

Illegal Abraham Lincoln artwork planned for inauguration in NYC

On Inauguration Day, artist Ben Turnbull will paste 1/6/21 in NYC, an unauthorized artwork dissecting nationalism, propaganda, conspiracy, and societal collapse

NEW YORK CITY, NY, UNITED STATES, January 16, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On January 20, 2025, coinciding with the 60th Presidential Inauguration Ceremony of Donald Trump, artist [Ben Turnbull](#), in collaboration with Candidate Q, will unveil their guerrilla intervention, 1/6/21, in New York City.

This wildposting showcases Turnbull and Q's latest artwork, 1/6/21, a provocative piece depicting Abraham Lincoln's statue set against a riotous backdrop of contemporary American iconography. Lincoln is depicted with clown-like makeup and shamanic horns—a nightmare version of the intruder of the Capitol raid—while a popcorn bucket rests on his lap and a crushed Coca-Cola can is held in his hand. These elements suggest a passive spectatorship in the face of societal collapse.



At the base of the statue lies a chaotic, shadowy mass of comic book corpses and zombies, piled like a grotesque human rockery. Among them, a mutant, faceless figure wields a hammer emblazoned with a swastika, violently pounding into the debris—a visceral representation of destruction and hate.

To the bottom right, two children stand with Captain America, gazing in awe and amazement at the statue. This trio mirrors the wonderment we are made to feel as schoolchildren in museum settings, yet here, the children confront a dystopian future shaped by chaos and disillusionment. The contrast of innocence and the grotesque highlights the sobering reality of their future.

Turnbull's work blurs the line between homage and critique, addressing America's historical and present struggles with nationalism, propaganda, and cultural mythology. The date of January 6, 2021, is critical to the artwork's context. It coincides with the storming of the U.S. Capitol, a day



The old cliché of art holding a mirror to reality has long gone—Q took a hammer to that mirror and smashed it to pieces—all that remains now are sharp fragments that'll cut and scar us all."

Ben Turnbull

that exposed deep divisions and chaos within the American political landscape. Turnbull reflects on how his artworks, created from 2022, have become an unsettling reality, with the MAGA phenomenon and the resurgence of extremist ideologies echoing across the political landscape.

In its deliberate and provocative presentation, 1/6/21 becomes an act of defiance, with Turnbull considering the audience's reactions an integral part of the performance. Acts of defacement or critique are anticipated, symbolically

echoing the chaos and discord of January 6, 2021.

Turnbull draws inspiration from Alan Parker's adaptation of Pink Floyd's *The Wall* and Gerald Scarfe's haunting animation, particularly Bob Geldof's iconic scene in which his character smashes a hotel room and uses the fragments to create a chaotic, surreal collage. Turnbull describes this moment as "an origin story," reflecting the transformation of destruction into creation, a theme deeply embedded in his new series.

Turnbull's adoption of the enigmatic persona Q is a bold reinvention after 25 years of established practice. As Candidate Q, Turnbull embraces raw experimentation, shedding his established identity to engage more directly with the volatile themes of his work. Describing his relationship with Q as "a monkey to Q's organ grinder," Turnbull pushes the boundaries of his process and style.

The artwork is part of a larger project that will culminate in a major show, *Rebirth of a Nation*, in London from March 24 to April 10, 2025.

About the Artists

Ben Turnbull is a British contemporary artist renowned for his provocative collage artworks that critically examine American culture and politics. Born in Isleworth, London, Turnbull's fascination with Americana began in his youth, influenced by American television and culture. His work often addresses themes such as nationalism, propaganda, and cultural mythology.

Turnbull's meticulous craftsmanship reflects his background as a fabricator, where he honed his skills in creating detailed and exacting works. Over his career, Turnbull has exhibited worldwide, including retrospectives of his work at The Lancaster Institute for Contemporary Art (2012) and Saatchi Gallery (2022), as well as critical and commercial success with his *American History* volumes at Bermondsey Project Space, VOLTA New York, and various London galleries.

Candidate Q is the enigmatic alter ego of Ben Turnbull, created as a vehicle for exploring raw, unfiltered artistic expression. Born out of frustration with the current socio-political climate, Q

embodies the role of an anti-hero, a symbolic challenger to the myths of power and nationalism that dominate cultural narratives. This persona marks a significant departure from Turnbull's established 25-year practice, embracing anonymity and guerrilla-style tactics to provoke dialogue and reflection.

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