

Press release

THE MYSTERY OF BANKSY "A GENIUS MIND"

The blockbuster exhibition about the street art superstar „The Mystery of Banksy – A Genius Mind” in Oslo from February 23rd!

He's world famous but still a mystery – Banksy, the Bristol-born and to this day anonymous graffiti artist and painter, known for challenging the boundaries of the art market, who has been causing a sensation with his work for many years. The exhibition success "The Mystery of Banksy – A Genius Mind" unifies this art icon! The exhibition presents like never before more than 150 motifs of the celebrated street art superstar: graffiti, photographs, sculptures, video installations and prints on various materials such as canvas, fabric, aluminum, forex and plexiglass which were reproduced and collected especially for this exhibition.

In an elaborate and unique setting, "The Mystery of Banksy – A Genius Mind" provides a comprehensive overview and insight into the entire work of the exceptional artist. According to Banksy's motto "Copyright is for losers ©TM", this homage is not officially authorized.

Ever since its premiere in Munich in March 2021 more than 2 million visitors saw the exhibition about the exceptional artist in several cities and made it one the most frequented and successful shows about the street art superstar worldwide. "The Mystery of Banksy – A Genius Mind" will now be on display in Norway for the very first time and will open on February 23rd in Oslo / Økernsenteret for a short time. While the originals are barely publicly available, the no less impressive reproductions can be admired in "The Mystery of Banksy - A Genius Mind".

To bring to life an exhibition like this is quite a challenge. The successful German musical producer and exhibition organizer Oliver Forster (COFO Entertainment) faced it. "We want to make art an experience, viewable for everyone and brought together in one place. Banksy is primarily a street artist who is known for his graffiti that he has distributed all over the world. In addition, he started early with selling signed works of art and prints in a limited edition. Most of them are privately owned and are therefore not accessible to the public. To be able to marvel at a genuine Banksy is therefore an absolute rarity. With 'The Mystery of Banksy – A Genius Mind' we try to bring together the best and most impressive motifs in just one place and in a relaxed atmosphere outside a museum, but still tangible with high quality standards", says producer Oliver Forster.

This extraordinary art experience is curated by Virginia Jean. The young curator and gallery owner, born in England and living in Berlin, is a versatile designer and indisputable creative. After working in the classic art market for many years she created numerous projects and exhibitions in the field of street art. Banksy has always been a great influence and inspiration in her life because of her origin and passion for creativity and free art as a means of communication. She is an expert in his works and specialist in the street art industry. "With his creations, Banksy addresses significant truths and problems in our world to which we prefer to close our eyes. A Banksy work touches everyone and is aimed at everyone, whether they like it or not. This is exactly why it is so important to me personally to exhibit Banksy's works, to make them accessible to the world and to celebrate them. Banksy writes history with his art – the story that is a reality for us in this very moment. The exhibition is a must-see for everyone who likes to grapple with art, politics, general world events and, above all, themselves and has a sense of bitter sweet irony", says the creative director of the exhibition.

Who is Banksy?

When it comes to street art, you can't get past him: Banksy, probably the most famous and most mysterious graffiti artist in the world. The British man, aged between 45 and 50, has successfully kept his identity a secret. His works, on the other hand, not only conquer the streets all over the world but also the auction houses, and with great success: he is currently considered one of the most expensive contemporary artists! Banksy, who touches people with his ironic, political but always poetic works, is an underground fighter, king of street art and even a hotel operator. When the city of Bristol had its citizens vote in 2009 whether Banksy works should be removed from the cityscape, 97 percent decided against it. A clear vote for his art. Banksy is a star far beyond the boundaries of the art market. Back in 2010, Time Magazine put him on their list of the 100 most influential people in the world for the first time, alongside personalities such as Barack Obama, Steve Jobs and Lady Gaga.

To this day, no one knows who Banksy is or what his real name is, but everyone knows his art that appears on city walls overnight and comments provocatively on world events. In the meantime, the phantom of the art world has long since made art history. Millions, and amongst them also in the classical sense less art-savvy people, know and admire his works. In particular, it is his recent work such as the painting "Game Changer" as a dedication to the hospital staff in Southampton or his guerrilla action with the world-famous rats in the London Underground that made him increasingly popular.

In November 2022, several new objects confirmed by Banksy attract attention and prove the artist's solidarity with the people of the war-ravaged Ukraine. The works of art on ruins are sprayed memorials: two children make a seesaw out of a tank trap, an abandoned chair becomes a viewpoint for a woman with gas mask and fire extinguisher, a child in a judo suit hurls his actually superior opponent on the floor, to exemplarily name three of the new motifs.

Many of his works have also found their way into everyday commercial life. The question of whether street art can be commercialised is written on another paper or in for discussion. Can his art be exhibited or can street art in general be shown in a museum or in galleries? After all, Banksy is also synonymous with rejecting commerce. The answer to this question is given by Banksy himself, as recently shown in the exhibition presented in Glasgow's Gallery of Modern Art from June to the end of August 2023, which – for the first time in 14 years – was authorised by the artist himself.

Spectacular promotions and auctions

With his murals, Banksy writes art history in his very own way: he continually sprays unsettling images and texts on facades, subways, public squares, surfaces and objects - logistically sophisticated with a lot of preparatory work, spying and guarding the process. Meanwhile, millions in sales are achieved with his salable works. The 2018 auction of one of his best-known works, "Girl with Balloon", was spectacular and sensational: Shortly after it was sold at the Sotheby's auction in London, the picture self-destructed on the spot, with the lower part being cut into strips by a shredder hidden in the frame. Before that, the original had been auctioned for the equivalent of 1.2 million euros. Up to this point, the record price for a Banksy work was the equivalent of around 1.7 million euros, which was achieved at an auction in New York in 2008.

In 2019, the 2009 oil painting "Devolved Parliament", the British Parliament populated by monkeys, landed again at Sotheby's in London and achieved a record price of 9.9 million pounds (11.1 million euros). Banksy himself then wrote on Instagram: "Too bad it's not mine anymore." Banksy sold the picture in 2011.

A triptych on the refugee crisis entitled "Mediterranean Sea View 2017" brought in the equivalent of 2.4 million euros in 2020, twice as much as expected. The artist donated the money to a Palestinian hospital.

'Show Me the Monet', Banksy's tongue-in-cheek reinterpretation of a Monet masterpiece, fetched £7.6million (€8.4million) in 2020. The idyll that prevails in Monet's work about "The Japanese Bridge" becomes an illegal rubbish dump in Banksy's work, with discarded rubbish bobbing amidst the water lilies. Banksy had already painted the oil painting in 2005 and shown it in a gallery exhibition.

The artist set a new record in March 2021: his picture "Game Changer", which he secretly hung in the hallway of a hospital in Southampton in May 2020 and dedicated to the hospital staff with the words "Thank you for everything you do", went under the hammer at Christie's auction house and fetched an incredible price of almost 17 million pounds (almost 20 million euros). As explicitly requested by Banksy, the proceeds should benefit the entire British health service NHS. The picture shows a little boy who threw away his superhero characters Batman and Spiderman and is now playing with a new favorite character – a nurse with surgical mask and cape.

Banksy last broke his own record in October 2021. The re-auctioned "Love is in the Bin" brought 18.5 million pounds (equivalent to around 21.6 million euros) - i.e. the shredded "Girl with Balloon", which, as mentioned above, had been sold already in 2018. To this day, it is not known who bought the work of art for the new record sum.

PRESALE

A time slot must be booked in order to optimally direct the number of visitors. With the time slot ticket, access to the exhibition is possible within the booked time slot, the length of your stay is unlimited.

If you want to stay flexible or want to give away tickets without a time limit as a gift, so-called flexi / gift tickets are the right alternative. They can be used to access the exhibition at any time, but due to the current situation there are only a limited number available.

Tickets can be bought at **www.mystery-banksy.com/no/** as well as any other common ticket agencies and at the box office from the first day of the exhibition. Included in the ticket price is a vast and informative multimedia guide that can be easily accessed via smartphone.

Bilingual & barrier-free:

Texts in Norwegian and English. The exhibition is fully accessible.

EXHIBITION INFORMATION:

„The Mystery of Banksy – A Genius Mind“

Duration: **From February 23, 2024 – only for a short time!**

Opening hours:

MON/TUE/WED/FRI/SAT	10 am – 7 pm
THU	10 am – 8 pm
SUN & public holidays	10 am – 6 pm

Location: **Økernsenteret
Økernveien 145, 0580 Oslo**

“The Mystery of Banksy – A Genius Mind” can also be visited here:

Until May 26, 2024	Cologne/Germany
From March 13, 2024	Wroclaw/Poland

Tickets: Tickets at **www.mystery-banksy.com/no/**, any other common ticket agencies and at the box office from the first day of the exhibition.

**Further Information,
press texts & photos download:** **www.mystery-banksy.com/no/**

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