Here's why 84 male figures are standing on the edges of London rooftops

By Mercedes Leguizamon and Brandon Griggs, CNN

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These statues atop a London building represent the 84 men who commit suicide every week in the UK.

(CNN) — If they looked up, passersby in central London on Monday got a strange and unsettling sight: 84 men, standing silently on the rooftops of office towers as if they were about to leap to their deaths.

Except these men aren't actually human. They are life-size sculptures, placed there to raise awareness about suicide.

The sculptures were installed overnight as part of Project 84, an idea made possible by American street artist Mark Jenkins and the Campaign against Living Miserably, or CALM, a charity focused on preventing suicide, which it says is the single biggest killer of men under 45 in the UK.

The sculptures represent the 84 men who commit suicide, on average, each week in the UK. CALM says three in four suicide victims are men.

"As a society we have to move past embarrassment and awkwardness, we have to face this awful issue, discuss it and actively work to stop it," said CALM CEO Simon Gunning.

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The sculptures were made from packing tape and will remain on rooftops until April 1.

Jenkins, who is widely known for placing his hyper-realistic sculptures in public settings where they interact with passersby, created the figures from packing tape.

Jenkins worked with collaborator Sandra Fernandez to create the sculptures. Each of the 84 represents a real man who died by suicide, and their individual stories are chronicled on the Project 84 website.

ITV's daily show "This Morning" featured interviews Monday with relatives and friends of the 84 men at the heart of the project.

"Underpinning this campaign is hope, hope that by telling these stories we can all better understand the complexities of suicide and strive for change," Gunning said.

Project 84 also has launched an online petition drive through which it hopes to persuade Britain's government to take action to improve suicide prevention and bereavement support. As of Monday afternoon more than 80,000 people had signed it.

Reaction to the rooftop sculptures has been mostly positive.

"So important that we break the stigma of men's mental health and let people know it's OK not to be OK," said one observer on Twitter.

> I suffer with mental health and tried to commit suicide a few years back, thankfully with help from t NHS and my incredible friends and family im in a much more stronger way. Talking is the key and certainly don't feel embarrassed. Well done #ThisMorning

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— elisha (@ElishaPrice11) March 26, 2018

But some others thought the project was in poor taste.

" ... this is probably the most perverse sick thing I've seen. Who on earth had such an insensitive idea??" said one man on Twitter.

> I wonder how many people will ring 999 to say there is someone going to jump only to realise it's a model #thismorning
>
> — Ollie 🤠 (@ollie_olly_olly) March 26, 2018

> Statues of the suicided on the edge and at the top of tall buildings....this is probably the most perve sick thing I've seen. Who on earth had such an insensitive idea?? #ThisMorning
>
> — Mitch (@Onlythetruth38) March 26, 2018

Regardless of the differing opinions, the project has appeared to achieve what it intended -- to get people talking about men's mental health. The conversation might even continue after the statues are removed on Sunday.

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