

Banky's
HOME SWEET HOME

THE UNOFFICIAL GUIDE TO
BANKSY'S EARLY IDEAS
BY STEVE WRIGHT

HOME SWEET HOME

LAST



GASP

Banksy's Bristol

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presented by
**HOME
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This book is dedicated to Banksy and the people of Bristol.

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the bristol beat

"I came from a relatively small city in southern England. When I was about 10 years old, a kid called 3D was painting the streets here. I think he'd been to New York and was the first to bring spray painting back to Bristol, and was the first to bring spray paint on the streets way before I ever saw it in a magazine or on a computer.

"3D quit painting and formed the band Massive Attack, which may have been good for him but was a big loss for the city. Graffiti was the thing we all loved at school - we all did it on the bus on the way home from school. Everyone was doing it."

Banky, interview with Swindle magazine

Any account of Banky's impact has to take in the larger context of street art in Bristol. For it's no coincidence that Banky grew up, and made his first pieces, in a city with a rich graffiti and street art tradition from the early 1980s onward. In the early days of Bristol graffiti culture, four figures emerge as key. Them right from the very start, as Banky mentions above was Robert del Naja, aka 3D, who started out as a young graffiti artist spraying on Bristol walls in the very early 80s. More than that, 3D was responsible for importing some of the American hip hop and graffiti culture over to Bristol, bringing leading artists connected to the seminal NY hip hop/graffi walls book *Deadly Crew* to paint over here. He went on, of course, to



That piece has been used to be on the wall since 1982. It's probably because the 'the '80s' was a great year for graffiti."

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THIS PART
of the book
is dedicated
to the history of
Bristol's graffiti
movement.

Each page has
a list of the
names of the
artists who
were active in
the scene.



Banksy and hip hop culture

Azlan was one of many people heavily involved in the late 90s music and graffiti scene in Bristol. He was a member of both Bristol hip hop group Aspects and Fantastic Super Heroes, a hip hop/graffiti crew which also included Park, Dicy, Feek and Manto.

"The Bristol art and graffiti scene has never been documented properly," he says. "Banksy was one small (yet successful) part of that scene. Instrumental to Banksy's development and the continued flourishing of the Bristol scene throughout the 1990s were a slew of writers infamous for changing their names more often than they changed their socks. Alongside artists like Jon and Tense was one crew comprising the artists Rylee, Lolita, Ivester, Sakar and Teal. Originally known as USA, they then became East

Apples and finally DBS which, according to one source, mood for Drybread's -- a reference to being so fatally challenged they couldn't afford any spread for their team.

JD was never really a part of what happened in the mid to late 90s," says Azlan, "although he may have been an inspirational figure through his early Bristol graffiti days and artwork for Massive. Nick Walker, however, has always been there, and worked alongside other Bristol artists such as Park, Eko, Dicy, Feek, Xenz, Will Barnes, Mr Jingo and, of course, Banksy.

The Bristol hip hop scene

"The main thing that brought everyone together in Bristol was the hip hop scene of the mid to late 90s. I think Massive, Porthead and Tricky, I'm talking about the underground scene -- Bristol's Hombie Records, special hip hop events and club nights run by the FOM (Fantastic Super



ACUDE

Cheba on Banksy

Cheba is a Bristol based graffiti artist who has been painting around the city for some seven years. Unlike Banksy's later work, he favours a fresh and graffiti style rather than stencils.

When did you first get the graffiti bug?

I first got into graffiti when I started seeing pieces to make around town. I'd always been a keen drawer from childhood. I'd never considered myself as a graffiti writer because I wouldn't do the traditional tags and letterforms, but I seemed to be throwing into that category I got into stencils around 2000 but I lost the love of stencils pretty quickly.

Why? Because he was dominating the scene?

Basically, yes. But I also realised it wasn't the route I wanted to go down. I moved on to posters then I got more into forward stuff. I guess I was experimenting with what I could do and what I could get away with.

How do the two forms compare?

Stencil graffiti is hard to get right. Many view it as a bit of a cheat, though, because it can all be done beforehand, whereas with traditional graffiti you've got to spend a lot more time actually up there doing the piece. With the stencils, you can do all your preparation at home - which is a lot more painstaking, but the risk levels are less there's, though, is a lot harder to make look like your own, to achieve an individual style.

Was Banksy an inspiration?

He inspired me to start doing it in a way (as well as just being in a city such as Bristol) not through his art, but by being so prolific. He'd 'bomb' a part of town and you'd suddenly be seeing his work everywhere. For me, he's more about the message than the art - I don't think he cares too much about what the art really looks like, I think he's more about taking the piss. It's more about getting across a social joke than the quality of the art.

Part
of
the
reason
of
his
success
is
his
style.



Mild Mild West

Bristol writer and publisher Richard Jones on Banksy's 'Welcome to Bristol' sign...

Some of Banksy's fellow artists from outside Bristol are said to be dismissive of his iconic Mild Mild West mural. Apparently, the best Banksy uses for the Mild Mild West wording has been singled out for particular criticism.

"But for many Bristolians, this is Banksy's signature piece - it's like an alternative 'Welcome to Bristol' sign, and its impact has as much to do with its position as its content. It's impossible for anyone who has lived in Bristol for a long time not to see Mild Mild West as a reference to the St Paul's riots of 1980 which started with a police raid on the Black and White cafe on nearby Greenway Road. I've always thought it's like a Blue Plaque for the riots."

"The riots had an immense cultural resonance in Bristol as they came at the height of the reggae movement coming out of St Paul's with bands such as Black Roots and Tallamen; Barton Hill scaffolder Gary Clail was teaming up with Adrian Sherwood at On-U Sounds to produce a funkier bass-heavy form of dub with wagnerian



The original tag (shown here removed by the houseowner) was the same shape but appeared in an area of the house.



Banksey — not for sale

A Banksey mural on a house in Lorton was deemed so valuable that it was advertised for sale as a Banksey piece with a house thrown in. The owners of 21 Mount Street recruited an art gallery as well as the usual estate agents to seek buyers for the house. The buyers were determined that the artwork should stay, and refused offers from buyers who planned to clean it off. The house was taken off the market after vandals threw red and black paint over the artwork. A rumour even went around that Banksey himself might have defaced the piece - but we haven't found any confirmation for that one.

All in the same boat?

Banksey originally tagged the side of the Thekla floating nightclub in spring 2003. The Thekla owners posted a photo of the tag on their website and asked punters whether it should stay. Back came the response: keep it. But even as the votes were coming in, Bristol City Council ordered its removal. It was an interesting decision given that, later that summer, art installations were introduced around Bristol's docks as part of Dialogue, a public art event and part of Bristol's 2008 Capital of Culture bid. Thekla manager Joanna Jackson says the incident "suggests that if it's an official installation it's OK, but if it's unofficial it's not." Unperturbed, Banksey returned to paint the Grim Reaper in the same spot - this image remains, having survived the Thekla's return in 2006.

TCF Crew

If Nick Walker, 3D and Ink's Crime Inc, were the first major graffiti crew to hit Bristol, a decade and a half later another crew began to make a huge impact in the city. TCF (Twentieth Century Fossilizer) was actually formed in Hull in 1987 by graffitiers Kenz, Paris and Eko, who had all been painting together since leaving school in the city (the story behind the name is that Kenz had just returned from a trip to Venice and Florence, full of ideas for painting on walls). From 1994-98 the trio took root in Bristol, drawn by the city's already famous graffiti scene. By 2004, the crew was 10-strong, having added the likes of Feek, Punk, Dicky and Zimi to its number. "I've always thought that crews need to be formed on friendships rather than similar painting practices," said Eko at the time. "I count my crew as some of my best friends."

For the last ten years they've given Bristol some of its most colourful, imaginative and distinctive spraycan art. For some of the best examples of their work, check out the phantasmagorical bread-inspired mural outside Herbert's Bakery, or Kenz and Paris's huge floral wilderness on the side of a house in St Werburgh's.



Installation of the TCF crew's work, before their reconstruction with the 19th Street House Residents, Bristol.

Barry Thomas
was invited
to do a group
concert in a
hall in Bristol
where he had
performed.



Friends with Massive Attack's Daddy G and others, Kelly was, as someone puts it, 'a kind of freelance promoter/haemorrhoider' on Bristol's music club and art scenes.

'He took up Barney's cause right at the beginning and was definitely partly responsible for getting his name around Bristol. But with Paul, it was always about the art, the street, and freedom of expression. Art had to stay true to the street, in a way, he's more real than Barney, in that he has always kept it real. It was always about the art and the music and never about the money, to the point where he was living hand-to-mouth, crashing on people's floors, trying to do his stuff. He's real. He believes in it all the way, in ways that perhaps Barney doesn't, or doesn't anymore.'

Richard Jones, who was the Bristol Evening Post's music writer at the time remembers 'Paul ran a barber's shop on Stapleton Road called Kelly's, and was well known for

cutting Batman logos and the likes into kids' hair, so it usually had loads of kids in there getting some street cred logo on their bionces. He did a mean flat top as well, it was a real characterful place with a few old West Indian guys hanging out and loads of barner.

'Paul always claimed he had interest from EMI for a band he looked after called The Spasmatics, but EMI signed a band from Oxford called Radiohead instead. The last time I saw Paul, he was going on about this artist called Barney he was helping out and how Barneys was going to paint something on the side of his house in Chapel Road in Easton in a special paint that only showed up with UV light or something. It was probably nonsense, but raises the question of whether there is an invisible Barney in Easton.'

We couldn't find Paul for an interview, but understanding he has left Bristol to return to his home town of Liverpool





KEEP LEFT

017BKK/SY



Ben Lundy
from the
British
Institution
with a painting
of a child.

Sweet charity

In 2006, Barney Baskin (pictured) spent three hours outside the Workshop store in Ferry Road, Bristol. The reason? His new print, 'Flag,' went on sale at £100. Proceeds were given to Sightavers International, a charity working to combat blindness in developing countries, restoring sight through specialist treatment and eye care.

"There was a note on the back of them encouraging anyone re-selling the print to contribute a proportion of the revenue to Sightavers. The print went on sale in the Workshop store in Bristol and at Santa's Grotto, a temporary exhibition of his work in London," said Neil Nolin, Sightavers' Media Manager. "The prints sold out of Workshop within two hours."



ART BY BARNEY 43

ISBN



HEAVY ★ ★ ★ WEAPONARY
BANKSY



That damn heavy... imagine a manual... ISBN... 0700...
That damn heavy... imagine a manual... ISBN... 0700...
That damn heavy... imagine a manual... ISBN... 0700...

Your are heavily crossed out in crayon. It's paint on board with an unfinished art piece on the reverse. I bought it at the Severnside exhibition for £110 and sold it in 2007 for more than £30,000.

I'd seen Banksy's stuff on walls all over Bristol in the late Nineties and they'd always made me grin. So when he had his first exhibition at the Severnside I wanted to support him and also buy a bit of the city I love.

I liked the flower-throwing posters pieces but chose this one because it seemed to say you don't have to make it capital cities to get creative recognition and that homely Bristol rock I interpreted the lumbering six-foot carrying a bomb as a wake up call to slow down.

The reverse had a strange unfinished art painting with a character sitting in a pumping cage wishfully waiting

at an out-of-reach key - it was really dark and used to give me grave bumps. I decided to sell the piece when I heard of the Lindy Auerbach being paid for his work in L.A. (Banksy's a genius they call it his land)... and I'm just so happy now to have a digital copy hanging on my wall.

"All power to Banksy and the madness of Redmond!"

Is there some irony that Banksy, with his impeccable anti-capitalist credentials, is adding to Bristol's economic, tourist and property values? It's not ironic. And his credentials aren't impeccable. You can't bring down capitalism through the art market - a pillar of capitalist accumulation. It was true then and it's true now. The purpose of entering the art market is to make money. What else is it for? Anybody who thinks they can spark a revolution, create the new Jerusalem, redistribute wealth or feed the starving via the art market is a fool.

Is the media too slavish in its admiration of Banksy? Yes. It's well-crafted anti-capitalist agit prop. It's interesting to note that most of the journalists writing about Banksy tend to be establishment news reporters, rock critics, Sunday supplement interviewers etc. who seem to have a romantic and uncritical approach to the whole "street" thing. I think he's hooked into that big audience of male, white, middle-class, graduate Nathan Barneys who are on a black-banking class/street authenticity trip.

Has he been a force for good in Bristol?
Yes. He makes us look smart and streetwise.

The Town of
A Fog on the
Hudson 2011
Banksy
on - London
the story that
he is about
to do.

100 years of the
100



Banksy's Bristol: Home Sweet Home is a revealing account of Banksy's formative years and contains more than 100 images of his art, as well as pictures of Banksy at work, many of which have never been published before.

This is a celebration of Banksy's art in his home city of Bristol, England. It places Banksy in the context of 3D (Massive Attack), Inkie, Nick Walker and the other artists and musicians who were instrumental in linking Bristol to the original New York hip hop scene.

Venue magazine's art editor, Steve Wright, explores the streets of Banksy's Bristol and interviews many of the people who worked with Banksy in his early years. He traces Banksy's roots back to the rave culture of the '90s and draws a rounded picture of an artist who is most famous for being anonymous.



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