

## 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 underlined words and phrases to their meanings.

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

### MEANINGS

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

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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 from the previous exercise.

SHRED

STAGGERING

PLAY A PRANK ON SB

STUNT

DECAY

ICONIC

DEPRECIATE

MOCK

NOTES:

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### 4. Discuss the questions.

- Will Banksy's Girl with Balloon depreciate in value after the stunt or not?
- Maurizio Cattelan's Banana was sold for a staggering \$120,000. Is it worth it in your opinion?
- Do you consider what you've seen in the videos 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 a 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. In the box, find two synonyms to each underlined word below.**

bewildering                      astounding                      scandalously  
astonishing                      outrageously                      incomprehensible

- 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? When appropriate, use the words from the previous exercise.**

- 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, analyzing 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 provocative forms of art you have seen?