

Banksy: The Man Behind the Wall

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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