

11th January 2018 - In its first event of 2018, Ciné-ONU, in partnership with Belga Films, BOZAR and [UNHCR](#), screened the Belgian premiere of Ai Weiwei's documentary, 'Human Flow'. The film painstakingly records each of the world's major refugee crises, bringing to the audience an unfailingly honest and visually striking portrait of the lives of migrants.

"When there is nowhere to go, nowhere is home." This tautology may seem self-evident to most. However, it is at the heart of the plight faced by millions around the world. Stuck in a no-man's land of insecurity and uncertainty, this is a fact of life for the world's migrants and displaced people. The precariousness of existence in refugee camps and the transient nature of shelter that a nomadic life brings, are not things that the more fortunate among us can easily identify with. However, the issue of migration remains one of the biggest challenges in our world today.

Speaking at the reception before the screening, Pascale Moreau (UNHCR) welcomed the guests and spoke about the importance of human solidarity in addressing migration. "This movie should touch all of us watching it because it is about us – and not about them – it's about our world today, our humanity, our collective path and after all, our human condition."



The film was followed by a conversation with Ai Weiwei and Leoluca Orlando (Mayor of Palermo), moderated by Catherine Vuylsteke (De Morgen). The discussion focused initially on the importance of the film. On this subject, Leoluca Orlando left the audience in no doubt about its impact, saying, “After this film, nobody can claim ignorance about the plight of refugees.”

When pressed further on the duty of developed states to help migrants, Mr. Orlando replied with a characteristically staunch defence of liberal values, “Welcoming migrants is one of the ways that we can show respect for human rights [...] We always forget that migrants are human beings [and that] mobility is a human right.”



In criticism of current nationalist and populist attitudes towards migration, Ai Weiwei asked the audience, “Can we continue to build a society with shortsighted coldness and selfishness? Our societies are made richer by different ideas and lifestyles.”

One of the most profound reflections of the night occurred when Ai Weiwei spoke about his

decision to make the film and what he thought of its importance, “The film is a personal reflection on the current political situation. It takes the willingness of everybody to make a difference in society [...] the violation of human rights anywhere is a disaster for the entire world.”



Check out the photos in our [flickr album](#)

For more information on ‘Human Flow’ click [here](#)

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