# Banksy’s Port Talbot mural sparks enduring cultural revival despite removal



Christmas came exceptionally early for the residents of Port Talbot in 2018 when the elusive street artist Banksy gifted the town with “Season’s Greetings.” This intriguing mural, painted on the wall of a garage, seems at first glance to depict a child joyfully catching snowflakes. However, upon closer inspection, the snowflakes are revealed to be ashes, a poignant commentary on the surrounding steelworks and perhaps a metaphor for the town’s industrial legacy.

The arrival of this artwork prompted a wave of attention—both welcome and unwelcome—leading to a mixture of excitement and fear within the local community. The verbatim theatre piece, *Port Talbot Gotta Banksy*, written by Tracy Harris and Paul Jenkins, captures this multifaceted experience. Drawing from over 150 hours of interviews with local residents, the production explores how Banksy’s intervention highlighted the challenges and resilience of a working-class community caught in the crosshairs of both global market forces and the art world’s whims.

Directed by Jenkins, with striking design from Cai Dyfan and sensitive lighting by Cara Hood, the performance utilises a unique technique. The performers listen to the interviews live through earpieces, allowing for a nuanced delivery that imbues the narrative with authenticity. The audience witnesses as the actors both listen and respond to these testimonies, reinforcing the idea that these voices, often marginalised, deserve to be amplified. Despite the genuine emotional weight of the production, its reliance on recorded journalistic reports generates a sense of narrative drag, hinting at deeper stories that remain unspoken.

The mural became a significant landmark, attracting thousands of visitors to Port Talbot, drawn not only by its artistic appeal but also by its socio-political message. Unfortunately, in early 2022, after nearly four years of display, the mural was removed due to concerns over vandalism and the challenges of preserving it in its original location. John Brandler, the artwork's owner, expressed sadness at the decision, noting the council’s difficulties and the high costs associated with maintaining it in Port Talbot. A candle-lit vigil held by local residents marked its departure, showcasing the community's genuine affection for the piece and its impact on local culture.

The legacy of *Season’s Greetings* continues to resonate even after the mural’s removal. Local artists have taken inspiration from Banksy, sparking a vibrant street art community that reflects a newfound appreciation for public art in the town. As noted in later reports, this cultural revival has attracted continued interest, offering a fresh sense of identity rooted in creative expression rather than industry alone.

The impact of Banksy’s work on Port Talbot serves as a powerful reminder of how art can lift communities, attract visitors, and foster dialogue about socio-economic issues. Yet, it also raises questions about the sustainability of such interventions and the fragility of local culture in the face of larger political and economic tides. In its most stirring moments, *Port Talbot Gotta Banksy* becomes not just a celebration of resilience but also a call to action to continue telling the stories of those often sidelined, ensuring that their voices are not stifled in the pursuit of global acclaim.

At The Plaza in Port Talbot from 15-17 May, and subsequently touring Milford Haven, Swansea, and Wrexham, this production aims to remind all who witness it of the stories that lie beneath the surface of public art—stories that intertwine the threads of personal and collective identity, resilience, and the enduring impact of one child’s snowy folly against the backdrop of an industrial landscape.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: 1
2. Paragraph 2: 1
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6. Paragraph 6: 7
7. Paragraph 7: 1

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2025/may/12/port-talbot-gotta-banksy-review-tour-wales> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/banksy-seasons-greetings-port-talbot-23019945> - In February 2022, Banksy's 'Season's Greetings' mural was removed from Port Talbot after being displayed for nearly four years. The artwork, depicting a child catching snowflakes that are actually ash from a fire, was transported to an undisclosed storage location. The owner, John Brandler, expressed sadness over the move, citing the council's decision and the high costs associated with keeping the piece in the town. The mural had become a significant attraction, drawing thousands of visitors to Port Talbot. ([walesonline.co.uk](https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/banksy-seasons-greetings-port-talbot-23019945?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-46617742> - In December 2018, Banksy confirmed his authorship of the 'Season's Greetings' mural in Port Talbot through a video on his Instagram account. The artwork, appearing on a garage wall, depicts a child catching snowflakes that are revealed to be ash from a fire upon closer inspection. The garage owner, Ian Lewis, expressed concern over potential vandalism and the impact of the artwork on his property. ([bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-46617742?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://news.sky.com/story/banksys-seasons-greetings-to-leave-wales-after-vandals-attack-artwork-12535906> - In February 2022, Banksy's 'Season's Greetings' mural was removed from Port Talbot due to concerns over vandalism. The artwork, which had been displayed for nearly four years, was transported to a temporary storage facility before being loaned to a cultural institution for public display. The owner, John Brandler, cited the need to preserve the artwork for future generations and the challenges posed by its location in Port Talbot. ([news.sky.com](https://news.sky.com/story/banksys-seasons-greetings-to-leave-wales-after-vandals-attack-artwork-12535906?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/port-talbot-banksy-seasons-greetings-22985430> - In January 2022, Port Talbot residents held a candle-lit vigil to mark the departure of Banksy's 'Season's Greetings' mural. The artwork, which had attracted international attention and tens of thousands of visitors, was set to be moved from its location in Port Talbot to an undisclosed site. The vigil was organized by ARTwalk Port Talbot, a community street art project, to celebrate the mural's legacy and discuss its impact on the town. ([itv.com](https://www.itv.com/news/wales/2022-01-28/it-leaves-a-true-legacy-port-talbot-says-goodbye-to-banksy-mural?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cerrz8edyd0o> - In July 2024, BBC News reported on the lasting impact of Banksy's 'Season's Greetings' mural in Port Talbot. Despite its removal in 2022, the artwork sparked a vibrant street art community in the town. Local artists, inspired by Banksy's piece, have created numerous murals, contributing to the town's cultural revival and attracting visitors interested in street art. The mural's influence continues to be felt, fostering a new appreciation for public art in Port Talbot. ([bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cerrz8edyd0o?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.itv.com/news/wales/2022-01-28/it-leaves-a-true-legacy-port-talbot-says-goodbye-to-banksy-mural> - In January 2022, Port Talbot residents held a candle-lit vigil to mark the departure of Banksy's 'Season's Greetings' mural. The artwork, which had attracted international attention and tens of thousands of visitors, was set to be moved from its location in Port Talbot to an undisclosed site. The vigil was organized by ARTwalk Port Talbot, a community street art project, to celebrate the mural's legacy and discuss its impact on the town. ([itv.com](https://www.itv.com/news/wales/2022-01-28/it-leaves-a-true-legacy-port-talbot-says-goodbye-to-banksy-mural?utm_source=openai))