



## Review of “Banksy cultural outlaw”

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by

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### Abstract

This review examines a comprehensive and detailed monograph on Banksy, one of the most elusive and influential contemporary street artists. The book provides an in-depth exploration of Banksy’s career, artistic techniques, thematic preoccupations, and commercial strategies, spanning his early work in Bristol, his international interventions, and major exhibitions such as *Dismaland* and the New York residency. Special attention is given to his stencil practice, preparatory sketches, and the dynamics of audience engagement, including fans, collectors, and critics. The review highlights the book’s fluid writing style, rich visual documentation, and analytical approach, while noting occasional organizational and image-placement inconsistencies and a partial reliance on native-English idiomatic references. Despite these limitations, the book offers rare insights into Banksy’s creative process, collaborative team dynamics, and negotiation of public, commercial, and legal spaces. The review concludes that this work is a significant, well-supported, and highly engaging reference for scholars, practitioners, and general audiences interested in street art, contemporary urban culture, and the intersections of art, commerce, and social commentary.

### Introduction

The copy of the book I had access to was in a 17 × 24.5 cm format. It features a semi-hardcover with folded flaps at both the front and back, containing a short description of the book and a brief author biography, respectively. The front cover shows *Migrant’s Soup* (detail), Porte de la Chapelle, Paris, 2018; the back cover image is adapted from *Sweep It Under the Carpet*, 2006.

The front also includes a kind of “Banksy logo” (which I had never seen before), likely designed by E&P Design in Bath, the studio responsible for the typesetting and overall book design. The pink colour taken from the

*Migrant’s Soup* stencil—original to Banksy’s work—spills into the logo, the second page, the graphic elements used in every chapter title and subtitle, and also dominates the back cover. The layout is not perfect; there is an imbalance between some textual elements, and at first glance the pages feel dense. This is partly due to the thick 160-page paper stock and partly because the chosen font is semibold and quite tall.

An interesting feature of the book is the large number of quotes—on average, roughly one per page. These quotations are set in a lighter typeface, which makes them easy to identify and pleasant to read, in contrast to the heavier body text.

The captions are also set in a heavy (bold) weight, but they work well thanks to their smaller size and placement beneath the images. The images themselves—and the entire book—are printed in full colour. There are images that occupy full pages, many that take up two-thirds of a page, some smaller ones placed at the top of pages, as well as a few in more unusual formats.

The text is arranged in two columns and never reaches the top quarter of the page. The chapters and subchapters are clearly divided, although the author's line of thought does not become completely clear if we rely only on these visible organisational elements. As a result, the reading experience is far from straightforward or obvious; the writing has a certain "linguistic thickness," and for a non-native English reader (like myself), it may require some mental adjustment.

### 1 - The elephant in the room

Here the author begins. September 2006, Los Angeles: *Barely Legal*, Banksy's first major U.S. exhibition. With no introduction beyond the brief description on the inner flap, the reader is immediately confronted with the author's writing style. It reminds me of Sophia Petrillo from the sitcom *The Golden Girls*, who often opened stories with "Picture this...". The tone here feels very similar.

#### Breaking into the USA

Most of the book is organised under subchapter titles like this one—descriptive, but also layered with multiple meanings. The narrative is meticulous and richly referenced, often drawing on interviews and other sources.

In the opening paragraphs, the author situates Banksy at that specific moment in his career, while also outlining the practical challenges faced by Banksy's team in staging the show. All of this is delivered in a light, humorous tone, infused with what I would describe as the classic, provocative British sense of humour.

Several actions carried out by Banksy during that period are explained and contextualised as teasers for the LA exhibition. The author describes, for instance, the fake Paris Hilton CDs and the Guantanamo Bay blow-up doll

intervention at Disneyland—emphasising that this latter action gave Banksy an important boost in international visibility.

In the paragraph dedicated to the *Barely Legal* show itself, the author focuses on the remarkable timing and complexity of the entire operation, including its commercial dimension: the risks taken in renting the venue and the pricing of the artworks, such as *Grannies* at US \$500 (now valued at around US \$40k at auction).

A number of episodes are mentioned, including things that did not go according to plan—such as artworks stuck in customs. And of course, there is "the elephant in the room," a sardonic centrepiece that attracted significant attention. The live elephant triggered strong reactions from animal rights activists, ultimately pushing Banksy to "concede the point." The author also briefly mentions other instances where Banksy incorporated animals into his work.

In three concluding paragraphs, the author argues that despite these "capers," Banksy's *Barely Legal* exhibition "must be considered a resounding success." Press coverage from both U.S. coasts, a rumoured \$3 million in gross sales, and 30,000 visitors over three days are cited as evidence. The balance between underground credibility and elite clientele—the valet parking, the paparazzi, the prices—are all acknowledged as elements that might seem at odds with Banksy's rebel image.

According to the author, Banksy (plus the PR team) were ahead of the press, and the subchapter closes with a flattering reflection that could only come from a deeply enthusiastic follower of Banksy and his team.

#### Framing the Debate

As we continue reading, it becomes clear that the previous subchapter functioned as a kind of prelude; here the author finally addresses the book's purpose.

He clarifies that "this book seeks to explore how a solitary street artist has been able to move rapidly from clandestine, hooded tagger to an impresario capable of staging events of global renown." The book examines the skill sets required for such a transformation, Banksy's ability to galvanise a team, and his "innovative" approach

to public relations—eschewing traditional marketing while manipulating social media and viral messaging to reach vast audiences at no cost. It also considers “how Banksy monetises his practice.”

The author states that Banksy has catalysed the street art scene, supported political causes and charitable actions, and “stayed true to his ambition to maintain an ethical stance in the rough trade of urban fine art.” The core of the book is then articulated through a series of questions: How have these constraints shaped his creative and commercial practice? What is the impact on his street credibility, as distinct from his financial capital? How has he achieved so much with such limited stylistic means? How does he compose and design his artworks? How does he move from white paper to white wall without losing intensity?

The author repeatedly clarifies that this is not a book about Banksy’s fame, controversies, provocations, identity, or his pursuit of anonymity. Identifying himself as a painter, the author states that the book is intended for practitioners like him—painters, filmmakers, and fans.

## 2 - A brief biographical sketch

The author begins by stating that very little is genuinely known about Banksy’s early years.

### Formative Years

The opening paragraphs trace Banksy’s trajectory through various urban areas of Bristol. Some details are presented as hearsay, while others come from Banksy’s interviews or writings.

The narrative continues by interweaving Bristol, London, and the politically repressive environment of the late 1980s and early 1990s, along with the corresponding artistic and cultural pushbacks. Damien Hirst is referenced as an “enfant terrible” artist-entrepreneur. The author suggests that at Hirst’s 1988 *Freeze* exhibition in London, Banksy observed how Hirst “controlled everything,” and connects this observation to the “not always frictionless” friendship that developed between them.

Back in Bristol, the young Banksy moved across graffiti and music scenes. There are references to him painting

festival stages and participating in the legal graffiti festival *Walls of Fire* in 1998, described as a “terrible last attempt” at freehand graffiti lettering. Somewhere along this timeline, in 1997, he met Steve Lazarides, “who became what might loosely be termed his agent.” Upon leaving Bristol in 1999, Banksy painted *The Mild Mild West*, combining freehand with stencilled figures.

Once in London, stencilling became his signature. By mid-2002, he held a modest exhibition in LA titled *Existencilism*, the first in a series featuring framed stencils and subverted paintings. Then came *Turf War* in London in 2003—featuring painted animals—which the author identifies as the start of Banksy’s fame. That same year marked the peak of his work with Blur, for whom he had been creating album art since 1998. The subchapter ends with an extensive paragraph on *Crude Oils*, his October 2005 London exhibition.

### An Expanding Practice

According to the author, with a series of picture-bombing interventions—smuggling artworks into MoMA in New York, the British Museum, and Tate—“the Banksy effect had taken grip.” Banksy’s involvement with printmaking is also mentioned: the fake £10 notes, limited-edition prints (such as *Rude Copper*, produced with Lazarides), and the online outlet Pictures on Walls (POW). *Santa’s Ghetto* began, and *Wall and Piece* was published in late 2005. In 2007 came the *Bethlehem* pop-up shop, followed by the *Cans Festival* (May 2008), with international participation—confirming Banksy’s reputation as an organiser and curator. “The Banksy effect was gaining momentum.”

The author provides many details—prices, dates, special features, locations—supported by solid references. A myriad of events, press coverage, and awards is presented.

Touching on the problem of street works being stolen or destroyed in London and elsewhere (notably in New Orleans), the subchapter concludes with the New York pop-up installation *The Village Pet Store and Charcoal Grill*: “I wanted to make art that questioned our relationship with animals and ethics... It ended up as chicken nuggets singing.”

## Achieving Worldwide Notoriety

Here the author identifies a turning point: “By this point any pretence that Banksy was in any way cool or cutting edge had long gone.” This is attributed partly to Banksy’s disregard for the art world and partly to his abandonment of graffiti purism, as he outsourced large stencilled pieces to an advertising company. “The idea of graffiti as franchise was an unbelievable affront.” Yet, as often happens, the “fan base continued to grow,” and so did prices.

In a loosely chronological fashion, the author notes that in May 2009, Banksy “parted company with Steve Lazarides” and established the Pest Control Office. Months later came *Banksy versus Bristol Museum*, which is mentioned with limited detail. The conflict with King Robbo (old-school graffiti) led to the disappearance of nearly all of Banksy’s London stencils by 2011.

The author speculates that these developments may have pushed Banksy to move into film, leading to the Oscar-nominated *Exit Through the Gift Shop*. The *Simpsons* opening sequence and several other scattered references are mentioned. Banksy is described as “seemingly unstoppable” during his 2013 “artist residency” in New York. The subchapter ends with *Dismaland* (August 2015).

### The Hotel Business

The Walled Off Hotel in Bethlehem opened in 2017. A long and detailed paragraph describes the project. The hotel closed (possibly temporarily) in 2023.

The author also expands on several of Banksy’s other endeavours—interventions engaging with the street, auction houses, and the art world more broadly, including Venice. The chapter concludes with examples of charity initiatives, such as hospital projects and the MV *Louise Michel Mediterranean Sea* rescue boat.

## 3 - Banksy’s face - influences and anonymity

### Shadowy Lone Practitioners

In these opening paragraphs, the author highlights Banksy’s fame and recognition—both among the general public and among his peers. He also presents the darker side, noting that some dismiss Banksy as merely a self-publicist, among other criticisms. All of this is framed by Banksy’s anonymity and the effort required to maintain it: friends, team members, and a very small circle who know his identity—some bound by contract, others by loyalty.

### “Named” but Not Shamed

The most significant attempts by news outlets, journalists, and academics to uncover Banksy’s identity are mentioned here. The author also notes that much of the general public has little desire to know. A Banksy quote captures the essence of the subchapter: “*I don’t know why people are so keen to put the details of their private life in public; they forget that invisibility is a superpower.*”

### Celebrity Coveted

“He knows exactly how to be heard and when to be seen.” The author mentions that a few interviews with Banksy have indeed taken place, and clarifies that it is not his intention to reveal Banksy’s identity. He notes that the interviews tend to produce generic impressions—Banksy presenting himself simply as “another skinny bloke.”

The author insists on clarifying Banksy’s possible motivations for remaining anonymous. First, anonymity preserves his street credibility. He includes a quote in which Banksy expresses concern about whether the graffiti community sees what he does as vandalism.

The second reason is Banksy’s refusal to “play the fame game.” Yet the author points out a contradiction here: Banksy manages fame extremely well. He cites Banksy saying, “*I think Andy Warhol got it wrong: in the future, so many people will get famous that one day everyone will end up being anonymous for fifteen minutes.*” The author suggests that Banksy has more in common with Warhol than he might admit.

## Haring, Basquiat, and Banksy

The discussion of Warhol leads naturally to Keith Haring and Jean-Michel Basquiat as reference points. Several paragraphs describe Haring's work and relate it to Banksy, highlighting both convergences and divergences. Basquiat, however, is present only in the subchapter title, with little direct discussion.

### Banksy and Chaplin

"Like Chaplin, Banksy also realises that a spoken or written language does not necessarily facilitate communication." This comparison is used to position Banksy within a lineage of artists who prioritise visual and universal modes of expression.

### Under the Influence

The author suggests an additional reason for Banksy's anonymity: a fear of becoming repetitive. Banksy is portrayed as being less obsessed with notoriety and more driven by the challenge of expanding his creative abilities—finding "the right piece at the right time."

### Continental Forebears

Here the author references Blek le Rat, described as the "Godfather of Stencil Graffiti." Their relationship is characterised as warm, with Banksy positioned as "the watchful and absorbent pupil" to Blek. The final paragraph of this subchapter offers an interesting exploration of influence, imitation, copying, theft, plagiarism, and creative transformation.

### Joke Theft and Other Forms of Homage

"There are Banksy's obvious smash-and-grab raids into art history." This section describes the main works in which Banksy appropriates, distorts, or subverts the great masterworks of the Western art canon.

## 4 - Radical and ruthless, understanding "existentialism"

The opening Banksy quote suggests that he wants to keep his main technique—stencilling—as inexpensive and accessible to everyone as possible.

## Infinite Reproduction

The author notes that the stencil of the young girl with the heart-shaped balloon has become extremely popular, but also excessively reproduced for all kinds of purposes. The text also mentions Banksy's 2018 self-destructing artwork performance during an auction, in which this iconic image was shredded.

To examine where stencilling fits within the street art scene, the author briefly describes the "classic hip-hop graffiti writing originating in New York in the 1960s." Acknowledging the "risk of crass over-simplification," he outlines the common forms of traditional graffiti writing.

The author also claims that "the urban art scene splintered into sub-genres," and that "by the 1980s, street art was born." He goes on to describe characteristics that distinguish street art from graffiti—while noting that for the general public, it all remained simply "graffiti."

This is not the place, within a book review, to dig deeply into these issues, but this section would certainly benefit from stronger academic scrutiny. Some claims are supported, but others lack proper references and may be contested because of their imprecision.

### From Chaos to Collectibles

This section emphasises Banksy's preference for locations that provide "mainstream exposure, a dialogue with diverse audiences." The author mentions the concept of "brandalism," or vandalism involving brands. He also touches on the fine line between Banksy's work and branding itself. The argument redeems itself somewhat through a Banksy quote: "*Graffiti equals amazing to me...*"—used to suggest that Banksy retains a sincere passion for the craft.

### Stencil's Story

Here the "craft of stencilling" is discussed in detail: the materials, the blades, and the structural bridges needed to hold the stencil together—one of the key visual traits of the technique. "A well-crafted stencil can be reused, which is its ultimate appeal." The author explains negative-image creation, colour choices, and other technical aspects, relating them to Banksy's practice through various quotes. Banksy's choice of stencil is

repeatedly linked to the limitations of freehand graffiti or the need for speed in illicit contexts.

This subchapter also references not only previous stencil artists but also well-known creators of stickers and collage-based street art.

### **Bristol: Balls on Walls**

This short section moves in several directions without a clear focal point—touching briefly on the Bristol graffiti scene, and on the evolution of Banksy’s stencil technique, which grew increasingly complex and precise over the years.

### **The Painted Word**

The subchapter opens with a Banksy quote: *“I think art should be a two-way conversation, not a lecture from behind glass.”* In this lengthy and detailed section, the author examines the texts and wording used in Banksy’s works, the contexts in which they appeared, the tendencies that mark different moments in his career, and a range of interpretations.

### **Writing in Colour**

The title summarises the content: the author discusses how colour functions in Banksy’s work. Several examples are provided, focusing on Banksy’s typically sparse and strategic use of colour. This is addressed in a short, four-paragraph discussion.

### **Creative Coincidences**

This section explores works in which Banksy integrates existing urban elements into his compositions. Examples include *Hula Hoop Girl* (Nottingham, 2020), *Rhino* from the London residency (Day 8, 2024), and *Girl with a Pierced Eardrum* (Bristol, 2014), among others.

## **5 - Monetising mockery**

The Rude Copper (2002) image introduces the chapter, which begins by outlining what determines the value of an artwork according to different sources. It discusses high market sums and record-breaking artists such as Basquiat. At the same time, it brings in Banksy’s own quotes, often marked by mockery, to contrast these market dynamics.

## **Some definitions**

This subchapter primarily clarifies that Banksy’s saleable works can be divided into prints (typically screenprints), multiples (numbered editions of canvases or sculptures), and originals (unique pieces). *“Obviously, these do not include the works in public space—the stencils, murals, and exhibitions—which Banksy mostly offers for free and which are not authenticated.”*

### **Printing money**

This subchapter focuses on flipping in the secondary market and the inflationary rise of prices. It discusses the early days of Banksy’s relationship with Steve Lazarides and their shared aversion to contemporary art galleries. It also covers POW (Pictures on Walls) as a business model tied to the early internet’s influence on street art. Screenprints became “souvenirs of the street,” forming what the author calls *“a new commercial model.”* The early role of social media and the phenomenon of print “hunters” are mentioned—and critiqued through a quote. The section concludes by arguing that *“Banksy and Lazarides learned how to create an entirely new audience.”*

### **Flipping the system**

Against the backdrop of tension between the “art world” and the approach taken by Banksy and Lazarides, the subchapter highlights how editioned prints became an accessible entry point into art collecting. This triggered the adoption of conventions meant to prevent fakes (numbering, stamps). The first example of this was *Rude Copper* (2002). The subchapter details these early experiments, their development, and their eventual entrance into auction houses. Issues of credibility and authenticity reappear here as a central theme.

### **Reinventing the “pop-up”**

Moving from *Santa’s Ghetto* (early 2000s), through the Los Angeles period (with its “corrosive aftermath”), to the so-called “West Banksy,” the author provides a short narrative arc. It culminates in Banksy’s emergence—after parting ways with Lazarides—as both creator and curator, *“a provocative power player with global impact.”*

### Good causes: giving it away

This final subchapter describes, across eight paragraphs, the various occasions on which Banksy used his art to raise money and support charitable causes.

### 6 - Breaking in

In the prelude to these subchapters, we find a wavering quote by Banksy about the “domestication” of street art. This sets the stage for several descriptions of how artists interact with their works in museums, as well as various unexpected incidents—such as accidents that destroy paintings or sculptures. However, the focus of this chapter is, of course, on Banksy’s own museum interventions. This is one of the book’s most detailed sections, spanning nearly four pages and concluding with the statement: *“Having achieved his ambition for global notoriety in a matter of a few months, Banksy stopped bombing museums and galleries (...) by 2009 he was ready to take on an entire institution. (...)”*

### Banksy back home

This subchapter recounts the *Banksy vs Bristol Museum* exhibition—not by describing the exhibition’s content, but by presenting the contextual details surrounding it: the process before, during, and after its opening; critical reception; and the scale of its success, expressed through visitor numbers (and revenue).

### The Wall: largest canvas ever

This subchapter focuses on Banksy’s projects in the Occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It begins with the 2007 relocation of *Santa’s Ghetto* to Bethlehem and references several other interventions, including the new works in the Gaza Strip in 2015 and the 2017 opening of the Walled Off Hotel in Bethlehem, which remained active until 2023. While many descriptive observations are provided, the depth does not fully match the complexity and significance of these interventions. Numerous aspects remain unexplored—perhaps due to limited accessibility, as is common with much of Banksy’s activity.

### Rats, chimps, and global injustice: recurrent themes in Banksy’s oeuvre

Here, the author turns to an analytical discussion of recurring themes throughout Banksy’s work. Animals play a central role, particularly the rat, which functions not only as a motif but almost as a signature or tag. The “mutation of the rats” over the years is briefly considered. Other recurring figures—children, CCTV cameras, and additional symbolic elements—are also addressed. The author touches on broader conceptual themes, such as critiques of globalisation and capitalism, although in a less descriptive and more cursory manner, maybe because these topics are already dealt with thematically throughout the book.

### 7- Curating and co-creating

The author introduces the concept of artistic residencies, tracing their historical use and their relevance today. This provides context while also updating the reader on Banksy’s previous activities (already mentioned earlier in the book). The focus then shifts to the New York residency of 2013.

### New York residency

The description begins with the announcement from Banksy’s “office”: a residency in New York featuring one new piece every day. The author summarises the full 31-day residency across three pages.

### At the seaside

Although not officially declared as a residency, the author gathers here a set of works produced “at the seaside.” The discussion expands into reflections on the decay of former resort towns, providing additional social context.

### Dismaland

In a similar vein—and also set in a run-down seaside resort—the author describes the staff “casting” for what some have characterised as an “ironic post-industrial, post-post-modern dark Disneyland fantasy.” This is further captured in the text of the souvenir brochure: *“Bertolt Brecht once said—art is not a mirror held up to*

reality, but a hammer with which to shape it. Which is fine, but what if you're in a hall of mirrors and the giant hammer is made of foam? This is the question raised by *Dismaland Bemusement Park*."

### Being charged

Dismaland charged an entry fee, largely due to permits and insurance requirements. The subchapter then moves into the episode in which Banksy's team sought a ruling from an Italian court to prevent the artist's intellectual property from being exploited in unauthorised exhibitions in Italy. The author notes the irony that Banksy himself once claimed that "copyright is for losers." The case is explained in detail, and the conclusion is that Banksy did not win that battle.

### Denouement in Croydon

The same legal issues arose in the UK, leading to a highly publicised installation in the form of a pop-up shop called *Gross Domestic Product*. This "shop" is presented as Banksy's eventual strategy for legally defending his creations.

### Coda

The narrative of the (un)real drama surrounding Banksy and intellectual property ends on an ambiguous note. Although some concessions seem to have been made, unofficial Banksy merchandise shops continue to appear everywhere. The issue remains far from resolved.

## 8 - Sketching solo and in a team

Across several pages, the relationship between artists and their preparatory sketches is "explored," touching on themes of mystery and the construction of identity. "*Banksy (...) was a serious artist with a studio, with technical assistants, a print house, a well-oiled public relations team (...)*." The author extrapolates from this and asks: "*Might releasing drawings and sketches as evidence of his preparatory practice reassert his authenticity?*" From the topic of sketches, the narrative shifts to the Black Lives Matter events, focusing particularly on the destruction of the Colston statue and its connection to a Banksy sketch.

## Revealing his hand: going underground

This subchapter examines a one-minute video released during the Covid period, featuring rats playfully moving inside a metro carriage. The video is identified as the first time Banksy's actual "hand"—his freehand drawing ability—appears on display.

## Opening the (studio) doors, again

*Cut & Run*, the exhibition held at Glasgow's GoMA in June 2023, was Banksy's first major institutional show in 14 years, following the Bristol Museum exhibition. The author describes how the Glasgow show relates not only to Bristol but also to *Dismaland*. The exhibition followed a predefined route in which Banksy "reluctantly referenced" *The World of Banksy*, the unauthorised and publicly condemned touring exhibitions that travelled through various world capitals. This subchapter also highlights other criticisms and behavioural inconsistencies. Several paragraphs are devoted to the team behind Banksy—the "other hands" who help realize the works—and his relationship with them.

## 9 - Supporters, rivals, detractors

From predicting the life cycle of each new stencil placed on the street, the author extracts a set of potential audience types—slices, categories, or archetypes—which are explained here.

### Fans and followers

At the base of the pyramid of praise and adulation lies a global fanbase. Above them come various types of "queuers," interestingly divided and briefly described. Robbers, raiders, and rivals are also mentioned. A short paragraph addresses "street bombers" and the mechanisms by which they classify Banksy as a "sell-out."

### Erasers

In two paragraphs, the author discusses the New Orleans figure Fred Radtke, who founded Operation Clean Sweep in 1997. The section explains how the initiative evolved and how it intersected with Banksy's work.

## Chancers

Curators, gallerists, and dealers—some “blasted” and a few “blessed”—form another category, portrayed in a divisive tone the author compares to Wyndham Lewis ninety years earlier. Those criticised are identified as opportunists, doubters, and sceptics. Many distinctions and characteristics are assigned to hypothetical groups and subgroups of “chancers.” Critique is also directed at commentators, specialists, and of course academics in university departments, with the author acknowledging his own position as “one of this breed.” He touches on this rich universe of research endeavours only briefly, mentioning some approaches but not doing justice to the overall breadth of existing scholarship.

## Investors

To introduce the topic, the author cites Banksy’s opinion of the “arena of auctions and onsales” as “rotten.” Nevertheless, this subchapter addresses the context of buying, selling, and authenticating Banksy’s works. After a short note on a successful donation to the NHS, the narrative shifts to several paragraphs on the film *Exit Through the Gift Shop*. The author presents the key questions the film raises, explaining its storyline in brief and ultimately deconstructing its main protagonists, Guetta and Banksy.

The chapter concludes with an image of the West Bank stencil *Girl Frisking Soldier* (2007), somewhat tangential to the final subchapter. Following this are thirteen pages containing references and credits, acknowledgments, and the index.

## 10 - Book review conclusion

This is a detailed book about a complex and intricate artist. The writing is fluid and accessible, suitable for a wide audience, although—due to references and language—it will likely be better understood by English speaking audiences - American as well as Australian perhaps?

The relationship between the images and the text is sometimes unclear. While there are direct references to images, the referenced illustrations are not always

present, or they appear in different parts of the book. Some images appear without any references in the text, including the final image.

The organization of the content is somewhat erratic, at least for readers seeking a strictly chronological structure. A chronological narrative exists only in segments, with content moving back and forth across chapters and subchapters. The subchapters themselves feel as though they were originally part of a continuous text, as the end of one subchapter often connects directly to the beginning of the next.

Although the book may be challenging to enter at first, it becomes engaging once you are immersed. There is a sense of intimacy and proximity to the artist that is uncommon in this type of book—especially when dealing with an elusive figure like Banksy. The author’s honest writing style, combined with carefully supported and professional analysis, makes this a valuable and referential read for all segments of Banksy’s audience.

