

BANKSY'S ART IN FINLAND: A GUIDE FOR CHILDREN

The art of one of the best-known British street artists working today, Banksy, was part of the Serlachius Museums in Finland in 2021. But what is street art and why is it important? The Serlachius Museums have created a page for children who are interested in knowing more about the street art and finding ways to describe it.

Banksy and street art in a tiny Art Town

In summer 2021, lots of interesting street art was on show in the middle of the spectacular Finnish forests. Art by the world famous street artist Banksy was displayed at Serlachius Museums. Nobody knows who he really is. But we do know that Banksy started his career in Bristol in Britain and has since made and shown his art in public places around the world. If you look closely, you can see how his work has been inspired by posters, postcards and graphic art, among other things.

Art in public places

Street art is made on the walls of buildings, on trains or in other public places. Have a think about these questions:

*Where did you last see street art or graffiti?
In your opinion, is all graffiti art?*

Street art is a way to pass on the artist's message or even make a place more beautiful. Traditionally graffiti are created with spray paint but might also have stickers, posters, mosaics, LEDs or even yarn as part of the finished piece. The paintings can contain letters, simple line drawings or detailed images. Street artists usually paint their artworks in secret so that nobody sees them working, especially because painting on public surfaces is often not allowed. People who do so may have to pay a fine or compensation. Each artist has his or her own signature called their 'tag'.

What would your tag look like?

Using stencils

Banksy has his own recognisable style. The stencil technique helps him to work quickly and to create visually skilful works. Banksy's artwork *Love Is in the Air* (also known as *Flower Thrower*) depicts a man who appears to be standing in a riot, wearing a handkerchief and backwards cap. He is, however, armed with a bouquet of flowers instead of a weapon. The substitute of the flowers for a weapon portrays peace and hope.

Pranks

Often Banksy's art involves pranks. For example, when Banksy's painting *Girl with a Balloon* was sold at a Sotheby's auction in London for 1.2 million Euros, it started to destroy itself in a shredder hidden in the frame. The destruction stopped half-way. As a result, a new artwork was created, and it was renamed *Love is in the Bin*. Banksy has also smuggled his own works into museums without the staff noticing.

Protest

Banksy's art sometimes examines animal rights. His animal figures include monkeys and rats, among others. The monkey is a caricature for our own human way of living and thinking.

What do you think is the message of the work Laugh Now?

You might also notice that for Banksy, rats and graffiti artists are alike. For instance, both are unwanted and populate the abandoned areas of modern cities.

*If you were to use art to protest, what would you protest about?
Which animal would you include in your artwork?*

Street art as landmark

Street art is equally visible in public places in the Art Town of Mänttä-Vilppula. Artist Viva Granlund led the community art project *100 +++ TREES*, which created more than hundred trees on the walls of an old building. The building is now a landmark in the town. Finnish street artist Jussi TwoSeven also created street art by painting foxes in the *Vulpes Vulpes* animation at various locations. You'll find the images of the works also on our web page.

How do the styles of these two Finnish artists differ from each other?