

# Banksy Does New York

Directed by Chris Moukarbel

Wed, Nov 30 at 10:30am & 11am

BAM Rose Cinemas

Approximate running time: 79 min (+20 min Q&A)

On Oct. 1, 2013, the elusive British street artist known as Banksy launched a self-proclaimed month-long residency in New York City, posting one unique exhibit a day somewhere on the city's streets and sparking a 31-day scavenger hunt for each impermanent artwork. This innovative found-footage documentary incorporates YouTube videos, Instagram photos, and social media content created by New Yorkers and Banksy-hunters from all walks of life, making for a fascinating exercise in art appreciation, Internet sleuthing, community building, and media-making that is sure to capture students' imaginations and re-frame art in their everyday lives.

Banksy, whose identity remains unknown, is believed to have been born in Bristol, England, around 1974. He rose to prominence for his provocative stenciled pieces in the late 1990s. Banksy's artwork is characterized by striking images, often combined with slogans. His work often engages political themes, satirically critiquing war, capitalism, hypocrisy, and greed. Common subjects include rats, apes, policemen, members of the royal family, and children. In addition to his two-dimensional work, Banksy is known for his installation artwork. One of the most celebrated of these

pieces, which featured a live elephant painted with a Victorian wallpaper pattern, sparked controversy among animal rights activists.

Other pieces have drawn attention for their edgy themes or the boldness of their execution. Banksy's work on the West Bank barrier, between Israel and Palestine, received significant media attention in 2005. He is also known for his use of copyrighted material and subversion of classic images. An example of this is Banksy's version of Monet's famous series of water lilies paintings, adapted by Banksy to include drifting trash and debris.

Banksy's worldwide fame has transformed his artwork from acts of vandalism to sought-after high art pieces. Journalist Max Foster has referred to the rising prices of graffiti as street art as "the Banksy effect." Interest in Banksy escalated with the release of the 2010 documentary *Exit Through the Gift Shop*, which examines the relationship between commercial and street art. The film, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, was nominated for an Academy Award.

**Chris Moukarbel** (director) made his directing debut with the film *Me at the Zoo*, which premiered at Sundance in 2012. He established a new directorial style that involved accessing a significant amount of user-generated footage from various social media outlets. Moukarbel, whose work often explores ideas around technology and identity, used this style to tell the story of Internet celebrity Chris Crocker and the birth of YouTube. He was commissioned by HBO to chronicle Banksy's self-imposed NYC residency. *Banksy Does New York* premiered in November 2014.

**Justin Crawford** (guest artist) is a young graphic designer by profession and avid art enthusiast. Born and raised in Queens, he graduated from the High School of Art and Design, which was also attended by graffiti and hip-hop ambassador Fab 5 Freddy, fashion designer Calvin Klein, and legendary rap duo Mobb Deep. After majoring in commercial art in high school, Crawford pursued his childhood dream of drawing cartoons that led him to college to pursue a bachelor's degree in communication design from CUNY New York City College of Technology. In addition to freelance graphic design projects, he currently designs graphics for NY1 News.



Photo: Courtesy of the filmmaker

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Feb 27—Mar 10

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