane Preston (London, UK: One Productions, Two Four Television Productions, Distributed by Channel 4 Television, 2011), TV
- 23- Hackney Council Representative, response email to Molly McCormick, November 28th, 2012
- 24- Gabbatt, Adam "Banksy Artwork Painted over in Hackney", *The Guardian Online* (September 3rd, 2009)
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/Artanddesign/2009/sep/03/banksy-Artwork-painted-over-hackney>
- 25- One example was this crowd-shocking vulgarity was Edouard Manet's *Olympia* when it was first exhibited in 1865. Ross King
The Judgment of Paris: The Revolutionary Decade That Gave the World Impressionism (London, UK: Random house Publishing, 2007) 148-154
- 26- For Example, in the Islington Gazette Article from 2012 (footnote 8), the quote was 'It is now an eyesore and we agreed with a resident that it should be removed.' Implying that one outspoken resident condemned the work, and the council merely agreed.
- 27- It should be noted that in these examples, it was contemporary critics that had a problem with the paintings, not so much a public response, which was rarely recorded.
- 28- *Graffiti Wars* Directed by Jane Preston (London, UK: One Productions, Two Four Television Productions, Distributed by Channel 4 Television, 2011), TV
- 29- "New Banksy" *BBC News – London* Aired March 5th 2008 Full Transcript Not Available
 Reproduced on YouTube channel of the Pure Evil Gallery in Shoreditch, London
BBC News - London, "New Banksy," YouTube video, 1:36, posted by Pure Evil Gallery "Pure Evil Charly" May 16th 2008
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CYsr-O6fp-w&feature=related>
- 30 - Topping, Alexandra "Banksy Graffiti Feud Given A Fresh Coat", *The Guardian Online* (April 23rd, 2010)
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/apr/23/banksy-graffiti-world-feud>
- 31- Banksy Homepage "This" <http://www.banksy.co.uk/QA/camden/camden4.html>
 (Accessed Nov 10th 2012)
- 32- Raj Chavda Interview with Molly McCormick, November 10th 2012
- 33- Islington Council Representative, response email to Molly McCormick, November 30th, 2012.
- 34- Figure 5 (See IMAGES)
- 35- Figure 6 (See IMAGES)
- 36- Tate Modern Homepage: Artworks Catalogue "The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Bachelors, Even"
<http://www.tate.org.uk/Art/Artworks/duchamp-the-bride-stripped-bare-by-her-bachelors-even-the-large-glass-t02011/text-catalogue-entry> (Accessed January 4, 2013)
- 37- Hollingsworth, Mary *Art in World History* (Amrok, New York: M.E. Sharpe Inc. Publishing), 280
- 38- *Graffiti Wars* Directed by Jane Preston (London, UK: One Productions, Two Four Television Productions, Distributed by Channel 4 Television, 2011), TV
- 39- Ibid.

40 - Islington Council Representative, response email to Molly McCormick, November 30th, 2012.

41- Hackney Council Representative, response email to Molly McCormick, November 28th, 2012

42 - *Graffiti Wars* Directed by Jane Preston (London, UK: One Productions, Two Four Television Productions, Distributed by Channel 4 Television, 2011), TV

43- One might look at the work of Jean-Michel Basquait for an example of this mentor-mentee relationship, as well as Warhol's undeniable influence in pop-Art in general. Hoban, Phoebe *Basquait: A Quick Killing in Art* (New York, NY: Penguin Publishing, 2004) 93, 201-204

44- Atkins, Robert *Art Speak: A Guide to Contemporary Ideas, Movements and Buzzwords* (New York, NY Abbeville Press Publishers, 1990, 2007) 84-86 , Also reproduced on MOCA (Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles) website, <http://www.moca.org/pc/viewArtTerm.php?id=15> , Accessed January 2nd, 2013

45- Tate Modern Homepage: Gallery of Lost Art "Gallery of Lost Art" <http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/exhibition/gallery-lost-Art> (Accessed January 4, 2013)

46 - Figure 7 (See IMAGES)

IMAGES

Figure 1 – Molly McCormick picture taken October 11th 2012

Figure 2 – Molly McCormick picture taken November 10th 2012

Figure 3- Harper, Paul "Double Blow for Banksy's Creations in Islington", *Islington Gazette Online* (June 5th 2012) http://www.islingtongazette.co.uk/news/double_blow_for_banksy_s_creations_in_islington_1_1398752

Figure 4- Ibid.

Figure 5 - Associated Press, Distributed by the London Telegraph Franklin, Kate (and agencies) "Banksy 'backs ban on plastic bags' *The Telegraph Online* (March 6th 2008) <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1580844/Banksy-backs-ban-on-plastic-bags.html>

Figure 6- Molly McCormick, Picture taken November 10th, 2012

Figure 7- Molly McCormick, Picture taken January 4th, 2012. Paper Image by the Street Artist, Swoon - placard satirically installed by the fictional "Street Museum Art" group.

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