

# Shepard Fairey

## Graphic Designer, born 1970

**Frank Shepard Fairey** was born on February 15, 1970 in South Carolina, USA. He is an American contemporary graphic designer and illustrator who emerged from the skateboarding scene. Armed only with a few sheets of photocopied sticker paper, Fairey began his art career on the street poles and abandoned buildings of Rhode Island. His work became widely known in the 2008 U.S. presidential election, specifically his Barack Obama "Hope" poster. The Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston calls him one of today's best known and most influential street artists.



'Hope' poster  
Shepard Fairey, 2008



Fairey's image enlarged to mural scale, on the side of a building in Denver, Colorado.

Although Fairey's name has been known in underground art circles for decades, and his work has been commissioned by everyone from hip-hop group The Black-Eyed Peas to Pepsi, it is his image of the presidential hopeful, Barack Obama, that has catapulted him into the mainstream.

Fairey's street art is widely seen as a new and positive replacement for the graffiti or vandalism of the past.

In February 2008, Fairey received a letter of thanks from Obama for his contribution to the presidential campaign, although his poster was never used officially by Obama or his team, as there were countless copyright issues over the owner of the original photograph Shepard used for his image. In fact, Fairey has often been accused of plagiarising other artists' works for his own benefit.

Barack Obama however, wrote to Fairey personally:

*I would like to thank you for using your talent in support of my campaign. The political messages involved in your work have encouraged Americans to believe they can change the status-quo.*

*Your images have a profound effect on people, whether seen in a gallery or on a stop sign. I am privileged to be a part of your artwork and proud to have your support. I wish you continued success and creativity.— Barack Obama, February 22, 2008.*

Fairey has now bought his own billboards, onto which he pastes his latest art works for the world to see.



'Non-Toxic Revolution'  
Shepard Fairey

Fairey has recently worked with the breast cancer group, *The Keep A Breast Foundation*. Their efforts to keep the public informed about the dangers of certain lifestyle choices have been helped along by Fairey's involvement.

Their goal is to inform and educate young people about the dangers of toxic chemicals in our environment and food supply and therefore the link to major illnesses later in life.

Fairey often uses a screen-printing technique rather than paint to achieve his very bold, sometimes basic images.

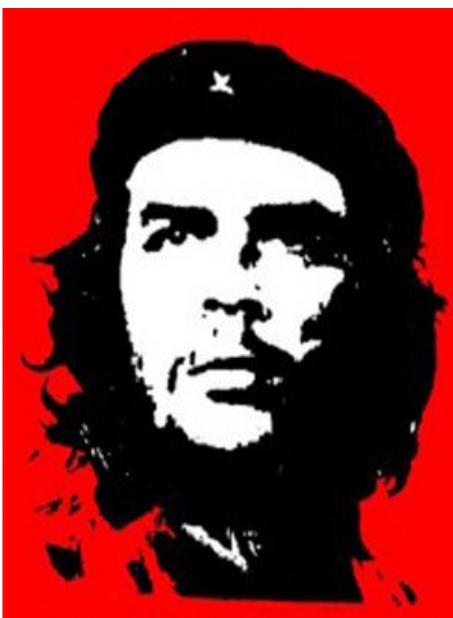
Sources: <http://www.avclub.com/articles/shepard-fairey,28943/>

<http://arthistory.about.com/od/namesff/p/fairey.htm>



'Obey'  
Shepard Fairey

With posters such as 'Obey' (above), Fairey tries to get people to question their obedience to the State, to fulfilling expectations placed on us by society. Much of his work is therefore political in nature, and he has 'borrowed' many iconic images from the past, such as the famous 'Che Guevara' image, by Alberto Korda (see below).



The world-famous Che Guevara image, by Alberto Korda.

