

## Press Release

Date: 20/6

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For a video of the artwork in Venice: click [here](#)

For HD pictures © Dirk Kinot: click [here](#)

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### Hyperrealistic drowning figure floats in Ghent at World Refugee Day on the 20th of June

Belgian visual artists collective Schellekens & Peleman, known for their interventionist art works like Inflatable Refugee, and Dutch artist Margriet van Breevoort will show during the world refugee day a raw and hyperrealistic work of art, called 'Drowning Wo/Man'.

**20/6, 14h, Korenlei, Ghent, Belgium**

Schellekens & Peleman create art works in an art-for-all philosophy with which they want to invite the audience to reflect on geopolitical evolutions, migration and identity.



Drowning Wo/Man, Venice, © picture Dirk Kinot

**Schellekens & Peleman made this work in collaboration with the young Dutch artist Margriet van Breevoort. 'Drowning Wo/man' will be put in the water (Leie) on June 20th at 14h at height of the Korenlei, Ghent, Belgium.**

'[Drowning Wo/Man](#)' is a hyperrealistic figure of a man hanging onto a lifebuoy. The face of the man is that of artist Dirk Schellekens. Schellekens & Peleman created this artwork to let it float into waterways or seas close to or into world cities, to bring struggle of people in need into the urban life. Drowning Wo/Man was created by Schellekens & Peleman in collaboration with Dutch artist Margriet Van Breevoort.

Schellekens & Peleman were inspired by a photograph of a young refugee woman who almost drowned in the Mediterranean Sea. Just before the photograph was taken she was spotted by coastal patrol and thrown a lifebuoy.

Today we do not empathize any longer to the suffering that caused the recent influx of refugees in our society. The concepts of 'war' and 'migration' have faded in our memories. The 'Drowning Wo/Man' seems to come from another world we have lost contact with. To most of us he is the other, to some even the intruder. We are confused on how to respond to this person in need.

The hyperrealism represents the duality of how we perceive the 'Drowning Body'. Do we label it as a 'refugee', or as a 'human'? It is the hyperrealistic image of a drowning person. It is so real, it could be you. It is the nameless face of the countless millions of refugees throughout the ages.

**With this work, the artists put the ball in the court of the passer-by, the viewer, and not in the court of themselves or the artwork. The work gives the audience; through its hyperrealism, an unwanted, uncomfortable sense of responsibility. You can not keep this work at a distance. There is no way of running away without making a statement. What will you do if you see this hyperrealistic figure: will you undertake any action, do you hesitate or do you neglect? The work judges, in a way, the audience instead of, what usually is the case, the audience judging the art work.**

More info: [videolink](#) and [link](#) to website

Website: [www.dirkschellekens.com](http://www.dirkschellekens.com)

It's not the first time that the art collective Schellekens & Peleman intervenes in the public debate. Last month they sailed into Copenhagen with their 6m tall 'Inflatable Refugee' (click [here](#) for a drone video and [here](#) for some pictures).



© pictures: Anton Corbal

Belgian visual artists Schellekens & Peleman form an art collective since 2014. Their work often reflects social awareness, without ever pointing the finger. Never patronizing and often triggering reflection through the use of irony and humour. In a straightforward way they leave the paths of conventions and traditions of art.

As artists they seek a direct one on one interaction between public and artwork. To establish this interaction they often let art happen outside the artistic institution and investigate the impact of art in public spaces in direct interaction with passerby.

Schellekens & Peleman observe society, distil elements from it and create with it, to then return and present their observations.

Also they feel the need to make critical remarks on what's happening nowadays, by making art. As artists they believe they have to be at the centre of debate, rather than giving answers or opinions, always with a typical Belgian sense of humour and surrealism, with poetry and compassion.

They try to catalyze debate by presenting artwork that has the intention to stimulate reflection. Schellekens & Peleman try to create time and space and to bridge the gap between art and audience by entering into the space of their audience rather than vice versa. They believe that the best place would be public space, as here people who didn't ask for it will be confronted with the image of the artwork.

Thus they want to bring their art, their visions and their stories to a broad audience. They call it their art-for-all principle.