

Banksy: THE BRISTOL LEGACY
ISBN 978-1-906593-96-4
Paul Gough (ed.)
Sansom and Company, Bristol
2012

Introduction
Banksy: Painter, Prankster, Polemicist
Paul Gough

Everyone asks the same two questions: 'Have you actually met Banksy?' and 'Does he know you are writing this book?' Answer to the first: 'Possibly; but how would I know?' Answer to the second: 'Probably, but why do you think it's important?' These and other frequently asked questions – and my cryptic responses – reveal several things about us and Banksy: first, our continuing fascination with this most secretive of public artists; secondly, a begrudging respect at times bordering on genuine affection for his role as a spokesman on contemporary matters; and thirdly, the British fascination with the 'whodunnit', who exactly is this person about whom so much is apparently known but who chooses anonymity and absence over visibility and instant recognition. Banksy's absence throws down a blatant challenge to our cult of instant celebrity. His is the missing face from the weekly glossy gossip mags; a global 'name' who simply refuses to reveal himself; the empty seat on the ubiquitous chat show...

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Banksy: the story so far ...
John Hudson

To the press and public, the question of Banksy's identity is at least as intriguing as the legitimacy of his work and the price that celebrities and other wealthy patrons are prepared to pay for it. His and his circle's great triumph has been in their ongoing ability to keep that identity swathed in mystery, even though the artist's name is now in the public domain beyond all reasonable doubt, freely available on *Wikipedia* and subject to myriad press revelations in the past five years.

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Challenging the Institutions: Street Art and Bristol Passion
Kath Cockshaw

The 2009 exhibition, 'Banksy vs Bristol Museum' was a runaway success in terms of visitor figures, providing a boost to Bristol tourism and the local economy. This chapter considers the challenges facing Bristol artists, and the conditions of production, funding and exhibiting opportunities for artists of all kinds who live and work in the city. Following the Banksy exhibition, the evaluation analysis carried out by Bristol City Council proved the extent of the financial and cultural benefits resulting from the project for the city, clearly illustrating that Bristol must invest more in its artists to gain future return. To further illustrate her argument, the author explores the importance of 'Banksy

v Bristol Museum' and the RWA exhibition, 'Crimes of Passion: Street Art in Bristol', which immediately preceded it, in the context of the international street art movement.

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Drawn in chalk, but graffiti all the same: street protest in eighteenth- and nineteenth- century Bristol

Steve Poole

Graffiti and street art are not new in English cities and neither is the moral outrage they have frequently provoked. A century or two ago, there were few things quite so irritating to 'respectable' opinion and local authority as the unsanctioned decoration of public walls with crudely carved initials, challenging proclamations and rude rhymes. In eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Bristol however, where, unsurprisingly, access to print media was effectively restricted, a simple piece of chalk was all it took to confound and frustrate the censors. In many ways, chalked messages on walls were the social media of the age, whether summoning the crowd, defying authority or mocking the privileged. But what messages did Bristol's chalk authors leave on the city's walls and what measures, if any, did local elites take to combat them? This chapter explores some of the surviving evidence.

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The 'versus' habit: Bristol, Banksy and the Barons

Paul Gough

Banksy has described his interventions as a form of 'brandalism', a calculated act of subverting familiar images and icons so that they are twisted into novel and provocative forms. But is this a new phenomenon? Moreover is it new to Bristol – a city that has a quiet history of schism and rife. Paul Gough examines the origins of Banksy's contrariness, suggesting that the 'versus' in his title tells us a great deal about the artist, the city and its civic habits.

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Bristol's great art heist

Tim Corum and Philip Walker

The authors reveal the revolution that the Banksy exhibition has caused in museum attitudes. They point to the shows by contemporary artists that have followed - and which would not have happened without the trail blazed by the Banksy team - and conclude that things have changed for ever. 'With official co-operation and a willingness to offer up spaces to the innovators you can transform museum practice and give it a new place in the heart of the city.'

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Working with Banksy

Kate Brindley

A brief personal reflection by the then Director of the institution that hosted the exhibition.

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The View from Stokes Croft
'They told us Banksy was a bit like the Queen Mum'
Katy Bauer

Banksy vs Bristol Museum was an extraordinary show, but the part I liked best was the queue. About half a kilometre long, seven days a week for three months, it snaked up the road, and I joined a handful of buskers and advertisers in working it. But I didn't want money, I wanted drawings. I wanted the queue to leave a mark because I saw it as Banksy's most poignant statement yet. It was a vote for defiance and the voters could best be described as: The General Public.

The 3,500 drawings collected became 'The Banksy Q' and the exhibition was held in Stokes Croft in December 2010. All the drawings were put up and I am told Banksy visited the show more than once, though I wouldn't know whether that is true or not because neither I nor anyone else at the PRSC knows who he is. We still don't know him, but one day he instructed his office to call ours ...

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Hanging out down the Council House:
Street art's outlaws and the Bristol establishment

Eugene Byrne

Thirty years ago, official Bristol persecuted graffiti artists with the full vigour of the law and the juvenile courts. Nowadays Bristol uses street art to market a cool and edgy image to everyone from tourists to businesses and potential undergraduates. The key moment in this transformation was not the Banksy exhibition at the Museum. It was rather, argues Eugene Byrne, a minor act of vandalism at the bottom of Park Street just before the show opened.

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Banksy and Bristol's Cultural Development

Andrew Kelly

It has taken a long time for official – government and business – Bristol to recognise the importance of Banksy. This is not surprising as it is only relatively recently that the city has begun to take arts and culture seriously. Bristol is a city of paradoxes and this is where Banksy best sits, but it sometimes leads to an uneasy relationship with the city wanting to celebrate both heritage as well as the new, and where promoting radical, underground, street art can sometimes come back to bite – especially when caught up in the Bristol 2011 riots.

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Thank you, Mr Banksy
Maria Bowers

A personal reflection of the show, the queue and the impact it had on one family.

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Banksy vs the Museum: Bristol Museum vs Banksy: Who Won?
Anna Farthing

Anna Farthing considers who won in the mock battle of 'Banksy vs Bristol Museum'. She tries to find the heart of the matter and assess what impact it had on those concerned. This chapter contextualises the event of the exhibition among developments in museum practice locally and nationally, and discusses the different conceptions of knowledge, learning and visitor experience currently exerting an influence on those working in the heritage industry.

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'Endearing enough, but it's not art'
David Lee

Performing stunts and living in the public eye are poor substitutes for lasting accomplishment. David Lee argues that being an eye-catching entertainer, who is not really that serious about either dissent or art, is only enough to command interest and respect from the less bright. Even so, the success of the Banksy Bristol exhibition may prove to be a watershed in the State's reaction to popular art.

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Banksy: the economic impact
Anthony Plumridge and Andrew Mearman

The economic impact of the Banksy exhibition was immediately apparent: queues and crowds around the top of Park Street gave a boost to local businesses, especially those in the food and beverage sector. Many visitors came from outside the city attracted predominantly by the exhibition. This resulted in a short-term boost to the local economy. Like a pebble thrown into a pond, ripples from this impact spread through the economy but very soon become dissipated and disappear. The pond returns to its previous relatively tranquil state. Is this all?

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The Nelson Street transformation: Bristol street art reaches new heights. Or does it?

John Sansom

The most dramatic and obvious legacy of the Banksy show was the descent of graffitists from around the world into the drab canyons of Nelson Street in Bristol's central area. The people of Bristol came out in their thousands, loved it, and gave the city council a big 'thumbs up' for allowing the invasion. But once the artists, the scaffolding, the entertainers, the food and drink and the crowds had gone, one had to look at the art itself. After spending a quiet hour or so there, John Sansom had his reservations.

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Protecting Banksy's Legacy: a lawyer's view
John Webster

It can be argued that Banksy's work, due to its artistic qualities, and its political and social statements, carries a cultural significance in modern society. An application for listing under the Listed Building Acts could ensure that the work may be preserved for future generations and actions could be taken to preserve landmark street art. Here, John Webster, a Bristol based specialist Planning Solicitor, considers the legal position for protecting Banksy's public art as a cultural asset.

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Banksy: the urban calligrapher
Paul Gough

In the closing pages of *Wall and Piece*, Banksy offers some helpful (if pretty idiosyncratic) advice on making stencils. Unfortunately, only two of the eleven tips actually refer to the precise process of designing, cutting, and spraying. The other nine tips are provocative and caustic, quintessential Banksy-speak, amongst them: 'Mindless vandalism can take a bit of thought' and 'Try to avoid painting in places where they still point at aeroplanes'.

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Further reading about Banksy, his art, and his milieu

Alice Barnaby

The bibliography is set out in six sections: books by Banksy, books about Banksy, books with reference to Banksy, unpublished theses/dissertations, journal articles and recent newspaper articles, since 2009.