

## 5 The Existencilism Shows

In 2002, Banksy put on three separate shows titled *Existencilism*. Like his book with the same name, the pun combines the word “stencil,” his preferred medium, with the philosophical concept “existentialism.” “Existencilism” is also similar to the term “Exitstencil,” which British punk band and art collective Crass has used in various contexts since the late 1970s. Crass also incorporated photos of punk stencils on the cover of their 1979 record *Stations of the Crass*, which have influenced Banksy’s early work.<sup>1</sup> Contrary to popular belief Crass seemed to have been the major influence for a young Banksy not only to start using graffiti stencils but also to juxtapose images in a similar way like Crass’ Gee Vaucher.

### 5.1. 2002 (9 Jul. – 18 Aug.) \*Existencilism. An Exhibition of Graffiti, Lies and Deviousness, 33 1/3 Books & Gallery Collective, Los Angeles, California

The first of the three *Existencilism* shows took place in Los Angeles. The exhibition, which was Banksy’s first L.A. show, took place in July and August of 2002 in Frank Sosa’s now closed 33 1/3 Books & Gallery Collective in the Silver Lake/Echo Park area. “[I]t’s that fine line between dystopian nightmare and Rockwellian utopia that makes Echo Park the hood that continues to be L.A.’s most vibrant halfway point between the big city, and the small neighborhoods that make L. A. the most diverse city in the country,” explains Art Tavana in a 2014 Huffington Post article.<sup>2</sup> Tavana also points out that Echo Park has a rough past marked by “LAPD corruption and gang violence,” and while graffiti continues to be a defining characteristic of the neighborhood, the area has also been victim to rapid gentrification.<sup>3</sup>

1 In 2004 and 2007 Banksy involved Gee Vaucher for his Santa’s Ghetto exhibitions (see chapter 9.1.). Crass member Voucher is connected to Exitstencil and the punk stencils on the The Crass Album covers. Banksy painted a truck with “Crass” in 1998. He quoted Crass members Voucher and Penny Rimbaud in his 2008 Cans Festival booklet and in his 2023 retrospective he showed the Gee Vaucher-designed Crass/Poison Girls unfolded-to-a-poster record cover of the 7 inch single “Bloody Revolutions / Persons Unknown” (1980). Also on his record player was also a Crass record, which made them stand out from all the music reverences in this room. Vaucher’s image depicts Punk band Ramones with their heads replaced by the then-current Queen of England, the then-current Pope, the statue of Liberty and then-prime minister Margaret Thatcher. On the wall behind the figures is a sprayed Crass stencil.

2 Art Tavana: “Is Echo Park the Best Neighborhood In L.A.?” Huffington Post, the Blog, 1 March 2014, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/art-tavana/the-best-neighborhood-in\\_b\\_4534451.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/art-tavana/the-best-neighborhood-in_b_4534451.html).

3 Ibid.

Malathion LA's Chris Vargas, Funk Lazy Promotions' Grace Jehan, and B+ [Brian Cross] are mentioned as curators of the exhibition.<sup>4</sup> At least two of these names are mentioned as Banksy's collaborators in other contexts.<sup>5</sup> 33 1/3 Books & Gallery Collective, which was founded around 2001, was both a small bookshop and a gallery. The collective was described as "striving to build community with a blend of art and activism that (hopefully) doesn't fall prey to the usual didactic pitfalls one might associate with agitprop."<sup>6</sup>

After the vernissage on July 19, 2002, which was sponsored by Flaunt Magazine,<sup>7</sup> a party featuring live music and DJs took place in a warehouse in Los Angeles' Arts District.<sup>8</sup> Banksy painted for instance the works "Riot Coppers," "Bird With Grenade"



Fig. 47: "Riot Copper, Bird With Grenade, Rat With Saw" – Wall. Existencilism @ 33 1/3 gallery. Source: The BookLa Website. Photo: Marc Goldstein.

4 Eric Siebenthal: "Banksy". Acrylic Mind Studios website. 18 July 2013 <https://www.acrylicmind.com/banksy/>

5 Grace Jehan is mentioned as responsible for the flyers and print production of the Barely Legal show in L.A. in 2006. <http://www.stagg.tv/wbanksy> B+, full name Brian Cross, becomes responsible for the filming of Banksy's film *Exit Through The Gift Shop*. <http://www.ray-magazin.at/magazin/2010/12/exit-through-the-gift-shop-i-am-banksy?parent=0> It is just known about Chris Vargas, that he was member of a club promotion called Malathion L.A. and is mentioned as collaborator of the first mentioned persons in: Brendan Mullen: *Big Bang*, L. A. Weekly, 12 December 2001: <https://www.laweekly.com/dont-let-your-meat-loaf/>

6 Ibid.

7 See press release of the show: <https://web.archive.org/web/20020822104531/http://home.earthlink.net:80/~gracejehan/banksyweb/press.html>

8 See <https://web.archive.org/web/20021010153936/http://www.soapdesign.com:80/banksy/post-event.html> "After the gallery niceties, come see what Banksy's precision bombing is really all

and “Rat With Saw” inside the warehouse on one wall (fig. 47). Those works mostly combine threatening elements like weapons with harmless components, such as a bird or smileys, in order to belittle the threat in ironic commentary. The works are placed to reflect where the figures would appear in real life—the “Riot Coppers” were standing on the ground, while the bird was sitting on a branch.

Another wall showed a Banksy tag, which appears to be setting a vertically hanging American flag on fire (fig. 48). The word “ANTI” is inscribed to the left of the flag, while the right side is flanked by “ART.” Burning a flag is, of course, a controversial act of protest. The “A” in “ART” is the anarchist circle-A, a reference to the rejection of flags by most anarchists. Banksy combined a flag in his book *Wall and Piece* with the slogan “People who enjoy waving flags don’t deserve to have one.”<sup>9</sup> Because the flag is



Fig. 48: Marc Goldstein (photographer): “Anti Art”.  
The BookLa Website. *Existencilism @ 33 1/3 gallery*.  
[https://web.archive.org/web/20030117154702fw\\_/](https://web.archive.org/web/20030117154702fw_/http://www.bookla.com:80/eventsfdr/banksy/01.html)  
<http://www.bookla.com:80/eventsfdr/banksy/01.html>

about. Large-scale wall murals, no-holds-barred in a downtown warehouse and the surrounding area. Bar, performance by Money Mark, and DJ sets from JUN, Al Jackson, Rhettmatic, J.Rocc, Coleman, and guests. The party will be rockin ‘til the breakadawn. 21+. 10pm-4am (or longer!), \$10.”Images of the wall installation: Stencil online archive (Owned by Happy feet design): [https://www.stencilarchive.org/archives/index.php/Europe/European\\_Artists/Banksy?page=9](https://www.stencilarchive.org/archives/index.php/Europe/European_Artists/Banksy?page=9)

9 Banksy: *Wall and Piece*, Wemding 2005, p. 199.

displayed in portrait, it reminds of a burning building and could therefore be a reference to the September 11 attacks.

On the wall behind the stage area, Banksy stenciled the motif of a stockphoto couple sitting at the beach. He omitted a girl with an Esso jerry can that is placed in front of them elsewhere.<sup>10</sup> Most wall works in this warehouse had dripping paint noses—accidentally or not. This first of the stockphoto zombie couples with their false grin seemed to go well with the dripping paint, as a typical ironic Banksy twist or break (in this case the Esso can and the fire) is missing in this version, as well in *Silence of the Lamb* on another wall in that warehouse, a idyllic scene with children, a lamb and a bird. Banksy created the twist through this dripping or melting stencil effect that turns those images into questionable pictures of falseness, stockphoto zombie pictures, suitable for the movie city L.A.

For the exhibition, which was sponsored by Puma, Banksy sold gray Puma T-shirts with the slogan “City of Angels,” Los Angeles’ nickname, emblazoned behind an image of a police officer.<sup>11</sup> The winged police officer is wearing riot gear and a shield reading “POLICE.” He holds the shield in the right hand, a gun in the left and an ammunition belt over his shoulder. He is also wearing a helmet with its visor open. His head is hidden by a big, round, yellow smiley face. In a G-Force interview from 2002, Banksy references the Martin Scorsese movie *Goodfellas* (1990) with the quote “Murderers come with smiles.”<sup>12</sup> He expresses that evil is often hidden and how, in his opinion, rich people and companies vandalize cities by paying money for billboard publicity.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, the movie quote coppers with the innocent wings and smiley faces are to be interpreted as evil and threatening figures. The riot gear motif may also refer to the 1992 Los Angeles riots, which were sparked as a result of police officers being acquitted after having used excessive violence against citizen Rodney King. During the riots, 2,000 California Army National Guardsmen in riot gear supported the Los Angeles Police Department.<sup>14</sup> A smaller motif on the shirt (beside a Banksy tag on the bottom rear of the shirt) shows a hand using a spray can labeled with “Deity” (appropriate for a “City of *Angels*” shirt).

10 Banksy uses this motif for a *Don't Panic Poster* in August 2001 with the Caption “Why the Attack on Esso? Surely They're All Bastards?”

11 Shirt edition of 300[?]. Photo uploaded by Fragile on 20 September 2010. <https://www.Flickr.com/photos/thelonlyvillein/5008190184>. See photo of the exhibition flyer front: [http://photobucket.com/gallery/http://s857.photobucket.com/user/bentheconsortium/media/Banksy%20LA%202002%20Frt\\_zps41cbgohi.jpg.html](http://photobucket.com/gallery/http://s857.photobucket.com/user/bentheconsortium/media/Banksy%20LA%202002%20Frt_zps41cbgohi.jpg.html) and back: <http://photobucket.com/gallery/user/bentheconsortium/media/bWVkaWFJZDo5NDg3NjJoNw==/?ref=>

12 Martin Scorsese: *Goodfellas* (1990), TC: 2h12min50sec., recalling Shakespeare, King Henry VI, Part 3: “Why, I can smile and murder whiles I smile”.

13 Banksy Interview, G-Force, Lowdown 30, spring issue 2002.

14 It is possible, that Banksy was inspired by Rage Against the Machine, whose album *The Battle of Los Angeles* was released in the year of the riots.

Because of all these references to Los Angeles, it seems likely that Banksy created the Smiley Copper for this very exhibition. Later, Banksy uses the motif in other contexts: In the *Turf War* exhibition in 2003 for instance, Flying Coppers were hanging from the ceiling.<sup>15</sup> The exhibited “Smiley Copper Panel H” shows almost the same motif. It is stenciled on a copper door in two parts, primed with white paint. The main difference between the T-shirt motif and the panel is that the panel figure is not winged yet.

Another T-shirt motif available for purchase at the exhibition was the HMV dog pointing a bazooka at a gramophone with the caption “Fuck you, I won’t listen to you what you [sic] tell me” refers to Los Angeles. The caption is a variation of a quote from “Killing in the Name” (1991), a song by Rage Against the Machine—one of the most famous political bands from Los Angeles at that time.<sup>16</sup> The band is also well known for its 1999 album *The Battle of Los Angeles*, which features also a political graffiti motif, by L.A. artist Joey Krebs (Joel Jaramillo) of a silhouette holding up a raised fist, recalling the 1992 Los Angeles riots.

The work “Monkeys” is sprayed on doors: two chimpanzees are stenciled next to each other. Instead of the frequent “Laugh Now, but one Day we’ll be in Charge,” there is just brown and white paint dripping down the plate.

The other assured exhibited works were stencil works on canvas. Banksy attached the work “Everytime I Make Love To You I Think Of Someone Else” next to “Barcode Leopard,” “Flower Bomber” and “Bomb Hugger.” It shows two tanks in an animal mating position, stenciled on a pink heart.

The Los Angeles *Existencilism* exhibition represents one of Banksy’s first steps toward a more international presence. In order to make his art more relevant for the audience in Los Angeles, he created new motifs (the Smiley Coppers) and techniques (the dripping stencils) and referred to the exhibition site in his works, enriching his oeuvre with elements and topics that Angelenos would recognize.

## List of Works

- Barcode Shark, 2002, signed with stencil on overlap, spray paint stenciled on canvas, 43.2 × 43.2 cm.<sup>17</sup>

15 Steve Cotton: *Turf War*, Art of the State website <http://www.artofthestate.co.uk/blog2/index.php/banksy-turf-war/>

16 Rage Against the Machine: *Killing in the Name*, 5:14 min. Album: Rage Against the Machine 1992. All Music: <http://www.allmusic.com/song/killing-in-the-name-mt0053603227>

17 Bonhams: <https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/16192/lot/60/>

- *Bomb Hugger*, dated 2002, signed in stencil on the overlap; signed, numbered *one of 5* and inscribed *LA* to the reverse, 43 × 43 cm, sold by Bonhams for € 56,372.<sup>18</sup>
- *Everytime I Make Love To You I Think Of Someone Else*, dated 2002, a similar version with the cars inside the heart was signed in stencil on the overlap, also signed and inscribed *one of 5* and 'LA 2002' in marker pen. Stencil spray-paint and acrylic on canvas, 91.5 × 76 cm, sold by Bonhams for €86,590.<sup>19</sup> Sotheby's: 91.3 × 76.1 cm.<sup>20</sup>
- *Flower Bomber [Love is in the Air]* dated 2002, signed in stencil on the overlap; signed, numbered *one of 5* and inscribed *LA* to the reverse, 51 × 43 cm, sold by Bonhams for €100,326.<sup>21</sup> The one sold on Sotheby's was said to be 43 × 43 cm,<sup>22</sup> like the *Bomb Hugger*.
- *Untitled (Laugh Now Monkey)*, signed in stencil on the overlap, numbered *one of 5* and dated *LA 2002* on the stretcher, 43 × 43 cm.<sup>23</sup>
- *Barcode Leopard*, dated 2002, numbered *1/5* and inscribed *LA* to the reverse. stencil spray paint on canvas, 43 × 51 cm, sold by Bonhams for € 86,590.<sup>24</sup>
- *Monkeys*, Spray-paint on doors, 210 × 180 cm. Castle Gallery Inventory Catalogue.<sup>25</sup>
- *Smiley Copper Panel H*, 2002, unsigned. Stencil spray paint on wall cut-out. 228,6 × 76,8 cm, sold by Smith Davidson Gallery.<sup>26</sup>
- *Turf War [Churchill with a green mohawk]*, small canvas, 2002<sup>27</sup>

18 Bonhams: <https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/20195/lot/283/>

19 Bonhams: <https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/16484/lot/105/>

20 Sotheby's: <http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2010/contemporary-art-day-auction-110025/lot.214.html?locale=en>; Both Sotheby's and Bonhams pieces are the same canvas though the heart color differs on photos. The one that hung in the show had a pink heart, see exhibition view: [https://web.archive.org/web/20030831064955fw\\_/http://www.bookla.com/eventsfdr/banksy/04.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20030831064955fw_/http://www.bookla.com/eventsfdr/banksy/04.html)

21 Exhibition view: [https://web.archive.org/web/20030831065512fw\\_/http://www.bookla.com/eventsfdr/banksy/05.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20030831065512fw_/http://www.bookla.com/eventsfdr/banksy/05.html); Bonhams: <https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/20195/lot/214/>

22 Sotheby's: <http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2008/contemporary-art-day-sale-108023/lot.307.html?locale=en>

23 Sotheby's: <http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2008/contemporary-art-day-sale-108023/lot.307.html?locale=en>, see also <http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2015/contemporary-art-day-auction-115021/lot.361.html?locale=en>

24 Bonhams: <https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/20195/lot/287/>; exhibition view: [https://web.archive.org/web/20030831064955fw\\_/http://www.bookla.com/eventsfdr/banksy/04.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20030831064955fw_/http://www.bookla.com/eventsfdr/banksy/04.html)

25 Artnet Castle Gallery inventory catalogue entry: [http://www.artnet.com/artists/banksy/monkeys-existencilism-exhibition-a-6IFPbt\\_QcYK5ZqAJna5G5Q2](http://www.artnet.com/artists/banksy/monkeys-existencilism-exhibition-a-6IFPbt_QcYK5ZqAJna5G5Q2)

26 Smith Davidson Online Catalogue: <http://www.smith-davidson.com/artists/banksy/works/5404>

27 Exhibition view: [https://web.archive.org/web/20030831065512fw\\_/http://www.bookla.com/eventsfdr/banksy/05.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20030831065512fw_/http://www.bookla.com/eventsfdr/banksy/05.html)

## Warehouse Wall Installation

- *Anti-Art Wall*, 2002, spray paint on black wall, ca. 150 × 150 cm. Motif: Burning flag of the United States, Banksy-stencil, Anti-Art lettering<sup>28</sup>
- *Heavy Weaponary, Elephant with red spiral*, 2002. Paint and stenciled spray paint on wall. Ca. 40 × 35 cm<sup>29</sup>
- *Stop Esso* [reduced version], 2002. Spray paint on white wall. Ca. 3 × 5 m<sup>30</sup>
- *Silence of the Lamp*,<sup>31</sup> [Girl and Boy with a sheep and a bird], 2002. Black spray paint on white wall. Ca. 3 × 2 m<sup>32</sup>
- *Monkey Queen/Deride and Conquer*, stenciled spray paint on wall. Ca 2,5 x2,5 m<sup>33</sup>
- *Rude Copper*, stenciled spray paint on black wall outside<sup>34</sup>
- *Sandwichboard monkey* [*Laugh Now, But One Day We'll Be in Charge*], 2002, spray paint on on the right pillar next to the anti-art burning flag<sup>35</sup>
- *Smiley Copper Wall*, 2002, spray paint on wall, ca. 3 m × 10 m. Motifs: dripping riot coppers with smiley faces, Bird with Grenade and Rat with Saw.<sup>36</sup>
- *Tramp Angel* [large version] combined with *People who enjoy waving flag don't deserve to have one* freehand slogan, (later cut out wall) painting or massive portable piece (?), 2002<sup>37</sup>

28 Photo: [https://web.archive.org/web/20030117154702fw\\_/http://www.bookla.com/eventsfdr/banksy/01.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20030117154702fw_/http://www.bookla.com/eventsfdr/banksy/01.html)

29 Photo: [https://web.archive.org/web/20030117154702fw\\_/http://www.bookla.com/eventsfdr/banksy/01.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20030117154702fw_/http://www.bookla.com/eventsfdr/banksy/01.html)

30 This version only shows the parents, not the girl with the Esso petrol can. Photos: [https://web.archive.org/web/20030423192336fw\\_/http://www.bookla.com/eventsfdr/banksy/10.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20030423192336fw_/http://www.bookla.com/eventsfdr/banksy/10.html); [https://web.archive.org/web/20030320023525fw\\_/http://www.bookla.com/eventsfdr/banksy/11.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20030320023525fw_/http://www.bookla.com/eventsfdr/banksy/11.html); the motif was later cut out of the wall and shown in an exhibition in Las Vegas in 2019, illustrated in Las Vegas Review-Journal: Banksy exhibit coming next week to Las Vegas Strip, 21.11.2019, [https://www.reviewjournal.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/13014506\\_web1\\_Stop-Esso-Photo-credit-GENIUS-OR-VANDAL-BANKSY-EXHIBITION.jpg?crop=1](https://www.reviewjournal.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/13014506_web1_Stop-Esso-Photo-credit-GENIUS-OR-VANDAL-BANKSY-EXHIBITION.jpg?crop=1)

31 In the Moco Museum, Amsterdam, this cut out wall was called Silence of the Lamb, 2002.

32 Photo: [https://web.archive.org/web/20030831065906fw\\_/http://www.bookla.com/eventsfdr/banksy/12.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20030831065906fw_/http://www.bookla.com/eventsfdr/banksy/12.html), later cut from the wall and exhibited at Moco Museum, Amsterdam, see [https://danielbracker.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/DSC\\_3009.jpg](https://danielbracker.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/DSC_3009.jpg)

33 Photo: [https://web.archive.org/web/20030831065035fw\\_/http://www.bookla.com/eventsfdr/banksy/07.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20030831065035fw_/http://www.bookla.com/eventsfdr/banksy/07.html)

34 Photo: [https://web.archive.org/web/20030320025742fw\\_/http://www.bookla.com/eventsfdr/banksy/03.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20030320025742fw_/http://www.bookla.com/eventsfdr/banksy/03.html)

35 Photo: [https://web.archive.org/web/20030122214537fw\\_/http://www.bookla.com/eventsfdr/banksy/02.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20030122214537fw_/http://www.bookla.com/eventsfdr/banksy/02.html)

36 Photo: [https://web.archive.org/web/20030423191346fw\\_/http://www.bookla.com/eventsfdr/banksy/08.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20030423191346fw_/http://www.bookla.com/eventsfdr/banksy/08.html)

37 Photo: <https://urbanartassociation.com/thread/110932/obscure-banksy-pieces?scrollTo=1131195&page=11>; see also photo posted by banksynews on Instagram, 12.02.2020, <https://www.instagram.com/p/B8eH2Z3nrgB/>

## Wall Cut Outs Sold in Individual Pieces Marked as Panels A–H

- *Smiley Copper Panel C*, 2002, unsigned. Spray paint on drywall cut-out 180,4 × 91,4 cm, sold by Smith Davidson Gallery.<sup>38</sup>
- *Smiley Copper Panel H*, 2002, unsigned. Stenciled spray paint on wall cut-out. 228,6 × 76,8 cm, sold by Smith Davidson Gallery.<sup>39</sup>

## Banksy T-Shirt Catalogue<sup>40</sup>

- *Golf Sale*: “Ref. We can’t do anything to change the world until capitalism crumbles. Until then let’s all go shopping to console ourselves.”
- *His Master’s Voice [Fuck You, I Won’t listen to What You Tell Me]*: “Ref. Fuck you, I won’t listen to you whatyou [sic!] tell me.”
- *CCCP Lenin on (Roller) Skates*: “Who put the revolution on ice?”
- *[To Advertise Here Call 090-77-????-33: “Back Print”]*
- *Queen Elisabeth II Chimpanzee*: “Special for Jubilee. Ref. You’re too ugly to rule us any more.”
- *Union Flag Flower Thrower*.

## 5.2. 2002 (8–17 Sep.) \*Ex[is]tencilism,<sup>41</sup> And A Store, Minamihorie, Nishi-ku, Osaka, Japan

The second *Existencilism* exhibition took place at the And A store in Osaka, Japan. A photo taken of the shop’s exterior documents that Banksy designed the facade. On the left side, he painted a manga-style schoolgirl with pink hair holding a paint brush in her left hand. The inscription “I ♥ Vandalism” (fig. 49), dripping with paint,

38 Artnet Castle Gallery Inventory Catalogue Entry: [http://www.artnet.com/artists/banksy/smiley-copper-panel-c-a-MNCVmmg\\_JTL-uj3puwwFbw2](http://www.artnet.com/artists/banksy/smiley-copper-panel-c-a-MNCVmmg_JTL-uj3puwwFbw2)

39 Smith Davidson Online Catalogue: <http://www.smith-davidson.com/artists/banksy/works/5404>

40 Banksy T-Shirt catalogue, ca. 20 pages, unpagged, 2002. A copy of this postcard size t-shirt catalogue was sold on Ebay in May 2015 and later exhibited on <https://vrallart.com> [2021]. On the cover is a photo of the Painted Statue with Banksy Tag and Heavy Weaponary Elephant, Barcelona, October 2001. Maybe printed for the first Santa’s Ghetto Show that contained many similar motives. It is unclear which and how many of the shirts in the catalogue were actually printed.

41 On the exhibition flyer, the name of the show was misspelled “Extencilism” while it was titled “Existencilism” on the website of the shop and on an exhibition postcard. Exhibition flyer on the shop website: <https://web.archive.org/web/20111110033414/http://www.and-a.com/art/banksy/>, see also <http://urbanartassociation.com/thread/68526/banksy-2002->





Fig. 49: Banksy, I ♥ Vandalism, And A Store, Osaka, 2002. Source: Archive of the editor.

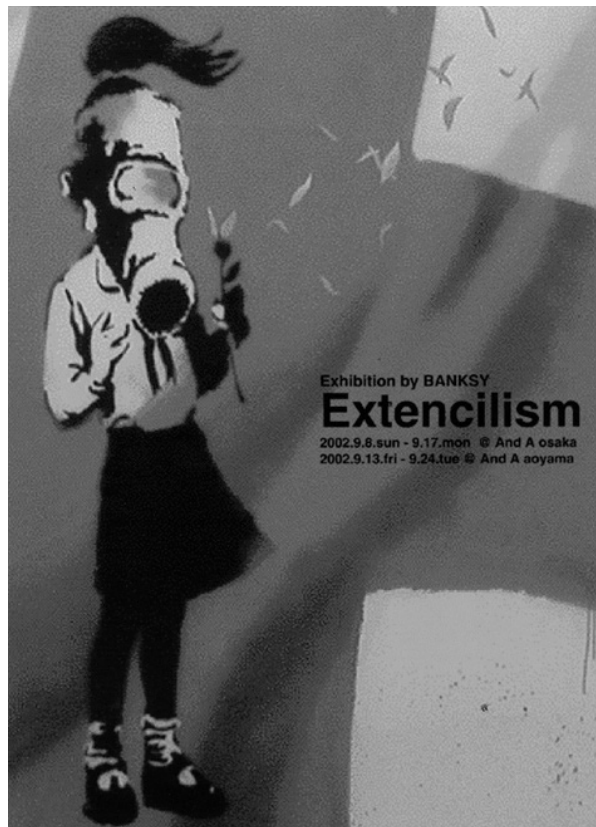


Fig. 50: Banksy, Invitation Card, 2002. Source: [https://web.archive.org/web/20130616152148im\\_/http://www.and-a.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/banksy\\_01.jpg](https://web.archive.org/web/20130616152148im_/http://www.and-a.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/banksy_01.jpg)

surrounded the store's entryway. The red heart was the same color as the still dripping paintbrush and leads to the conclusion that the girl was the perpetrator of the vandalism. The use of the heart symbol and the youthful, sweet-looking manga-style girl contrast the message and vandalism. On the event's flyer (fig. 50), Banksy's "Gas Mask Girl" with petals stencil is presented on an English flag in red and white, which are also the colors of Japan's flag. The petals, the flag and the manga-style schoolgirl with pink hair are both a parody of western stereotypes regarding Japanese culture as well as a winking homage to the culture itself.

The And A store sold clothes and other products with Banksy motifs at And A. The merchandise included at least two long white shirts carrying the "And A" logo (one with a Banksy logo each on front and back, the other one with "Gas Mask Girl" on the front) and two T-shirts with the logo of Japanese fashion brand "Montage" (a gray one with the peeing foot guard in front of a Banksy tag and a white one with the inscription "Boom and Bust," the motif featuring Mona Lisa with a Rocket Launcher, on the front).<sup>42</sup> "I do as little fashion stuff as possible," said Banksy in a 2003 *Sunday Times* article. "I don't like to see my name on people's chests but I have to make a living. And I've turned down a lot of offers from companies like Nike, so I'm not worried about selling out. I concentrate on the work."<sup>43</sup>

existencilism-show-signed. Exhibition postcard with presumable Banksy autograph on Urban Art Association Website: "Banksy 2002 Existencilism Show Card, Signed. Real?"; Thread by user Japandemic, 24 March 2011: <http://urbanartassociation.com/thread/68526/banksy-2002-existencilism-show-signed>

42 Montage did a reissue of the Mona Lisa on a green and a yellow shirt, ca 2005–2010, probably 2006, according to Pepperspraypress: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BhXTtoHHlmke/> The company Montage does not exist anymore. An original sticker sheet (17 × 15 cm) of Montage's collaboration with Banksy was sold at auction through Catawiki: <https://auction.catawiki.com/kavels/13448937-montage-tokyo-x-banksy>

43 Banksy quoted in Cosmo Landesman: Genius with a spray can, but is it art?, *Sunday Times*, 20 July 2003. [http://docs.newsbank.com/s/InfoWeb/aggddocs/UKNB/10035EF966955D68/0F8BFF68D3921800?p\\_multi=LSTB&cs\\_lang=en-US](http://docs.newsbank.com/s/InfoWeb/aggddocs/UKNB/10035EF966955D68/0F8BFF68D3921800?p_multi=LSTB&cs_lang=en-US)

### 5.3. 2002 (13–24 Sep.) \*Existencilism, And A store Aoyama, 3-6-19, Kita-aoyama, Minato-ku, Tokyo, Japan

The *Existencilism* exhibition at the And A store in Tokyo's luxury Aoyama district is documented better than the show in Osaka.<sup>44</sup> Photos show what the shop windows looked like during the exhibition period (fig. 51). Banksy sprayed freehand on the glass from the outside and attached stenciled cardboard elements to the window from the inside.<sup>45</sup>

The first shop window (fig. 52) shows a black and white bubble-style throw-up with Banksy's name. It is a less dynamic and less antropomorp version of a drawing Banksy showed on his website later. Above the "BA" of "BANKSY" is a stencil of a schoolgirl. The girl's face-covering ski mask and gun contrast with the elements typically associated with schoolgirls such as the braids, the bow tie and the skirt. Red butterflies are flapping out of the barrel. The schoolgirl motif, which represents a sexual fetish perceived by many westerners to be particularly popular in Japan, completes the ironic combination of innocent elements with weapons and violence. Like almost every And A shop window, there was a garland of Union Jacks behind the glass and in front of the mirrored back wall of the shop window.

On the second window (fig. 53), the Union Jack garland is covered partially by the red-sprayed writing: "This Revolution is for Display Purposes Only." On one hand, the slogan indicates the triviality of consumer society, and on the other hand it is a



Fig. 51: And A Gallery webpage, November 2011. Source: <https://web.archive.org/web/20111110033414/http://www.and-a.com/art/banksy/>

44 Probably there was a writing mistake on the flyers; the exhibition is mentioned in two different ways on the website.

45 For the photos, see screenshots of official *And A* website from the 10 November 2011. <https://web.archive.org/web/20111110033414/http://www.and-a.com/art/banksy/>



Fig. 52: Shop Windows from the And A store Aoyama. Source: capturingbanksy.wordpress.com (1.7.2012), Japanese Existencilism, <https://capturingbanksy.files.wordpress.com/2012/06/jap5.jpg>



Fig. 53: Shop Windows from the And A store Aoyama. Source: capturingbanksy.wordpress.com (1.7.2012), Japanese Existencilism, <https://capturingbanksy.files.wordpress.com/2012/06/jap4.jpg>

self-admission that the expression of revolutionary thoughts might be just artwork without a real effect. Inside the window display, Banksy put up a rectangular cardboard trifold, the lower half of which he stenciled with “Heavy Weaponry” elephants carrying rocket launchers. The two elephants on either end of the cardboard are cut off in the middle, which gives the impression of an endless caravan. The third elephant from the left is colored in white and is marked by a red, spiraled circle Banksy also used for the motif Radar Rat.

The third window (fig. 54) displayed a cardboard cutout of a life-sized police officer in riot gear, labeled with the lettering “POLICE” on a shield at waist level. On the windowpane itself, the red word “DESTROY” is connected to a vertical arrow pointing to a circle painted around the head of the officer. The officer wears a khaki-colored helmet and his face is substituted with a big yellow smiley face. Although the smiley expresses positive feelings in modern communication, the covering of the face has an intimidating effect in this context, because the viewer is not able to see the real emotion behind the smiley. The officer reminds of Sinister S.O.O.F.I., a villain from the Marvel Comic *Howard the Duck*, who hides her face with a yellow smiley face.<sup>46</sup> Her followers, the S.O.O.F.I.s, are “suicide bombers dressed up as smiley faced cleaners.”<sup>47</sup> The officer’s smiley mask may also be referencing the drug MDMA, which is often distributed in a pill with a smiley face on it.

“There Are No Innocent Bystanders” was sprayed on another shop window (fig. 55). In a 2002 interview with online magazine *Squall*, Banksy explains that he tagged this phrase as a reaction to the 9/11 attacks.<sup>48</sup> “There Are No Innocent Bystanders” is a quote from US general Curtis LeMays, who was responsible for the bombings in Japanese cities and the mining of Japanese waters in World War II. In LeMays’ opinion, “There are no innocent civilians. It is their government and you are fighting a people, you are not trying to fight an armed force anymore. So it doesn’t bother me so much to be killing the so-called innocent bystanders.”<sup>49</sup> In 1995, William S. Burroughs adapted this expression: “There are no innocent bystanders ... what are they doing there in the first place?”<sup>50</sup> Banksy pointed out that the United States has become a victim of the same policy it once enacted against the Japanese people. Circa 2002,

46 Cf. Sinister S.O.O.F.I., in: Online Marvel Database, [http://marvel.wikia.com/wiki/Sinister\\_Soofi\\_\(Earth-616\)](http://marvel.wikia.com/wiki/Sinister_Soofi_(Earth-616)) 20 February 2016 by *Artful Bot*.

47 Ibid.

48 *Squall: Creative Vandalism (out and about with Banksy in London)*, May 2002, <http://web.archive.org/web/20030103192030/http://www.squall.co.uk/squall.cfm?sq=2002053001&ct=2>

49 Curtis LeMays, 15.12.1906–3.10.1990, general in the United States Air Force, in: Sherry, Michael: *The Rise of American Air Power. The Creation of Armageddon*, Yale 1989, p. 287.

50 William Burroughs: *My Education: A Book of Dreams*. New York 1995, p. 65.



Fig. 54: Shop Windows from the And A store Aoyama. Source: capturingbanksy.wordpress.com (1.7.2012), Japanese Existencilism, <https://capturingbanksy.files.wordpress.com/2012/06/j2.jpg>



Fig. 55: Shop Windows from the And A store Aoyama. Source: capturingbanksy.wordpress.com (1.7.2012), Japanese Existencilism, <https://capturingbanksy.files.wordpress.com/2012/06/jap3.jpg>

Banksy freehandedly painted this slogan also in Brick Lane, London. Famous UK band The Libertines posed in front of it.<sup>51</sup>

Banksy sprayed another stenciled tag in the same red spray paint under this phrase. Under that tag, there is another, almost illegible tag. The two mannequins on the right side of the window, unable to move, are also addressed by the message and denounced for their inaction. This shop window allows the viewer to see the inside of the shop: The black and white designed interior of the clothing store shows a luminous, white floor. Papers or photos in different shapes and layout lie on the floor; maybe as part of Banksy's exhibition.

Since there are no photos of the exhibition inside, it is difficult to prove which works have been exhibited in which city. There are five works, most probably shown at the exhibition in Aoyama, since they all are in the hands of companies located in Tokyo.

Two works, which are in the hands of the Office Sazaby League, Ltd., were on display to the public for the first time during the exhibition. The first work (fig. 56), showing the popular Banksy chimpanzee wearing a white sign, is captioned with the



Fig. 56: 不言実行 (Fugen jukkou) Monkey, (Version 2), spray paint and emulsion on cardboard, 135x 90 cm, 2002. Sold as "Keep It Real (With Japanese Slogan)" by Sotheby's in 2017. Source: <https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2017/contemporary-curated-117027/lot.51.html>

51 Innocent, Brick Lane, London, photo by Roger Sargent, <https://www.snapgalleries.com/product/roger-sargent-the-libertines-innocent/>



Fig. 57: Zombie and Bicycle Girl. Source: Yoshihiro Hoshina, 2002, [https://assets.media-platform.com/fuze/dist/images/2019/04/19/Banksy\\_maiji\\_street01.jpg](https://assets.media-platform.com/fuze/dist/images/2019/04/19/Banksy_maiji_street01.jpg)

Japanese expression “不言実行” (Fugen jukkou) instead of the standard “Laugh Now, but one Day we’ll be in Charge.” The Japanese phrase literally means “silent action,” i.e. “Action speaks louder than words [...] which beautifully describes one of the Japanese virtues, ‘to make no complaints and do what needs to be done.’”<sup>52</sup> The pronunciation (Fugen jukkou) sounds a bit like “Fuck you”. Banksy created this work just for the exhibition in Japan and expresses the message to act instead of talking to the Japanese public.

The second work is a quadratic work of around one square meter in area and depicts a grayscale blowfly with a head that looks like a gas mask. The background consists of 1280 identical red stamps showing Queen Elizabeth II wearing a gas mask.

Another three works might be still on display at Lazy Hazy Planet, a clothing store in Harajuku, a Tokyo fashion district. All of them were stencil works sprayed on brown wrapping paper and glued onto colored paper. The three works bought by the shop are the chimpanzee wearing a sandwich board lettered with “Laugh now, but one day we’ll be in charge,” “Happy Chopper,” a helicopter wearing a girly bow on its “head,” and “Zombie and Bicycle Girl” (fig. 57). The last of the three works shows a girl riding a bicycle and being chased by a figure circled in pink and captured by the word “AMERICA” hinting at the irak war—what looks at first sight to be a father teaching his daughter how to ride a bicycle turns out to be a zombie chasing a scared girl. In the upper right corner of this piece is a symbol for “downstairs” (stair and arrow pointing downwards).

52 Japanese proverb (諺, ことわざ kotowaza) Facebook page. Post from 12 April 2010. [https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=114005935285575&id=286814251668](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=114005935285575&id=286814251668)



## List of Works

- 不言実行 (Fugen jukkou) Monkey, (Version 1), 2002, spray paint and emulsion on cardboard, stenciled Banksy tag under the motif.<sup>53</sup>
- 不言実行 (Fugen jukkou) Monkey, (Version 2), [Keep it Real (with Japanese Slogan)], 2002, spray paint and emulsion on cardboard, 135 × 90 cm.<sup>54</sup>
- Untitled [Mosquito] 2002, signed in spray paint on cardboard on the lower right. Provenance: Agnes B Shop, Japan 2002. Two versions, one stenciled in black, one in white. Second version owned by Sazaby League, Ltd., Sendagaya, Shibuya, Tokyo, 80 × 90 cm.
- Masked pigtail girl on Gasmask Queen stamps, 2002. Similar background than Untitled [Mosquito]. The pigtail girl stencil seemed to be the same Banksy used on one of the windows (fig. 55c) where the girl is holding a gun.<sup>55</sup>
- Laugh Now, signed with stencil in the lower right, once owned by LHP Harajuku store, Shibuya, Tokyo.<sup>56</sup>
- Happy Chopper, 2002, acrylic and spray paint on cardboard, signed with stencil in the center, 84.8 × 170 cm,<sup>57</sup> once owned by LHP Harajuku store, Shibuya, Tokyo.<sup>58</sup>
- Caravane of 5 Heavy Weaponry elephants, 2002, stencil on cardboard, 126 × 39 cm.<sup>59</sup>
- Shop Windows 1–4: ca. 1,5 m × 2,25 m., And A Store Aoyama, not preserved: This Revolution Is For Display Purposes Only (1), Destroy (2), Banksy throw-up (3), There Are No Innocent Bystanders (4)
- Zombie and Bicycle Girl, unsigned, owned by LHP Harajuku store, Shibuya, Tokyo.<sup>60</sup>

53 In 2010 on Flickr, later removed.; see also <https://urbanartassociation.com/thread/110932/obscure-banksy-pieces?page=5>

54 Photo and info: <https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2017/contemporary-curated-117027/lot.51.html>

55 Photo uploaded on 19.09.2022 by [y\\_o\\_o\\_o\\_k\\_o\\_o](https://www.instagram.com/p/Cir9cPKp9), <https://www.instagram.com/p/Cir9cPKp9>; thanks to Cosmic for the hint with the window

56 Photo: [https://64.media.tumblr.com/tumblr\\_lp8mbgRpAi1qmqhyqo1\\_500.jpg](https://64.media.tumblr.com/tumblr_lp8mbgRpAi1qmqhyqo1_500.jpg); see also <https://urbanartassociation.com/thread/110932/obscure-banksy-pieces?page=6>

57 Photo and info: <https://www.sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2022/modern-contemporary-art-day-auction/chopper>

58 Photo: [https://assets.media-platform.com/fuze/dist/images/2019/04/19/Banksy\\_maiji\\_street\\_02.jpg](https://assets.media-platform.com/fuze/dist/images/2019/04/19/Banksy_maiji_street_02.jpg); [https://64.media.tumblr.com/tumblr\\_lp8mbgRpAi1qmqhyqo1\\_500.jpg](https://64.media.tumblr.com/tumblr_lp8mbgRpAi1qmqhyqo1_500.jpg); see also <https://urbanartassociation.com/thread/110932/obscure-banksy-pieces?page=6>

59 Offered on Ebay, April 2020.

60 Photo: [https://assets.media-platform.com/fuze/dist/images/2019/04/19/Banksy\\_maiji\\_street\\_01.jpg](https://assets.media-platform.com/fuze/dist/images/2019/04/19/Banksy_maiji_street_01.jpg)



## 6 More International Shows

### 6.1 2002 (14 Dec. – 15 Feb. 2003) Alife / Deitch Projects, New York

In this group show, 60 urban artists “were committed to creating art in the form of products that can be distributed widely and sold inexpensively.”<sup>1</sup> The show was organized by Deitch Projects in collaboration with Alife. Deitch Projects was a contemporary art gallery in New York City founded by curator and urban art dealer Jeffrey Deitch in 1996. Manhattan creative collective Alife was founded in 1999 to promote “young artists, bringing their work and influences to the commercial environments of retail and manufacturing.”<sup>2</sup> The 76 Grand Street storefront of Deitch Projects displayed floor-to-ceiling vitrines with art products for two months, inspired by Keith Haring’s Pop Shop, according to their website. Deitch worked with Haring in the 1980s, and Deitch Projects represented his estate.<sup>3</sup>

Most of the participating artists had a background in graffiti, punk or street art and had moved into commercial art and design, like Kaws (Brian Donnelly), Twist (Barry McGee), WK Interact or OBEY (Shepard Fairey). This might have been the first time Fairey and Space Invader exhibited with Banksy. Like Todd James (REAS), Stephen Powers (ESPO), and stencil artist collective FAILE, all of whom had exhibited with Alife, Invader was also later represented by Pictures on Walls, the online gallery that sold Banksy’s prints from 2003 until 2018.

At the Alife show, Banksy sold copies of his first two books.<sup>4</sup> Banksy was listed as “Banksy/Stephen Earl” in the line-up of the show, which made it seem as if Banksy and Stephen Earl were the same person. According to the auction house Bonham, Stephen Earl was Banksy’s first manager,<sup>5</sup> who sold works for him before Steve Lazarides took over in middle/late 2002. Apparently the former manager left the country with

1 Jeffrey Deitch website: <http://www.deitch.com/deitch-projects/alife>

2 Ibid.

3 Candace Jackson: Deitch to Head L.A. Museum of Contemporary Art, *The Wall Street Journal*. 12 January 2010. [https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748704081704574652733847021844?mod=WSJ\\_latestheadlines](https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748704081704574652733847021844?mod=WSJ_latestheadlines)

4 Jeffrey Deitch website: <http://www.deitch.com/content/deitch-projects/alife/2.alife-deitchprojects-install1-12-02.jpg>

5 “*Stephen Earl whose agency, Timebomb, represents DJs and the graffiti artist Banksy.*” Kate Worsley: Living Review Design: We can make it—Fancy starting your own creative business? Don’t want to run it from the spare bedroom? You are not alone, *Independent* on Sunday, 6 October 2002. See also Bonhams: Lot 49AR. Auction 16748: Urban Art. 24 February 2009. <https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/16748/lot/49/>