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## **Has Banksy painted a new mural in Venice?**

**Work depicting a migrant child wearing a lifejacket is a stark counterpoint to Venice Biennale's inclusion of Christoph Büchel's wreck of migrant ship**

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A stencil of a migrant child wearing a lifejacket has appeared in Venice © Lapo Simeoni/Instagram

The British street artist Banksy appears to have left his mark on the Venice Biennale with a stencil of a migrant child wearing a lifejacket holding aloft a fizzing neon pink flare.

The work stands in stark contrast to the Swiss-Icelandic artist [Christoph Büchel's presentation of a rusting fishing vessel](#) which sank off the Libyan coast in 2015, killing up to 1,000 people who were trapped in its hull. *Barca Nostra*, as the installation is titled, has sparked controversy for its positioning, without label, among seemingly oblivious tourists.

The Venice mural, painted just above the lapping waters of a canal in the heart of the student area of the Dorsoduro district, is thought to have gone up at the end of last week, during the Biennial's vernissage, according to the Italian paper *Artribune*. The work, which has all the characteristics of a Banksy, has not yet appeared on the artist's Instagram account or website. Pest Control, Banksy's authenticating body, did not respond immediately to requests for comment.

Issues of migration and immigration are prevalent at this year's Venice Biennale, entitled *May You Live in Interesting Times*, a nod, its curator Ralph Rugoff says, to the "condition of late capitalism, lurching from crisis to crisis".

Banksy has also frequently addressed the refugee crisis in his work. In 2015, he travelled to the Calais refugee camp known as "the Jungle", where he stencilled an image of the late Steve Jobs, the founder of Apple, with a black bin bag thrown over one shoulder and an original Apple computer in his hand.

In a statement accompanying the work, Banksy said: "We're often led to believe migration is a drain on the country's resources but Steve Jobs was the son of a Syrian migrant. Apple is the world's most profitable company, it pays over \$7bn (£4.6bn) a year in taxes – and it only exists because they allowed in a young man from Homs."

While in Calais, the artist also painted across several walls at the French port, including a riff on Theodore Gericault's *Raft of the*

Medusa, which featured drowning migrants trying to wave down a passing luxury yacht.