



## Artist Incognito

Works of the anonymous and controversial street artist known as Banksy go on display at Palazzo Cipolla. **Tiffany Parks** takes a look.



"If you want to say something and have people listen then you have to wear a mask. If you want to be honest then you have to live a lie." These seemingly paradoxical words come from the infamous street artist known simply as **Banksy**. And they sum up the modus operandi that has catapulted him to world fame, despite—or perhaps thanks to—his anonymous status. One of the most controversial, debated, and acclaimed figures of our time, Banksy seeks to give voice to the masses, those who would otherwise remain unheard. His works, ranging from sculptures to murals, from screen prints to installations, are instantly recognizable for their satirical social and political commentary, presenting anti-war, anti-capitalist, and anti-establishment sentiments with biting irony.

Banksy cut his teeth as a young freehand graffiti artist in Bristol, England in the early '90s. Serendipitously, he noticed a stenciled

serial number on a garbage bin while hiding from police, and this faster, more efficient medium soon became his calling card, earning him acknowledgment in his native Bristol as well as in London. By the dawn of the new millennium, he had garnered international recognition and held his first major exhibition in Los Angeles in 2002. By 2006 he had reached cult status, and some of his works fetched into five and six figures at auction, triggering the so-called "Banksy effect," which heightened the appeal for street art around the world.

*War, Capitalism, and Freedom*, an exciting exhibit at Palazzo Cipolla, presents 150 of Banksy's original works. Paintings, prints, sculptures, and other rare items, all on loan from private collections and most never exhibited before, explore pressing contemporary issues with the wit and humanity the artist is famous for.

**All month at Palazzo Cipolla.**