

# HUMAN FLOW

GERMANY/US

AI WEIWEI



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Shot in 23 countries over more than a year, the new magnificent, macrocosmic film from plucky Chinese dissident Ai Weiwei is as epic as cinema gets.

An incredible chronicle of the 65 million people who are currently displaced around the world, *Human Flow* provides an essential visual guide to the near-incomprehensible scale of the migrant crisis.

There are overhead shots of a corridor of humans escaping from Syria, in a line that has no discernible beginning or end. There are rows and rows of tents in Iraq. Thousands of refugees walk along the borders between Macedonia and Greece, Syria and Jordan. Thousands more are affected by the 2016 agreement between the EU and Turkey. The many kilometres of fencing on view is grimly contextualised with a reminder that in 1989, as the Berlin Wall fell, there were 11 countries with fences; by 2016, there were 70.

Occasional intertitles provide snippets of related news stories from the *Telegraph*, *De Zeit*, and the *New York Times*. Other words are drawn from Buddhist texts and UN statistics.

A crowded boat of mostly children is unloaded in Greece. There are two more like it coming behind. They never arrive. Ai Weiwei, who was himself displaced

during the Cultural Revolution, watches the shoreline for hours as life jackets wash up on the beach.

There are short interviews with aid workers, weary travellers, UN representatives, the Princess of Jordan, and with Ustav Rafik, a community leader from Rohingya who speaks of ethnic cleansing in Myanmar and of the shame that comes with being a stateless or boat person.

Ai Weiwei mostly prefers to emphasise common humanity over suffering: the trekkers taking selfies to send back home, the sobbing brothers who wonder if they can go on, the Syrians gathering around a cute cat picture.

Against the urgency of the situation, this is a stunningly beautiful, stately paced film of sparkling seas and breathtaking tableaux. The director even finds an eerie poetry in bombed out Kurdish towns and burning oil fields.

"You're a good man," Ai tells one refugee during the film's opening scenes. *Human Flow* doesn't have easy answers. It just has heart and people. Millions of them.

Tara Brady, *The Irish Times*

**WRITERS:** Chin-Chin Yap, Tim Finch & Boris Cheshirkov **CINEMATOGRAPHY:** Ai Weiwei & 11 others **MUSIC:** Karsten Fundal  
**CAST:** *The refugees* Themselves, from 23 countries | *The aid workers and others* Themselves

VOTING FOR *THE WOUND* A15 | B26 | C11 | D4 | E0 | Rating 73% | Attendance 60

Next screening | **Loveless** | Tuesday 11 December 2018 8.00pm

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FROM THE DIRECTOR OF "LEVIATHAN"

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**TUESDAY 11 DECEMBER 2018 8.00PM**

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