

AUTHENTICATION
IN ART

AiA Art News-service



Hidden in plain sight: Tokyo probes possible 10-year-old Banksy artwork

Updated 18th January 2019



Credit: HANDOUT/TOKYO METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT/AFP/Getty Images

Hidden in plain sight: Tokyo probes possible 10-year-old Banksy artwork

Written by By Jack GuyJunko Ogura, CNNTokyo

Banksy artworks invariably draw widespread attention when they are discovered, and now authorities in Tokyo are looking into whether the elusive street artist may have also left their mark on the Japanese capital.

An investigation is underway to ascertain whether an image of a rat holding an umbrella, reminiscent of some of the provocateur's best-known works, was in fact created by the still unidentified artist.

Banksy's attention-grabbing, and often political, work has made them the biggest name in the international street-art scene.



The drawing of a rat holding an umbrella on a door designed to prevent flooding near Hinode station in Tokyo. Credit: HANDOUT/TOKYO METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT/AFP/Getty Images

The picture was found on a door near Hinode monorail station in the center of the city, and local workers say that it has been there more than 10 years, Tokyo Metropolitan government official Koji Sugiyama told CNN.

According to Sugiyama, "Graffiti on walls are usually erased. But (the work) didn't stand out, so it was left there."

In December 2018, residents alerted authorities to the artwork and suggested that it might be a Banksy.

Then, on January 16, the city removed the door and placed it in storage.

Tokyo governor Yuriko Koike posted a photo of herself crouching next to the artwork on Twitter, alongside a caption which reads: "There's a painting of cute rat in Tokyo which could be Banksy's work! A gift to Tokyo?"



[witter Ads info](#)

However, Sugiyama is unsure if there is anyone in Japan that would be able to identify a genuine work by the mysterious artist.

"We haven't appraised it yet. We still don't know if there are any authorities or experts in Japan (able to identify a genuine Banksy). We'll start figuring out our process next week."



Banksy's "Love is in the Bin" is unveiled on October 12, 2018, at Sotheby's in London. Originally titled "Girl with Balloon," the canvas passed through a hidden shredder seconds after the hammer fell on October 5 at Sotheby's London Contemporary Art Evening Sale, making it the first artwork in history to have been created live during an auction. Credit: Tristan Fewings/Getty Images for Sotheby's

Banksy is known for leaving artworks in public places.

In December, residents of Port Talbot, Wales, awoke to find graffiti in Banksy's distinctive style on two walls of a garage owned by a local steelworker.

The art, which appears to pay homage to the town's industrial past, depicts a child playing in what looks like snow. But viewed from another angle this appears to be embers and smoke from a skip fire.

In October, Banksy's painting "Girl with a Balloon" was reduced to shreds as part of an elaborate prank, just moments after it sold for \$1.4 million at a Sotheby's auction in London.

The iconic image of a girl reaching out for a red, heart-shaped balloon self-destructed thanks to a shredder hidden inside the frame.