

# WHY VISUAL ART MUST CLAIM THE STREETS!

By Artist Jens Galschiøt



Left side: 'The Hunger March' - demonstration during COP15 in Copenhagen.  
Right side: Refugee Sculptures and Freedom To Pollute - at social summit, COP21 in Paris

Dear

*NGOs, activists, musicians and actors mobilize and cry out in favour of social justice. And as always the esteemed visual artists are barely heard from.*

**In a world of unprecedented gap between rich and poor**, and the darkest political landscape in decades we see massive public response in the streets. Meanwhile we find the esteemed visual artists in exclusive art galleries, caring for the world only when it is in line with the established art world or the funds that support the exhibitions.

**Some visual artists** do have a critical view on the world order and social injustice. And we do see MoMA exchange Picasso with Somali paintings, while Documenta14 opens in Athens as a symbol of the social and cultural clash between east and west. Clearly these are steps in the right direction, but if art is seen as a tool to change the world, it is far from enough.

**The progressive behaviour** of the esteemed art world is often wrapped in a veil of exclusivity and elitism, reserved for the ruling class and isolated from 'ordinary' people. Usually the art works can only be found in fancy exhibition sites and the pieces are woven into a range of artsy words that are only understood by high society's intellectuals. 'Real' art is made for 'art's sake' and has no opinion and no direct purpose. It can be interpreted any way you want, as long as the right fancy words are used. To *really* understand art today one has to have the right education and know the right vocabulary. In this way the esteemed art excludes ordinary people, thus adding to the increased populist tendencies that have led to Trump.

**The established art world as a whole has locked itself in an ivory tower** dazed by fine wines, expensive suits and visits by the societal elite which provide the funding. While the art world might

comment on migration, social injustice etc. it almost never leaves the gallery facades and take a real stand to change the world. The significance of visual art for ordinary people, 'social rebellion' and societal development as a whole is insignificant - or very small at best.

**There are progressivity and social artists** within the esteemed art world. But artists that actually leave the art institutions and bring their art to street, or take a real part in the public outcry, are despised and excluded by the art elite and the intellectual upper class. With a few bright exceptions, like Banksy.

**An art piece can say more than a thousand words** and art could be an important element in the social struggles around the world. Therefore we need to bring back and support public and social art.

**We need more visual art in the protests, giant statues in front of the White House** and innovative artists that use their art to show new angles on reality and prevent populism. Art can make difficult discussions comprehensible to the public, but this will never happen with the present reactionary attitude.

Let it be clear that the art institutions and the esteemed artists play an important and needed role in the art world. The problem is that esteemed art almost never leave the art institutions and get down to street level.

*Best Regards*

*Jens Galschiøt – Artist, and chair in the NGO 'Art In Defence Of Humanism' (AIDOH)*



**In the Name of God.** - About Catholic influence against contraception and sexual education in 3rd world countries.



**Freedom To Pollute.** 6 meter tall response to western consumption.



**Survival of The Fattest.** European Justitia (the goddess of justice). *"The man is sinking under my weight. I will do anything I can to help him. Except stepping down from his back"*

## Galschiot: Work chronology (from [Wikipedia](#) )

### Bigger projects/Sculpture-groups

- **Cocoon** (1992): 4 meter high 12 meter in diameter, sculpture consisting of 22 shields in rustproof steel with bronze-faces breaking through the steel. First exhibition at the international kunsthall på verdensudstillingen [expo92](#) in Sevilla in Spain. [\[23\]](#)
- **My inner beast** (1993): concretesculpture 230 cm high . 22 sculptures were put up in the public space in European cities, as a [Street art](#) action that should set focus on increasing putrefaction in Europe. [\[24\]](#)
- **The Little Prince** (1995)
- **Elysium**, The occult temple (1995): A 500m2 installation that was used to perform theater/music and the danceperformance Elysium in. [\[25\]](#)
- **The Silent Death** (1995): Street art happening with the hanging of 750 doll corpses and distribution of 13.000.000 "banknotes" under the social topmeeting (FN) in Copenhagen 1995. [\[26\]](#)[\[27\]](#)
- **Pillar of Shame** (1996 - 201?): An 8 meter high sculpture is put up to mark a crime. The sculpture is an obelisk formed of human bodies and has been put up in Hong Kong, Mexico and Brazil.
- **Young People in Glass Tubes:** (1997) 3,5 m high 15 m in diameter. An art installation on the town hall square, where 6 glass containers with water in (as kind of a laboratory cobs) containing 6 young people corpse (in silicone) - The installation took the temperature on the youths mental state in Copenhagen. [\[28\]](#)[\[29\]](#)
- **The Earth is Poisonous** (1997): 20.000 m2. Art installation with 2500 white crosses, placed in Odense. As some kind of time image, 500 high school students wrote their opinion about what they would do personally would do to counter the environment problems. [\[30\]](#)[\[31\]](#)
- **The Messenger** (2000): 5 meter high cobber sculpture of a female messenger figure wearing cape, with computer controlled light boards in the background. The lead sculpture under Jubilee 2000 campaign in Denmark, attended in the world bank's demonstrations in Prague and stood in front the main entrance to environment in Copenhagen,(cop15). [\[32\]](#)[\[33\]](#)
- **Hands of Stone** (2000): 2000 m2. Art installation with 3,000 unique children's hands in concrete. Cooperation with Amnesty about child soldiers. [\[34\]](#)[\[35\]](#)
- **The Tenth Plague** (2001): Art performance with thousands of real dollar bills pasted on 10 canvases on 2x1 meter, painted on with human blood. Protest together with "doctors without boards" against the pharmaceutical industries lawsuit against South Africa about copy medicine. [\[36\]](#)[\[37\]](#)
- **Den yderste stilhed** (2001): 12x 6 meter in copper/wood. Performance/set design for a play by the Brutalia theatre and Jonathan Paul Cook about [Ted Kaczynski](#), also known as the Unabomber. It now works as a stage at Galleri Galschiot. [\[38\]](#)[\[39\]](#)
- **Freedom to Pollute** (2002): A 6 meter high Statue of Liberty with a smoking torch that created a dialogue about the Western civilizations individual thoughts about freedom. Used at environmental manifestations in Denmark, Luxemburg, Rostock, Sweden and many other places. [\[40\]](#)[\[41\]](#)
- **Survival of the Fattest (sculpture)** (2002): Survival of the Fattest. A 3 meter high copper sculpture of an enormous woman figure ([Justitia](#)) who is sitting on the back of a man.
- **The Hunger March** (2002): 170 cm high copper sculpture installation, consisting of 27 starving boys. The sculptures has participated in many manifestations around the world.
- **The Nightmare** (2002): 20x20 meter, Performance/art installation with hundreds of sculptures, among other things the Fenris wolves blowing 8 meter big fireballs, inspired by Hitler's architect Albert Speer and Martin Luther King's speech "I Have a Dream". Put up at Roskilde Festival

2005 and other places in Denmark. [\[42\]\[43\]](#)

- **The Storyteller's Fountain** (2005): Big H.C. Andersen sculpture, put up at the Townhall Square in Odense 2005-2011. The sculpture was drowned in Odense Harbor in 2011, during a great protest march against Odense municipality. [\[44\]\[45\]](#)
- **Mad Cow Disease** (2005): Art installation, a 12 meter high balancing weight with a stuffed cow in one of the bowls, and 5 hunger boys in the other, put up at the Town Hall Square in Copenhagen, and at the WTO meeting in Hong Kong. [\[46\]\[47\]](#)
- **Golden calf** (2005): 8 meter high copper sculpture of a golden calf, coated in 24 carat gold leaf. Displayed in Gent, Belgium, and now permanently at the Town Hall Square in Fredericia. [\[48\]\[49\]](#)
- **Børneliv anno 2005** Den lille pige med svovlstikkeren (2005): 10 sculptures of a 9-year-old girl sitting with her matches and a cell phone. [\[50\]\[51\]](#)
- **In the Name of God** (2006): Sculpture installation in copper, consisting of various sculpture constructions of a pregnant, crucified teenage girl.
- **The Color Orange** (2008): An art project, where the color orange was used as a signal for human rights violations in China during [OL 2008](#).
- **SevenMeters** (2009): Lots of art installations during the COP15 environment meeting in Copenhagen. Among other things a 24 km long light chain with blinking red lights representing a 7-meter water level, going through Copenhagen and in Bellacenteret. The project was supported by the ministry of foreign affairs. [\[52\]\[53\]](#)
- **Ending Homelessness:** (2010til 2013) 13 copper sculptures of homeless people, size 1:1, on tour in England, Ireland, Italy, Belgium, Hungary, Portugal, Romania, Norway and Denmark. Also put up at the European Parliament. In collaboration with Project 'Udenfor' and Fiansa. [\[54\]\[55\]](#)
- **The refugee ship M/S ANTON** (2010 til 2013): A floating art installation with 70 copper refugee sculptures on the old Danish fishing cutter M/S Anton. It has been on a tour to many coast cities in Denmark, and in 2013 it is going on a tour in Scandinavia. In collaboration with "Levende Hav". The project is supported by Danida. [\[56\]\[57\]](#)
- **Balancing Act** (2005-2015): Copper sculptures balancing on high (6 til 15 m) poles, some of the sculptures is 3 meters high. Symbol of UN 10 years "for education for sustainable development" (UBU). They have been exhibited in Kenya, India, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark. 4 of the big ones is put up at the castle square in front of the Danish parliament from 2009-2012. [\[58\]\[59\]](#)
- **Fundamentalism (sculpture)** (2011/12): Copper, 4 meter high, 9 meter in diameter. Sculpture installation consisting of religious books, making the word "FUNDAMENTALISM".
- **Unbearable** (2015): A real sized [polar bear](#) impaled on an oil [pipeline](#), 6 meter high, 17 meter long. Displayed at [COP21](#) in [Paris](#). [\[60\]\[61\]](#)

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## General information about Galschiot

About Jens Galschiot [Wikipedia](#):

Portrait of Jens Galschiot (engelsk) [CV \(PDF\)](#)

Galschiots Homepage: [Galleri Galschiot](#)

### websites:

[To Gallery Galschiot](#)

[To Galschiot website](#)

[to "The Children of Abraham"projekt](#)

Overview over [Galschiot sculptures](#)

Portrait of a [sculptor Jens Galschiot](#) (PDF)

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