

I'm the accidental owner of a Banksy

NEW YORK

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I'm the Accidental Owner of a Banksy

By Cara Tabachnick | 10/18/2013 at 3:04 PM



▲ Banksy's painting on the Tabachniks' building

“Are you going to be rich?” That is the first question people ask me upon finding out that in the morning hours of October 17, the famed street artist Banksy painted a mural on the side of a building my family owns in East Williamsburg.

The truth is — at the end of an exhausting day filled with phone calls talking to lawyers, security companies, art experts, and reporters — I have no idea what it means. There is no rule-book when one of the most famous artists in the world decides to drop his work into your life.

The painting on our building was the seventeenth piece of art to appear during Banksy's monthlong tour in New York. Each day, the shadowy London-based graffiti artist leaves behind a work of art somewhere in the city. The two prior days had witnessed the appearance of a small silhouette of the Twin Towers spray-painted on a wall in Tribeca and a sculpture of an expectant Ronald McDonald getting his shoes shined by a real human being in the South Bronx.

Mayor Bloomberg¹ has promised to paint over any Banksy pieces on city property and has labeled him a vandal. “You running up to somebody's property or public property and defacing it is not my definition of art,” he told the reporters on Wednesday. The NYPD has promised to charge² him — if they can find him.

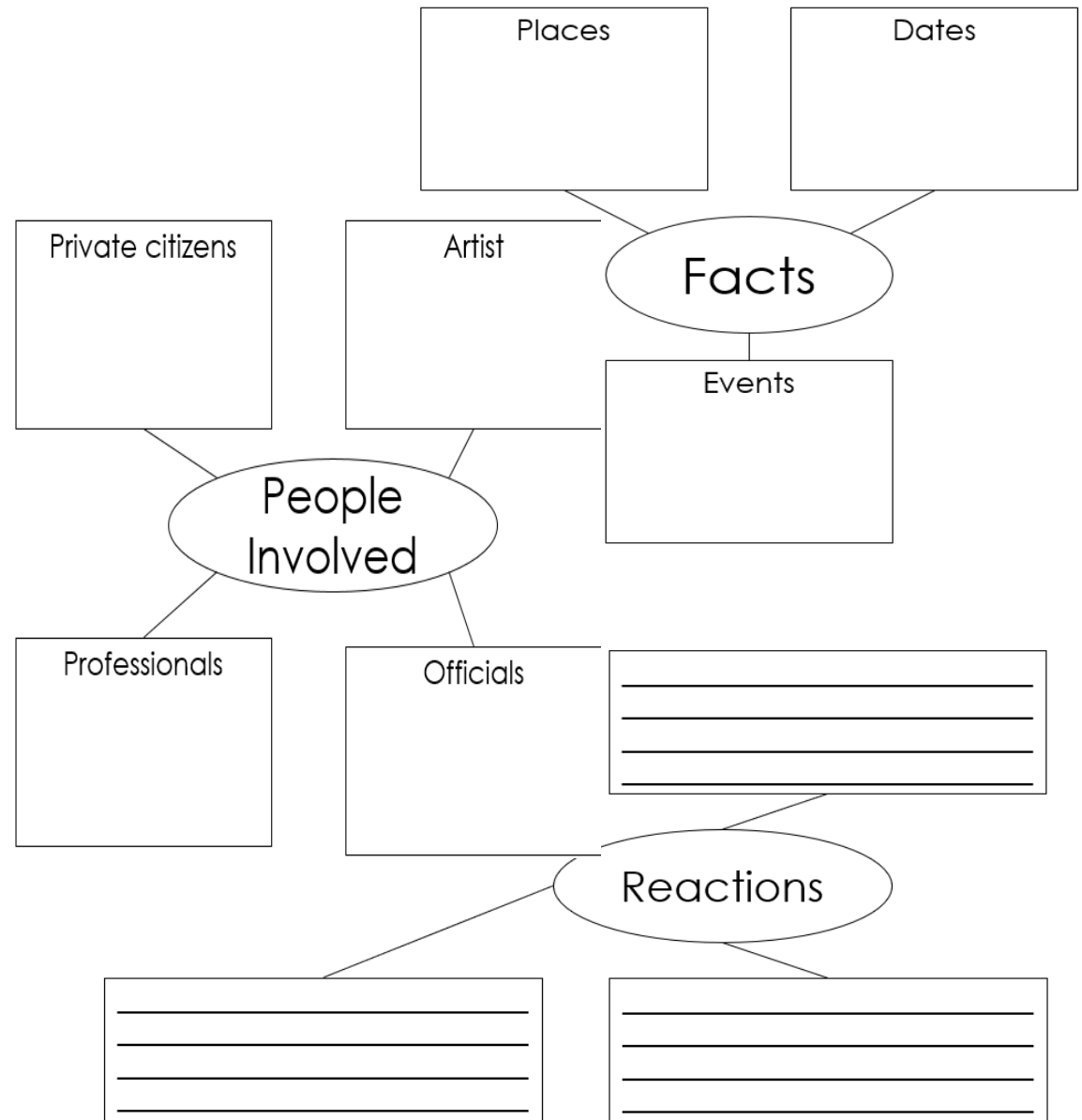
I had been following the Banksy phenomenon with mild interest (my husband is a fan), but had no idea what was in store for our family when my father texted me yesterday morning, “Banksy painted our building last night and a huge crowd is forming. What should we do?” (...)

Should we preserve it immediately? Do we have a public duty to do so? How does one preserve a piece of art like this? How do we control the crowds with gawkers and fans of the elusive³ artist, many of them foreign tourists, who were suddenly standing outside the building? Will it make us money? (...)

It's hard to know what the future holds. In England, where many of his pieces survive, buildings have gained value and local governments take great pride in his work. As the cult of Banksy grows, that could mean tour groups coming around to look at the painting. It is hard for our family to envision busloads of tourists being dropped off at our front door every day. But it is a possibility.

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Read the article and pick out the following information.



1. mayor of the City of New York (2002 – 2013) – 2. to officially accuse somebody of a crime – 3. hard to find or capture