



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Image link below

'Haight Street Rat' by Famed Artist Banksy On View this Summer in Cooperstown

The exhibition, *Banksy: The Haight Street Rat*, is on view May 18 through September 8 at Fenimore Art Museum in Cooperstown.

COOPERSTOWN, NY — The work of a famous (and anonymous) street artist is coming to Cooperstown's Fenimore Art Museum in the exhibition, *Banksy: The Haight Street Rat*, on view May 18 through September 8, 2024. Best known for creating art on street corners and on buildings unexpectedly, Banksy's work expresses strong political and social statements and is believed to be a driving force behind the street art movement. The exhibition not only provides the public with a chance to see the now world-renowned Banksy work but will also feature related programs.

"It's always such a thrill to bring world-famous art like *The Haight Street Rat* to Cooperstown," said Dr. Paul S. D'Ambrosio, Fenimore Art Museum president and CEO. "We are always on the lookout for artists you may not expect to find at other upstate museums—and Banksy, being such a force in today's culture, was an obvious choice when we discovered this piece was available."

When politically charged murals tagged "Banksy" popped up on the façades of British buildings in the late 1990s, the overwhelming question was, "Who?" Since then, the street artist known only as Banksy* has left their mark in places like London, New York City, and Los Angeles. Satirical and darkly humorous, the British artist's work, often pointing out humanity's shortcomings, is created on the sides of walls, bridges, and streets. Using stencil-style graffiti, Banksy works quickly and disappears before the public or the police notice their presence and possibly press charges. The work can have a precarious existence, vacillating between removal by property owners and protection by appreciative fans.

Banksy's first public work of art, *Mild Mild West*, was completed in 1998 on an abandoned warehouse in Bristol, England, and was a response to the police violence against partygoers at unlicensed raves. Subsequent work has appeared around the globe. Banksy's work remains politically outspoken and anti-war, and the artist has amassed a following of supporters who are always on the lookout for Banksy's next surface to convey a message.

During Banksy's 2010 painting spree in San Francisco, the *Haight Street Rat* appeared on two walls of The Red Victorian hotel. On one wall, a rat wearing a cap similar to the beret worn by Cuban revolutionary Che Guevara holds a red marker used to draw a line to the other side of the building and write the words "This is where I draw the line." Through the activist rat, Banksy used their powerful voice to criticize Haight Street's clothing stores that allegedly sold items depicting work from local artists without providing reimbursement.

As with many examples of street art, the rat and its message were meant to be painted over after Banksy completed it. However, art collector Brian Greif paid to have the work removed from the building and the hotel wall repaired. To conserve the image, a work crew had to cut and remove twelve cedar boards and then replace the planks. Greif believes that street art should be accessible to everyone, and that removing the Banksy from its original location does not hinder the piece's original intention but increases its visibility.

Greif's efforts are detailed in the 2017 documentary "Saving Banksy," which questions the ethical grounds of removing street art for the benefit of sharing it with a wider audience.

The exhibition is sponsored by The Clark Foundation, Nellie and Robert Gipson, and NYCM Insurance.

Banksy's Haight Street Rat is exhibited courtesy of Brian Greif and 2:32AM PROJECTS, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Visit FenimoreArt.org for more information.

RELATED PROGRAMS

Film Screening:

Exit Through the Gift Shop

Friday, May 31 • 7:00pm

See website for details.

Live Zoom Lecture:

The Subversive Self-Portrait: Banksy's "Haight Street Rat" and Beyond

with Dr. Leesa Rittelmann

Thursday, June 6 • 7:00pm

See website for details.

ABOUT FENIMORE ART MUSEUM

Fenimore Art Museum, located on the shores of Otsego Lake—James Fenimore Cooper’s “Glimmerglass”—in historic Cooperstown, New York, offers visitors the opportunity to experience a wide variety of world-class art in an idyllic, small-town setting. The museum features a wide-ranging collection of American art including folk art; important American 18th- and 19th-century landscape, genre, and portrait paintings; more than 125,000 historic photographs representing the technical developments made in photography and providing extensive visual documentation of the region’s unique history; and the renowned Eugene and Clare Thaw Collection of American Indian Art comprised of nearly 900 art objects representative of a broad geographic range of North American Indian cultures, from the Northwest Coast, Eastern Woodlands, Plains, Southwest, Great Lakes, and Prairie regions. Visit FenimoreArt.org.

ADDITIONAL SUMMER EXHIBITIONS

Bob Dylan Remastered: Drawings from the Road

May 25 – September 15, 2024

Marc Hom: Re-Framed

May 25 – September 2, 2024

American Masterworks

through December 29, 2024

As They Saw It: Women Artists Then & Now

through September 2, 2024

MUSEUM HOURS

Open April 2–December 29, 2024. Summer hours begin May 25: open daily 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Museum admission is free for visitors 19 and under. Find more information at FenimoreArt.org.

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Image Link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/u57d5jmk2hgixyti6kykp/AJaGHZKRMxXcnzq6GO4VXco?rlkey=csfmdz1nczvshiezpk3o8xfsc&dl=0>

Image Credit:

Banksy, May 2010, Haight Street Rat, Aerosol—Stencil on Redwood Siding, 79.5" (H) x 101.5" (L) X 2.75" (D), On loan from 2:32AM Projects, Thousand Oaks, CA

** Banksy's identity has never been revealed to the public as either a man or a woman. Some have even speculated that the name "Banksy" represents a group of artists.*

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