

BANKSY JESUS

I

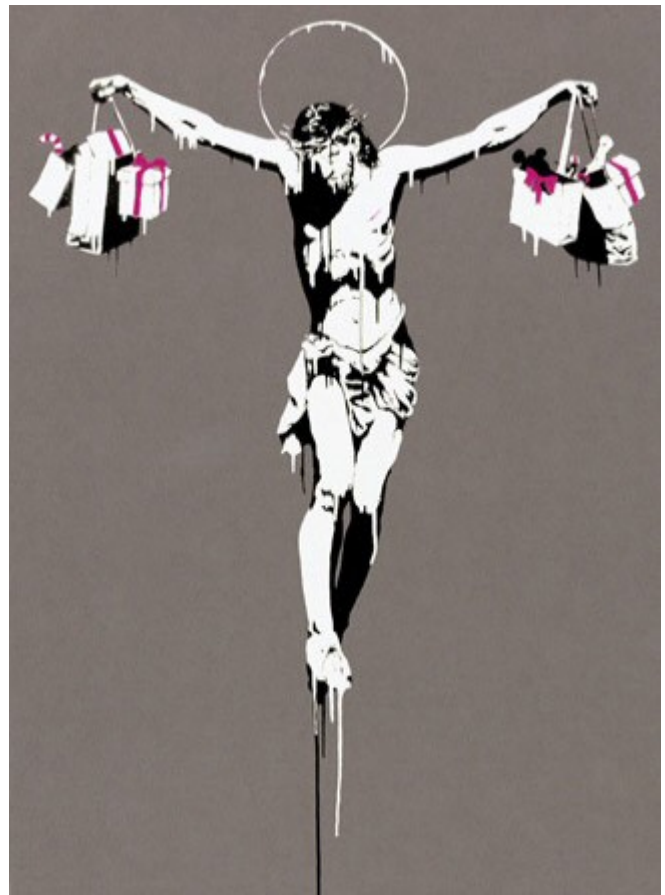
This document is a painting, I think it has been made using a stencil. The artist is Banksy, a British graffiti artist.

D

The picture is one of the most recognizable images in popular culture – Jesus on the cross; except he is holding bags of gifts.

A

The aim of the document is to mock the commercialisation of religious celebrations like Christmas, but more importantly to show the hypocritical relationship between capitalist consumer culture and religious values. The artist also seeks to criticise Christians who contradict their own values by being greedy and over-consuming, companies who exploit religion in order to make money, and people in general who use serious religious holidays as an excuse to consume.



H

When most people think of Christmas or Easter, they think about eating lots of food, spending lots of money, and receiving gifts. However, I'm not sure people realise that this is actually quite a recent invention. 100 years ago, Christmas was a more strict religious time. I think the artist is trying to show how our values have changed – before, religion was very important, but now religious celebrations have become an excuse for people to be greedy and selfish. This is especially ironic given that the Christian faith tells us that being selfless and giving to those in need is very important.

O

Obviously this is a very controversial image, and would probably shock a lot of people. However, images of Christ are used all the time in order to make money – by jewellery companies and companies that make Christmas cards for example. If it's ok to buy a Christmas card with a picture of the baby Jesus on it, or a necklace showing Christ on the cross, then I don't think we can really say that this painting is morally wrong. If people accept the mix of business with religion, then why shouldn't other people be free to denounce it?

B

This image also makes me wonder whether or not it is always necessary to shock people in order to make them think about the world around them. Sometimes I think it is necessary to remind people of the truth using images like this, but I also think that artists might sometimes produce images with a "shock factor" in order to increase their own wealth and fame.