

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

## Banksy pranks Sotheby's with self-destructing art

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*Banksy's "Girl with Balloon" self-destructed after selling for \$1.4 million. Image credit: Sotheby's*

By STAFF REPORTS

After auction house Sotheby's sold a work by street artist Banksy for \$1.4 million, the contemporary art sale turned into a spectacle as a hidden trick was revealed.

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After the gavel hit to end the sale of the work, a shredder positioned within the frame sliced the painting. Despite seemingly destroying his own art as a statement, Banksy's move may have made the painting worth more.

### Painting prank

Banksy's "Girl with Balloon" is a recreation of a design the anonymous artist originally spray-painted onto a wall in London. The copy, spray-painted onto canvas, similarly depicts a girl reaching towards a heart-shaped red balloon that is floating away.

Sotheby's said that the owner acquired the painting from Banksy directly in 2006.

At Sotheby's London auction, the painting was sold for 1.042 million pounds, tying the artist's previous record.

In a short video shared on Banksy's social media after the sale, he shows the process of installing the shredder into the frame. He explains via text that he included the self-destructing device in case it was ever put up for auction.

A secret videographer at the auction also captured the shredding and the crowd reaction as the canvas was sliced.

[View this post on Instagram](#)

. "The urge to destroy is also a creative urge" - Picasso

A post shared by Banksy (@banksy) on Oct 6, 2018 at 10:09am PDT

### *Instagram post from Banksy*

The artist captioned the video with a Picasso quote, which reads, "The urge to destroy is also a creative urge."

While the painting has been shredded, some experts believe that the artwork is actually worth more due to the stunt, which gives it a significant place in art history.

Some are speculating whether or not Sotheby's was in on the stunt. The auction house has denied any involvement in the prank.

In a statement given to [CNN](#), Sotheby's said, ""It is increasingly common in the Contemporary art world for artists to deem their frames integral to the artwork, as was the case in this instance. The certificate from the artist's studio for the present work states that the frame is 'integral to the piece.'"

Sotheby's also notes that when it asked about removing the frame to catalog the piece, it was expressly told not to.

According to a recent report from Barnebys, watchmaker Rolex is a dominating force in regards to art, antique and collectible online auction search alerts worldwide.

The research shows that branding is vital in the world of auctions, as consumers will follow beloved labels and artists no matter the price point. While watch brands such as Rolex continue to control online searches, fine art names such as Picasso, Banksy and Koons also have strong presences ([see story](#)).