

Comparative Study of Banksy and Chuck Close

This comparative study focuses on the evaluation of similarities and contrasts of the style and intentions of 2 artists with 4 total works. This includes an international artist famously recognised as Banksy, and a well-known American artist known as Chuck Close. I will also be comparing and contrasting these artists style and technique on my own work along with their influence.

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Evaluation of Cultural Significance of Banksy

A 'modern day problem' influenced, English-based, anonymous, well known, and talented graffiti artist known as Banksy provokes many while also inspiring many as well with his art. What makes his work so controversial is the fact that they're are mostly based off of modern day problems and struggles and uses the subjects to provoke emotion and thought into his audience. He often displayed these audacious subjects and pieces on the side of buildings with a large scale so that they were not easy to miss. This played along with the actual pieces themselves to make his work so popular and thought provoking. Banksy's popularity was at peak in the 1990's in Bristol England. This is also where his unique style and use of stencil graffiti art became widely recognized.



Interpretation of Function and Purpose

From the rest of the image it's safe to assume that the man would be throwing a molotov, which would be a violent act. Instead of a molotov, the man is throwing a bouquet of flowers to sort of symbolize a peaceful act instead.

The only color in the entire image is in the flowers to draw emphasis and more attention.



"Flower Thrower" by Banksy (2)

From the clothes that the man is wearing, it is easy to see that he would not be throwing the molotov for any sort of military action, but instead a form of riot. This gives more of the feeling of problems that would be helping locally by local citizens, making the work slightly more powerful.

The image is on a large scale making it easier to see and give it more public attention.

Interpretation of Function and Purpose

The only color is in the words, drawing emphasis.

The text reads "NO FUTURE". To amplify the sad reality of most children in poverty.

The black and white contrast on a blank wall background gives even more emphasis and attention to the words above. Sort of like an alert message.

The 'o' in the text is also an outline for the girl's balloon, giving more of the child like feeling and connection to the girl instead of just putting a red text above her head.



"No Future Girl Balloon" by Banksy (3)

From the clothes, you can tell that the little girl is either homeless or in severe poverty.

The image is placed at ground level to give more of the real feeling seeing the girl sit on the floor.

Analysis of Formal Qualities of Banksy

When Banksy creates a famous piece of work like *Flower Thrower* and *No Future Girl Balloon*, he shares similar concepts and choices between them. In *Flower Thrower*, Banksy uses a subject that would normally be seen as throwing a molotov or some sort of harmful object, this would connect to acts of local violence and crime which is a subject that a lot of people choose to ignore, Banksy decides to not only put it somewhere easy to see and on a large scale, but instead replace the molotov with a bouquet of flowers. He also uses only black for the subject that plays off with the color of the wall to drive attention away and towards the bright and vibrantly colored flowers. All of this creates that overall thought and emotion provoking image.



Once again Banksy uses the use of dull color in the subject to draw the eye away and towards the main point which is in a striking red color. In *No Future Girl Balloon*, Banksy also uses an image like a little girl holding a balloon to connect to the thoughts of the potential and happiness at youth. He then proceeds to bring in the modern day problem to use as a emotional and thought provoking aspect.



Evaluation of Cultural Significance of Chuck Close

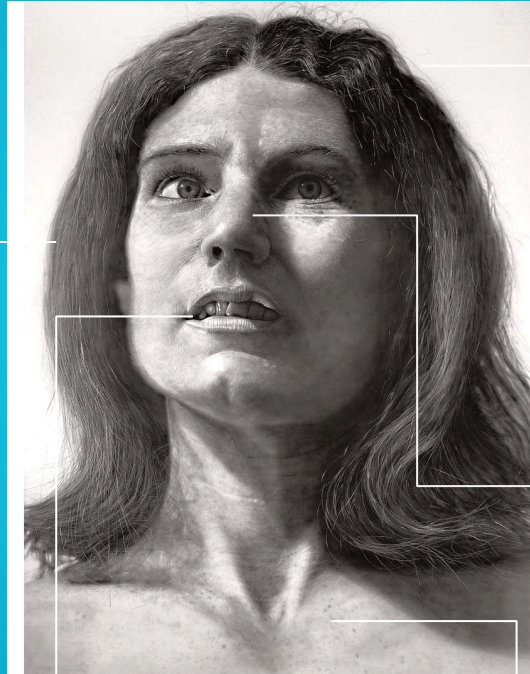
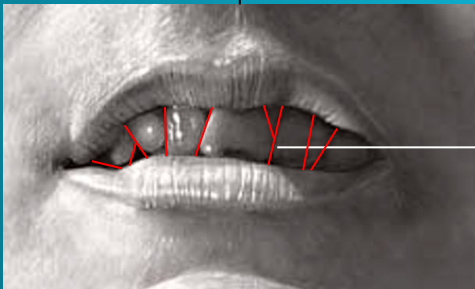


Born in Monroe, Washington, Chuck Close is a master of detail. Making paintings look exactly like a photo is exactly what made him such a well known artist. What makes his portraits so photorealistic is the fact that he doesn't try to glorify anything and pays strong attention to every little detail. Chuck Close does not try to make an image look pretty with amazing colors or perfect angles, he paints what's there and nothing more, he shows the realism with the details and black and white theme throughout his work.

Interpretation of Function and Purpose

Chuck Close does not try to use a special angle to capture a “beautiful look”. He uses a straight forward angle that sort of says “look, this is it”.

Close does not try to make the teeth “perfect” or super bright and clean but instead he intentionally gives them a crooked and not so bright and clean look.



“Nancy” by Chuck Close (5)



Hair is usually portrayed with an aesthetic look of smoothness or a pleasing craziness, chuck purposely creates this unpleasing frizzy look adding to the realism.

You are easily able to see a slight cross-eyed look. Right above the crooked nose shape. This adds to the realistic beauty yet again.

Close chooses to use a black and white color scheme which adds to the realism feel.

Interpretation of Function and Purpose



Using the red lines as a guider you can see that Close has one eye lower than the other which normally isn't considered an "attractive" feature.

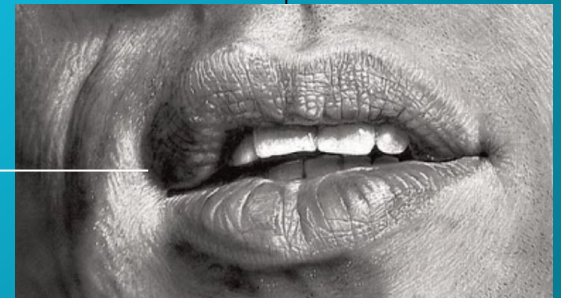
The straight forward angle with the subject looking straight forward adds to the repeated "look, this is it" concept, along not hiding away from the realism with amazing poses or angles.



"Phil" by Chuck Close (6)

Once again close continues the theme of black and white values only instead of glorifying it with nice looking colors.

He portrays the mouth in an open relaxed position instead of a smile which gives it a more lazy or relaxed feeling.



Analysis of Formal Qualities of Chuck Close



Chuck Close uses a lot of intentional techniques that make the image extremely realistic and do not portray a typical good looking person that you normally see in the media.

With *Nancy*, you do not see her with any makeup on and instead rough textured skin. He uses black and white values only instead of glorifying with color. He uses a straight forward angle to show the subject and nothing more. In *Nancy*, Chuck also uses stereotypically unattractive features like crooked teeth and frizzy hair.



Chuck continues his themes in techniques into his other piece *Phil*. He uses the black and white contrast once again along with stereotypically unattractive features. In *Phil*, one eye is noticeably lower than the other. The mouth also has a lazy aspect to it. The hair is also considerably messy in a way that wouldn't be considered a "good" kind of messy look.

Comparing Artistic Styles

Banksy

- Strictly street art (graffiti) with the use of various hand drawn stencils.
- Subjects of paintings often have figures/subjects related to the government or economy.
- The messages in his art often are very obvious, clear and distinct.
- Concepts of his work are mostly considered controversial and sensitive.

Both

- They both create artwork that emphasizes their meaning through the artwork itself and not something else apart from the piece.
- Both artists usually keep a relatively simple piece as in one or two focal points.
- Each artist always or almost always uses a human figure(s) as the main subject/focal point of the piece.

Chuck Close

- Primarily acrylic on canvas paintings using high resolution photos for reference.
- Subjects typically are just ordinary people and do not hold any higher role in society.
- The overall message(s) in his work are usually subliminal and not extremely obvious.
- One could argue that the meanings in his work is based on opinions and not facts.

Comparing Mediums

- Spray paint on building walls.
- Uses hand drawn stencils for accuracy.
- Often has multiple different color spray paints.

Banksy

These two artists do not share any similarities in their mediums except the fact that they both use a form of paint. Their choice of a medium also really shows what kind of artist they are and their strategies in communicating their messages. With Banksy, he uses a variety of colored spray paints and hand drawn stencils and uses them to create his art on public building walls.

- Acrylic Paint on canvas.
- Uses high resolution photos for reference.
- Strictly uses black and white paint only.

Chuck Close

This shows how he uses the fact that the walls are public to get the attention of a lot more people, creating a larger audience and sending out the message more. The spray paint also shows possible lack of money and creates a style that gives you the feeling of it being created by people suffering similar situations, so it makes it more relatable to the audience and closer to home. Chuck Close however decides to use acrylic paint on a large canvas to be able to nail down every single detail in the subject. His choice of medium also allows him to create several different textures to reach that photorealistic look which creates a huge feeling of “wow look at this” which brings people in to notice the flaws of the subjects and form those thoughts of what the painting means.

Comparing Use of Emotion

Banksy

- Banksy has more obvious and emphasized points to deliver his message and provoke the emotion.
- Banksy's pieces usually provoke different emotions in his audience and can vary to the audience depending on how they relate to the message.

Both

- Neither of the artists go for a strong aesthetic look, they both have meaning, purpose and direction.
- Both decide to avoid the happy and joyful mood expressed in their piece, some may consider them to be a somewhat dark mood.

Chuck Close

- Chuck Close chooses to use more subtle points to deliver his meaning and has them placed all around the image on the subject.
- Chuck uses a black and white color scheme to sort of control his audience's emotions in a way.

Comparing Formal Qualities

- Banksy uses a wide range of colors. Usually only one or two per piece,
- The colors used in Banksy's work are always purposeful and help direct the viewer's eye towards a focal point.
- Reaches towards a more minimalist look.

Banksy

- Both artists often have direction in their piece by use and placement of lines and attention seeking shapes/forms.
- Both artists use a lack of space in their work to keep the attention on the subject.

Both

- Close sticks with black and white values.
- Close directs the viewer's eye by using continuous lines and shapes that flow together to make the human face along with the extreme details.
- Reaches towards a hyperrealism look.

Chuck Close

Formal Introduction to Own Works

The two digital pieces at the bottom are both strongly inspired by Banksy's work. I tried to capture Banksy's way of putting the message right out in the open and creating a very strong visual mood for the piece. I kept them as digital pieces instead of paintings or stenciled art because I plan on majoring in a digital art field and this would allow me to practice/develop my skills, also it gives them a unique style instead of being extremely similar to Banksy's style.

The large black and white acrylic self portrait to the right is very similar to Chuck Close's style. I tried to add in or adjust little things about my features to make them much more distinct and noticeable. I also went for the photo-realistic approach just as Chuck does in his work to make the inspiration much more obvious.



Comparing and Contrasting Own Artistic Styles to Banksy

BANKSY

- Created with the use of stencils and graffiti on a brick wall.
- The image depicts an assumably violent act in a peaceful manner which creates a mood.
- Sticks to a strict minimum amount of colors with the same tones and vibrancy.



BOTH

- Both works have a very strong sense of meaning and direction.
- Both of the images in the works have a sense of controversy and publicity.
- Both also have an obvious street art presence which makes the works feel a lot more local and personal to the audience.

MYSELF

- Created by digitally drawing on a computer using Adobe Photoshop.
- The image/work depicts a very violent/gruesome image to provoke emotions.
- The work contains a large variety of colors in different tones and saturations.



Comparing and Contrasting Own Artistic Styles to Banksy



- Used as little amount of details in an attempt to not distract the viewer from anything but the girl and words.
- Stuck to a strict color pallet of less than 2 colors.

BANKSY

- Both used a large text in the wide open to express the message of the piece a lot more obvious and blunt.
- Both pieces express a time of sadness and despair.
- The pieces express the emotion or tone by showing the subjects with a lack or loss of something.

BOTH



- Used a decent amount of details in an attempt to make the piece more engaging.
- Used a wide range of colors throughout the whole piece.

MYSELF

Comparing and Contrasting Own Artistic Styles to Chuck Close

CHUCK CLOSE

- Chuck Close was successful in creating real looking patterns to form a look of texture for every aspect of his work.
- Chuck's subjects do not show a state of happiness or even being content, they appear to be disturbed or bland.

BOTH

- Both artists aimed for a photo-realistic look.
- Both artists use a black and white color scheme.
- Both artists focused on a portrait, rather than still life or landscape or etc.

MYSELF

- Was only successful in creating a look of facial hair textures. The rest has an untextured look.
- The piece shows a state of a calm happiness, a sort of hopeful smile and happy mood is given.

Comparing and Contrasting Own Use of Emotions to Banksy

BANKSY

- Banksy's emotion depicted can be slightly happy while also aggravating and sad.
- The direction of the emotion is given through a combined effect of little points. For example, the subject's cloth covering part of the face and the stance help to show the purpose of the subject and their goals.



BOTH

- Both issues displayed in the pieces could be considered controversial and could have different viewpoints.
- The street art aspect to both pieces gives them a much more closer and local feeling making the emotions a bit more personal.

MYSELF

- The emotion in my piece is strictly dark and unhappy.
- A part of the mood and emotion given out in this piece by the use of bloody/gory images.





Comparing and Contrasting Own Use of Emotions to Banksy



- Even though both pieces expresses a mood of sadness and hurt, Banksy's piece shows the subject in isolation which also plays a role on the mood.
- Banksy uses a lack of color to better showcases the feelings in the piece.

BANKSY

- In both pieces, the mood is directed by large and obvious texts.

BOTH

- In my own piece I used a wide variety of colors with lower saturations and values.
- In my piece I display a number of people in the same situation to express the vastness of the issue and give attention to the mood and the victims of it.

MYSELF

Comparing and Contrasting Own Use of Emotions to Chuck Close

CHUCK CLOSE

- Uses facial expressions of calmness and unhappiness.
- Used the lighting on the subject to bring more attention to itself and incorporate a dramatic feel.
- The lightness and almost absence of a background makes the subject pop more, which allows the audience to focus on the details and expressions.

BOTH

- Both artists used the facial expressions of the subjects to showcase the emotion in the piece.
- Both pieces have a smooth and flowing sequence of lines and shapes rather than jagged or ridged lines. This helps the viewer ease into the piece with a calmness.

MYSELF

- Used a facial expression of calmness and happiness.
- Used a less dramatic light effect, less emotion coming from shadows or light on the subject.
- The background gray is a bit darker than the ones in Chuck's work. This allows the subject to blend more with the background, making it easier to look at.