



# GAVIN TURK

Introduction by SARAH FEENEY  
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*Gavin Turk, one of the original Young British Artists, a group of visual artists that emerged in the 1980s, is no stranger to travel. Kick-starting his career with the notorious installation 'Cave' for his later-refused postgraduate degree at the Royal College of Art, Turk was soon brought to fame by Charles Saatchi. Since then he has showcased his work at exhibitions across the globe. It's fitting, then, that he is involved in onefinestay's programme of creative residencies, which invites artists to apply for free breaks in amazing homes around the world. Newly launched in London, New York, Paris and LA, onefinestay promotes both travel and art by asking artists to donate a unique piece of work for their collection in return for their upscale accommodation. Having recently visited Paris as part of onefinestay's launch, we caught up with Gavin Turk to discuss life as an artist and what makes onefinestay so unique...*

***As one of the Young British Artists, a group that helped to revitalise the British art scene in the 1980s, how do you feel that your background has influenced your work?***

There are cultural traits that I acknowledge in my work in a clichéd sense. For instance I've done a lot of work with fish and chips, cups of tea and waxwork museums – things that are rather touristic ideas of England. As an artist your work is often looked at in a culturally specific way, so in some ways it is a reflection of its culture.

***Although you've been inspired by your native British culture, you're currently working with onefinestay, which offers artists the opportunity to seek inspiration in other countries. What excites you most about this project?***

I went on a trip to Paris in November to see the Paris Photo Exhibition at the Grand Palais and stayed in one of the onefinestay apartments. I like the idea of this new form of artist private residency, rather than more institutionalised residency programmes. For me it's an interesting opportunity to think about being in an alternative culture.

***It seems that onefinestay is a great concept for people who love to travel, is travel something that inspires you as an artist?***

Travelling is important for trying to think about your own cultural identity. Sometimes you need to go away to get closer to where you are.

***Do you think this is true of your own experiences?***

There is definitely a point at which, when I do travel, I find I get a better idea of how much of my work is being shaped by my environment.

***As a regular traveller, do you have any items that are always in your suitcase?***

It is interesting how often I arrive somewhere and realise I haven't actually brought any paper and pencils with me and then have to go to a local art shop. But that can be quite an interesting process in itself. Recently I was in Istanbul and I went to a hardware store where there were boxes of coloured dust. They told me they were for paint – just buy a base colour and mix the powder with it. It was incredible. Travelling gives you visions of how people create art in different ways.

***With your work being exhibited internationally, you've travelled across the globe. Do you have a favourite city to visit?***

I really like Istanbul; it's such a melting pot.

***What would you recommend visiting there?***

I like going to the Taksim area, and although it's quite touristic there are some great new galleries, particularly one called Salt and another called Arter.

***Taking into account all of your artistic and travel experiences, has there been a highlight to your career so far?***

I recently completed a big public sculpture [the Nail] near St Paul's. There's a Barbecoa restaurant, which is one of Jamie Oliver's restaurants, and looks out over the Nail sculpture. I had the fortune of meeting Jamie and when I told him that I was the artist who made the sculpture he said: "Oh, the kebab!" Well he would do that; turn it into some sort of food.

*For more information on onefinestay and their creative residency programmes visit [onefinestay.com](http://onefinestay.com)*