

## Fourteenth St. Jerome Translation Contest

Sponsored by the Conference Management Service of the United Nations Office at Vienna

---

### English

*Honourable mention – Nuria Diez del Corral Dominguez*

#### **Guernica in Banksy's shredder**

No matter what the vanguards thought, science progresses but art does not. The perfect illustration of this fact is that we continue to confuse value and price. In fact, we have recently witnessed two art-related incidents headlined by that crucial driving force behind the contemporary aesthetic: money. The first relates to the fee Picasso charged the Spanish Republic to paint Guernica. The other was when Banksy doubled the price of one of his pieces- Girl with Balloon- by shredding it while at auction, thus proving that, like outlaws, some paintings are worth more damaged than whole.

Two decades ago, the influential scholar Rosalind Krauss published a book entitled 'The Picasso Papers'. Although her essay is primarily an analysis of the collages created by this man from Malaga, it is built on a larger premise. Namely that, as the world was moving away from the gold standard and the monetary system was becoming an increasingly abstract concept, art was compounding abstraction by severing the bonds between representation and reality. When the latest edition of Antonio Saura's pamphlet 'Contra el Guernica' was published by the Reina Sofía Museum, Félix de Azúa was asked to furnish the preface. In it, he dedicated three pages to summing up experts' conflicting interpretations of the mural. Depending on who you ask, the bull could represent Spain or fascism, brute strength or Picasso himself, defense of the weak or “a primal and sexual energy”.

The rupture between art and reality- as well as the former's new links to economics- has paid dividends for auction houses and bequeathed hefty tomes to libraries. One of these was published by Lawrence Weschler- editor of The New Yorker- in 1999, just one year after Krauss published hers. It is entitled 'Boggs: A Comedy of Values' and it recounts the adventures and misadventures of Stephen Boggs, whose art practice involved drawing paper-money bills and, more importantly, trying to have them accepted as legal tender. When he succeeded, he was fined by the IRS. True to form, he tried to pay the fine with his handmade money. Boggs, who passed away a few months ago, delighted in telling the story that the phrase “In God We Trust” was added to dollar bills only when they lost the backing of gold reserves.

### **Fourteenth St. Jerome Translation Contest**

Sponsored by the Conference Management Service of the United Nations Office at Vienna

The true power of a modern creator- be they God or an artist- does not rest in giving life to their creation, but in taking it away. Creating a painting is a fairly easy task; museums are overflowing with them. But not just anyone can destroy them. Not even halfway in order to later recreate them, which is precisely what Banksy (whose name sounds like that of a children's My First Bank) chose to do, in the ultimate speculative gamble. Iconoclasm is a form of fetishism: the prestige surrounding icons has always been shaped by the attacks they have suffered. Ever since they removed the bulletproof glass that shielded it, Guernica has not been the same. On that day, for better or worse, its price increased but it lost part of its value. On that day, it became 'a Picasso'.