

Fundamentalism project sparks debate inside the EU Parliament

In spite of a ban and other obstacles artist Jens Galschiot has finally managed to get his controversial exhibition through. The 8 sculptures show the darkest and brightest quotes from the Quran, the Bible, and the Torah. The exhibition is arranged by MEP (EPP) Bendt Bendtsen.



On the 10th of July EU parliamentarians will be presented with a sight they hadn't expected to see.

600 of the darkest and brightest quotes from the Quran, the Bible, and the Torah can be seen on 8 of Artist Jens Galschiot's (DK) sculptures 'The Pillars of Scriptures', which throughout the week will be exhibited centrally inside the EU Parliament's cubby room. The sculptures' displays present the religious quotes in 9 different languages. Galschiot and his crew will be there throughout the exhibition to answer questions and debate culture and religion. The sculptures are 2 meters tall and weigh circa 2 tons.

The EU exhibit is a part of the art and dialogue project The Children of Abraham, which uses visual art to build a bridge between Christianity, Islam and Judaism. It aims to create an understanding and a dialogue to counter the effects of extremism which a fundamentalist interpretation of the religions can create in all camps.

The project's main sculpture, Fundamentalism, which is 3½ meters tall, 9 meters wide, and weighs 28 tons, has been exhibited publicly throughout Denmark and even outside Copenhagen's City Hall without any kind of trouble. The exhibitions have started dialogues where people spoke to each other without prejudice about religion's influence, cultural identity, and our personal similarities and differences. Libraries have held debates and over 100 schools and High School classrooms have used it in their lessons.

The giant sculpture Fundamentalism should actually have been exhibited by the EU in the fall of 2015; here 30 EU parliamentarians from different countries and political parties used their vote to okay

the exhibition of the sculpture.

But the exhibition was prohibited by The Bureau, who under the leadership of Martin Schulz came with a number of vague arguments about not being able to vouch for the safety of the sculpture. It seems they would rather overrule the parliamentarian's rights to exhibit, than engage in an important and very relevant debate about the different religions in Europe. There are apparently some reservations on their part to take up this religious debate. [See article from Der Spiegel](#) (DE).

Now it will be interesting to see how the politicians receive the exhibition which shows that all the three religions have terrible, inhumane *and* good and beautiful sides, and shows that the three religions, text wise, are so alike that one can hardly even tell them apart.

It is not the foreigners but our reaction to those foreigners which poses a threat to our civilization.

If we want to avoid radicalization and terrorism there are only two options. Either we create a police state where everyone and everything is completely controlled and monitored. Or we find a way to make all ethnic and religious groups feel that they are accepted in our society and treated as equal citizens. I believe we should choose the latter solution, in order to uphold the open and democratic values of our society. This is the foundation for my art project The Children of Abraham.

Jens Galschiot, Artist

Invitation to the Vernissage

If you are interested in the project and have the chance to come to Bruxelles, You are welcome to join the opening of the exhibition in the EU Parliament on Tuesday July 11th. See [Invitation](#).

Background

The art and dialogue project 'The Children of Abraham'/Fundamentalism aims to bridge the gap between the three monotheistic religions - Christianity, Islam and Judaism. It promotes understanding and dialogue in order to counter the extremism, which a fundamentalist view of the religions can cause from by all parties.

600 of the brightest ('good') and darkest quotes from their holy books, the Torah, Bible and Koran are to start the debate. The quotes make it evident, that the three religions, text wise, are so alike that one can hardly even tell them apart. In other words; human practice is accountable for the state of the society, not religions.

The central sculpture 'Fundamentalism' is 3.5 meters high and 9meters in diameter. It consists of the characters 'F.U.N.D.A.M.E.N.T.A.L.I.S.M'. The huge letters are constructed of 8000 copper books that symbolize the Koran, the Bible and the Torah. They are arranged in a circle on top of a foundation in which 28 screens display changing quotes. On the outside of the circle the bright quotes are displayed.

10 Pillar of Scriptures (of which 8 are exhibited in the EU Parliament) work as satellite exhibitions. Each one is two meter tall and build of copper books. The sculptures' displays the religious quotes.

Links



The sculpture Fundamentalism in Copenhagen - it was forbidden by the EU Bureau.



The Children of Abraham-web page: [fundamentalism](#)

The religious quotes: o [Quiz](#) o [Quote search](#) o [Screen savers](#)

About the art project: [Introfilm](#) (15 min) o [Wikipedia](#), o [photo](#)

Pamphlet with a description and quotes from The Children of Abraham:
Pamphlets in: [Danish](#), [English](#), [German](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#), [Dutch](#), [Polish](#), [Italian](#) and [Arabic](#).

About Jens Galschiøt : [Wikipedia](#) - [CV \(PDF\)](#)

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About Jens Galschiøt:

General information about Galschiøt can be found at:

See [Wikipedia](#):

[Portrait of the sculptors CV \(PDF\)](#)

[Gallery Galschiøt](#)

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