

Art or prank?

1. Discuss the quotes below. What did these people mean?

“Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up.”

Pablo Picasso

“Art, freedom and creativity will change society faster than politics.”

Victor Pinchuk

“I'd been painting rats for three years before someone said, 'That's clever. It's an anagram of art,' and I had to pretend I'd known that all along.”

Banksy

2. Read the sentences below and match the words and phrases in bold to their meanings.

- a) I can't believe that he destroyed his work by **shredding** it.
- b) Todd flew over the city in a hot-air balloon as a publicity **stunt**.
- c) His photographs have become **iconic** images of war.
- d) It costs a **staggering** amount of money, that is \$50,000 per week, to keep the museum open to the public.
- e) As dead plants **decay**, they release mineral salts into the soil.
- f) Our car has **depreciated** to nearly 50% of its original value.
- g) When I was at school we **played a lot of pranks on** our teachers.
- h) The employees **mocked** the company's recovery plan as it seemed ridiculous.

MEANINGS:

- 1) make someone or something look stupid by laughing at them **MOCK**
- 2) become less valuable than before **DEPRECIATE**
- 3) cut or tear something into long thin pieces **SHRED**
- 4) do something to someone as a joke or trick **PLAY A PRANK ON SB**
- 5) very shocking and surprising **STAGGERING**
- 6) something silly or unusual that is done to get public attention **STUNT**
- 7) be gradually destroyed by the natural process of change **DECAY**
- 8) very famous and well known, and believed to represent a particular idea **ICONIC**

Art or prank?

3. Watch two [videos](https://youtu.be/OQ_fIALWqpU) [https://youtu.be/OQ_fIALWqpU, https://youtu.be/E-d1Hozj6-s], make notes and summarize them afterwards. When speaking, use the vocabulary in the box.

decay depreciate iconic play a prank on sb
shred staggering stunt mock

.....
.....
.....

4. Discuss the questions.

- Will Banksy's Girl with Balloon depreciate in value after the stunt or not?
- Maurizio Catallen's Banana was sold for a staggering \$120,000. Was it worth it in your opinion?
- Do you consider what you've seen in the videos to be art or maybe just pranks played on the wealthy?
- Do you know any other artworks that are controversial when it comes to their artistic value?



5. Read the sentence from one of the videos and choose the correct meaning of the word in bold.

*“Maybe we’re missing something with the banana and duct tape like an **unfathomable** metaphor about the banana that decays and the tape (...) that pretty much lasts forever.”*

- a) creepy
- b) impossible to understand
- c) convincing

6. Read the sentences below. Then, find two synonyms in the box for each word in bold.

astonishing

astounding

bewildering

incomprehensible

outrageously

scandalously

- a) I must say that it is **shockingly** expensive. **scandalously, outrageously**
- b) It's **unfathomable** to me why people invest in contemporary art. **bewildering, incomprehensible**
- c) It cost a **staggering** amount of money and I don't even know who the buyer was. **astounding, astonishing**

7. What do you think about the cases below? Use the words from the previous exercise to discuss your thoughts.

- A 1986 sculpture "Rabbit" by Jeff Koons was sold for \$91.1 million. It's the most expensive work sold by a living artist. See it [here](#).
- An artist Marcel Duchamp changed art history forever. He turned a urinal upside down, hung it on the wall and claimed it was art. See the piece [here](#).
- Two teenagers pranked visitors at a museum in San Francisco. They left a pair of eyeglasses on the floor so that people might think it was a work of art. Visitors started gathering around the glasses, analysing them and thinking that they were an element of the exhibition. See what it looked like [here](#).
- The 82-year-old Cecilia Giménez had the best of intentions when she worked on the restoration of a religious painting of Jesus (from 1930), but her skills didn't quite allow her to pull it off. Judge it for yourself! See the restoration effect [here](#).

8. Discuss the questions below.

- Overall, how do you feel about modern art? Do you prefer it to more traditional art or vice versa?
- Do you ever go to see art installations, exhibitions or look for graffiti in the streets?
- Can you describe any other thought-provoking forms of art you have seen?