From:

Jens Galschiot
Owner of the Pillar of Shame
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To:

Department of Justice
dojinfo@doj.gov.hk
Prosecutions Division
prosrdu3@doj.gov.hk,
and dojinfo@doj.gov.hk.

Re: HKSAR v. Hong Kong Alliance & Others (HCCC 155/2022)

Pillar of Shame — Formal Claim of Ownership and Request for Return

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am **Jens Galschiøt**, the Danish sculptor, creator and owner of the sculpture *Pillar of Shame*, formerly displayed at the University of Hong Kong and presently understood to be held as an exhibit in connection with the captioned proceedings.

I write to the **Department of Justice of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region** following information that has come to my attention concerning the possible disposal, confiscation or other disposition of exhibits in these proceedings, including the *Pillar of Shame*.

I wish to place my position formally and unequivocally on record.

I am, and have always been, the sole owner of the Pillar of Shame. I hereby formally assert and maintain my ownership rights, claim the sculpture and request that it be returned to me. I do not consent to its confiscation, destruction, disposal, transfer, forfeiture, or release to any other person or institution other than myself or my duly authorised representatives.

I have consistently asserted my ownership of the sculpture for many years. In particular, in my open letter dated 12 November 2021, as well as in other communications and public statements concerning the University of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong authorities, I expressly stated that I was the rightful owner of the monument and sought cooperation so that it could be removed from Hong Kong and transported to Denmark.

I respectfully request that the sculpture be returned to me rather than being confiscated, forfeited, destroyed, disposed of, or otherwise permanently withheld.

I understand that a question may have arisen as to whether I would personally travel to Hong Kong to collect the sculpture or whether somebody would collect it on my behalf.

I therefore wish to remove any possible uncertainty.

I will not personally travel to Hong Kong to collect the Pillar of Shame. Instead, I will appoint and formally authorise appropriate professional art handlers, transport specialists and/or an international shipping company to take possession of the sculpture on my behalf and arrange for its safe transportation from Hong Kong to Denmark.

My authorised representatives and transport contractors will cooperate with the Department of Justice, the Court, the Hong Kong Police Force, the University of Hong Kong and/or any other authority or person having custody or control of the sculpture in order to make the necessary arrangements for its release, collection and transportation.

The *Pillar of Shame* is a large, valuable and fragile work of art. Its removal, handling, packing and transportation should therefore be undertaken by suitably qualified professionals. I am prepared to arrange and pay for appropriate professional assistance and to provide written authorisation confirming the authority of the persons or companies appointed to collect the sculpture on my behalf.

I respectfully submit that the *Pillar of Shame* is a unique artwork created by me many years before these proceedings and is my private property. The sculpture is not contraband, prohibited property, or an inherently unlawful item. It has never been the proceeds of criminal conduct. It was not obtained through any alleged criminal activity, nor does it represent any benefit derived from crime. It is an original artwork created by me and has independent artistic, cultural and proprietary value.

To the best of my knowledge, ownership of the sculpture is not itself disputed. The sculpture belongs to me.

Accordingly, I respectfully submit that there is no proper basis for treating the *Pillar of Shame* as property that should be confiscated, forfeited, destroyed or otherwise permanently withheld from its lawful owner. Any position taken concerning the sculpture should take into account the rights and interests of an innocent third-party owner who claims the property and seeks its return.

As a matter of principle, the confiscation or forfeiture of property belonging to an innocent third party would constitute a serious interference with proprietary rights. The *Pillar of Shame* is my personal property, created by me and continuously claimed by me, and I respectfully submit that it should therefore be released to its lawful owner rather than forfeited, confiscated, or destroyed.

For the avoidance of doubt, my decision not to travel personally to Hong Kong does not constitute abandonment of the Pillar of Shame, relinquishment of my ownership, waiver of my rights, or any indication that I do not wish to receive the sculpture. On the contrary, this letter constitutes my express and formal claim to the sculpture and my request for its return.

I therefore respectfully request that the Department of Justice:

1. Take note of and formally record my claim of ownership of the *Pillar of Shame* and my request for its return;
2. Refrain from seeking or supporting any order for confiscation, forfeiture, destruction or other disposal of the sculpture that would prevent its return to me;
3. Bring this letter and my ownership claim to the attention of the Court before any final order concerning the disposal of the *Pillar of Shame* is made;
4. Inform the Court, where appropriate, that I am ready and willing to take possession of the sculpture through duly authorised professional representatives;
5. Facilitate, or at least not oppose, the release of the sculpture to my duly authorised representative, professional art handler and/or international shipping company acting on my behalf; and
6. Allow reasonable time for my representatives to make the necessary arrangements for the safe collection, packing and transportation of the sculpture from Hong Kong to Denmark.

If the Department of Justice or the Court requires evidence concerning my ownership, proof of identity, a formal power of attorney or authorisation, details of the proposed art handlers or shipping company, or any other documentation reasonably necessary to establish my claim or arrange the release of the sculpture, I am ready to provide such documentation through my legal representatives.

I would be grateful if the Department of Justice would **acknowledge receipt of this letter and confirm that it has been brought to the attention of the Counsel responsible for HCCC 155/2022 and, where appropriate, placed before the Court before any final decision is made concerning the *Pillar of Shame*.**

Nothing in this letter should be understood as consenting to any confiscation, forfeiture, destruction, disposal or transfer of the sculpture, or as waiving any rights that I may have as its creator and owner.

My preference is to resolve this matter practically and constructively. I stand ready to cooperate in arranging the professional removal of the *Pillar of Shame* so that it can be safely returned to me and transported to Denmark.

Yours faithfully,

Jens Galschiøt
Sculptor and creator of the *Pillar of Shame*

Jens Galschiøt, artist

August 28, 2026

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