FILM CAPSULE: Exit Through The Gift Shop (Banksy, 2010): USA, UK

Description

ring the Santa Barbara International Film Festival.

Exit Through The Gift Shop, a documentary film about the underground street art world, formerly known as graffiti, tells the story of a French-American, second-hand clothier, Thierry Guetta, and his drive to explore the underground street art movement. Tabbed as the biggest counter-cultural movement since punk rock, the underground movementâ??s street artists were using stickers, stencil, markers, spray paints in creating their pieces.

The film opens to a catchy pop tune by Richard Hawley, â??Tonight the Streets Are Ours,â?• a tune reminiscent of a Frankie Valle number.

Guetta quickly begins telling his story. He buys lots of second hand and/or irregular clothing and resales them at upwards of 800% markups.Guettaâ??s

Thierry Guetta

appearance, mannerisms, and speech establish him, without a doubt, as a huckster. Soon, Guetta delves into his experiences with a video camera and the dawning of the underground street art movement.

Guettaâ??s cousin, known as â??Space Invader,â?• for his tiles that resemble the character from the video game by the same name, allows Guettato record Space Invaderâ??s work. Along the way Guetta is introduced to other street artists such as Neckface, Swoon, Cheez Coma and Shephard Fairey, the worldâ??s most prolific graffiti artist for his use of pro wrestlingâ??s 7â??4â?³, 450 pound Andre â??the Giantâ??sâ?• mug on a piece of work with OBEY plastered upon walls everywhere. Shephard Fairey also takes credit for the iconic Obama image.

Fairey allows Guetta to accompany him around the world as they place art work in major metropolitan cities of New York and Paris and to document the art work that more often than not is gone the next morning. Guetta envisions making the definitive documentary of the street art movement and likes the element of danger that came with climbing illegally to tops of buildings and defacing the buildingsâ?? walls.

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Throughout Guetta and Shephard Faireyâ??s exploits one name kept surfacing â?? Banksy. In a â??Who is John Galtâ?? manner, the world begin asking, â??Who is Banksy?â?• According to Guetta, Shephard Fairey called one day out of the blue and informed Guettathat Banksy was â??hereâ?•. Guetta abruptly dropped what he was doing and sped to meet the elusive Banksy.

Guetta immediately put himself at Banksyâ??s disposal escorting Banksy to all the Los Angeles hotspots. Impressed, Banksy invited Guetta to London, England, as Banksy wanted to begin â??showingâ?• his work. Guetta accepted and captured Banksyâ??s telephone booth â??modificationâ?• and counterfeit Princess Diana currency during a three day art show on skid row featuring a painted elephant (which garnered media attention due to animal rights activists). Street art was now a hot commodity. And a Banksy piece was a welcomed piece in any modern art collection.

Meanwhile, Guetta was creating his own identifiable image titled Mr. Brainwash. Here the film shifts as Guetta is inept at filmmaking. Banksy talks Guetta into parting with the street art footage so a real documentary can be made. The remainder of the film deals with Guetta creating questionable works of art and his wheeler-dealer antics with his own Mr. Brainwash, â??Life is Beautifulâ?• art show, while Banksy provides insightful, and often comedic commentary.

In my opinion the film is a must see. Banksy appears hooded and speaks in a distorted voice in *Exit Through the Gift Shop, a* hood-wink name for this film. Recommended.

Category

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