

PRESS RELEASE

Att. Pillar of Shame Hong Kong - Info List - Nov. 18, 2022.

RETURN THE PILLAR

Artist Jens Galschiøt, wants to know where his sculpture the Pillar of Shame is, and get it out of Hong Kong. But University of Hong Kong refuses to cooperate. Now NGOdei is starting a campaign to get the sculpture back.

Almost a year has gone since my sculpture was taken down on December 22, 2021 in the middle of the night. It came as a shock to me as I was not informed about it. Now I cannot even get information about where my sculpture is. So says Danish artist Jens Galschiøt. He is the creator and rightful owner of the Pillar of Shame. A sculpture that commemorates the Tiananmen Massacre in Beijing in 1989 and was erected at University of Hong Kong in 1997 by Hong Kongs students and the Democratic Alliance.

For nearly a year, Galschiot has tried to find a way to get the sculpture out of Hong Kong and back to Europe. The Pillar of Shame has been described as the most sought after sculpture in the world and it is extremely valuable - both economically and as an artistic symbol of resistance against Chinas clenching of basic freedom rights in Hong Kong. Therefore it is imperative to get it back.

The Artist don't even know which state the sculpture is in, and it looked like it was damaged when the University took it down. *I publicly offered to come to Hong Kong with a crew to take the sculpture down, warning it could be damaged if they did it without me. The offer was all over the media in Hong Kong, so the university cannot have missed it - still they never contacted me,* says Galschiot.

It is quite frustrating, Galschiot says. *My shipping company is ready to transport the sculpture, and I have a crane company on standby in Hong Kong. I need the sculpture for an exhibition at my gallery in Denmark.* He continues *The University of Hong Kong knows that it is my property, which they have clearly confirmed to my lawyers - so the sculpture should be in my possession and not locked in a container somewhere in Hong Kong.*

Galschiot is clearly frustrated: *My lawyers have been contacting University of Hong Kong through the universitys lawyers for months and months. First they did not answer at all. When they finally responded the solicitor was out of office. Then he had left for three weeks' vacation. And now the lawyers say they haven't got 'any instructions from University of Hong Kong in respect of our proposal to inspect and remove the Pillar'. For me it seems like deliberate obstruction, and I think China is pulling the strings, deliberately obstructing the process of getting the Pillar of Shame out of Hong Kong.*

Galschiots says he thinks that China is afraid of the sculpture and of it being exhibited: *The Pillar of Shame sends a reminder of Chinas brutal aggression in Tiananmen in 1989 - and later their destruction of the democracy movement and basic human rights in Hong Kong.* Galschiot continues: *Paradoxically, by locking the symbol of freedom of expression into a steel container, China has made a new symbol of their own brutal takeover of Hong Kong where they have forbidden all freedom of expression.*

Return the Pillar - A Campaign to get The Pillar of Shame back.

Now the Hong Kong supporting organisation NGOdei has lost its patience and started a campaign - called Return the Pillar - aiming to use digital tools like 3d prints and augmented reality to make the Pillar of Shame present everywhere. In this way the digital Pillar of Shame will be used as a driving

force for the Hong Kong Freedom movement, and create awareness about the situation in order to get the sculpture out of the grip of University of Hong Kong and shipped abroad. *I am grateful that NGodei has started the campaign*, says Galschiot and continues, *and I am honoured that the Hong Kong movement will use my sculpture in their struggle against Chinese takeover*. He ends: *I really hope the Return the Pillar campaign can help get the process running to get the sculpture out of Hong Kong*.

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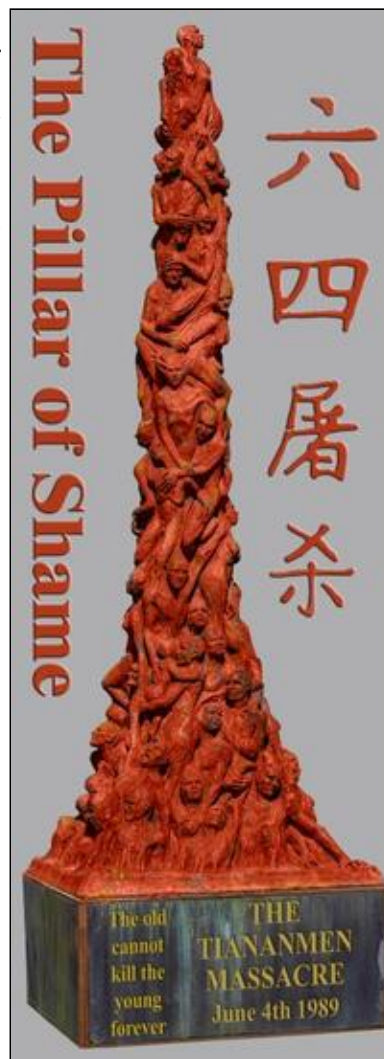
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[Pillar of Shame website](#)
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LATEST ABOUT PILLAR OF SHAME

Artist talk in Amsterdam [Art Beyond Democracy](#)

In October, Galschiot and two employees traveled to the Netherlands to participate in a debate about art and democracy, with offset in Hong Kong. [Watch the debate here](#). In this connection, there was a screening of the highly praised documentary film '[The HongKonger](#)' about the now imprisoned media mogul Jimmy Lai. It was a great trip, which also gave us the opportunity to plan the further work with The Pillar of Shame.

The Pillar of Shame in Berlin

On November 27, Axel Springer Freedom Foundation officially opens. It is celebrated with a major ceremony to pay



tribute to the Russian dissident Vladimir Kara-Murza and his tireless fight for a more democratic Russia.

In this connection, Galschiøt has been asked to exhibit the large Pillar of Shame sculpture in front of Axel Springer's head office in the middle of Berlin.

Taiwan - visit in Feb./March

Galschiøt had actually been invited to Taiwan this month by the organization New School of Democracy, where he, among other things, should have met with Taipei's mayor and have attended an exhibition with China-critical artist Kacey Wong. But since the visit came at the same time as The Pillar of Shame exhibition in Berlin, and the Qatar6500 happening, Galschiøt has chosen to postpone the visit to February or March.

[Here: all about Pillar of Shame](#)

The monument in Hong Kong

In 1997, I erected an 8 meter tall monument in Hong Kong in memorial of the massacre. This monument is so far still the only memorial about the Tiananmen Square massacre on Chinese soil.

Placing this sculpture in Hong Kong cost me a permanent expulsion from China and two expulsions from Hong Kong. I think it's important that artists, cultural groups, and others that defend human rights use their freedom of speech to tell the story of the massacre. I hope that you will help in doing this.

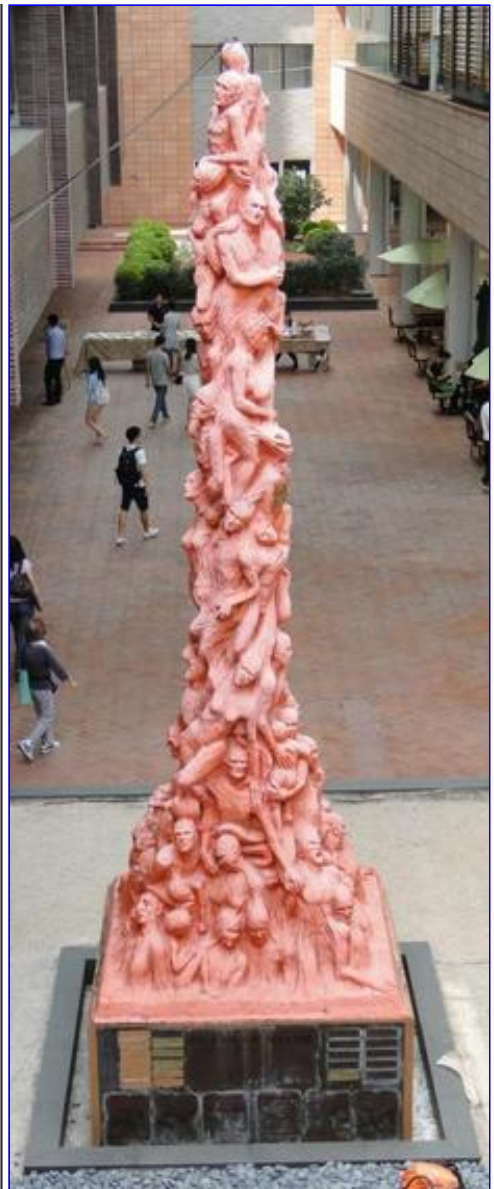
32 years after the massacre history seems to be tragically repeating itself. Now with Hong Kong as the epicenter for youth demanding their basic Human Rights and the Chinese Government forcefully fighting down the youth. China has passed landmark legislation to force national security laws in Hong Kong, effectively crushing the city's autonomy, removing pro-democratic forces from the parliament and sending pro-democrats in jail.

In February 2020 I erected 'A Pillar of Shame' sculpture in front of the Danish parliament, as a protest against that China is once again using extreme force against youth people demonstrating for their democracy rights, this time in Hong Kong.

The China's National People's Congress are now directly interfering with the justice system and the freedom of speech in Hong Kong, which is an unprecedented violation of the agreement between England and China for the handover of Hong Kong. China has fundamentally changed the status of Hong Kong and basic Human and Democracy rights are no longer respected as they used to be.

About Hong Kong at the moment

China's supression of free speech is spreading to Hong Kong. Galschiøt is just one of many critics who have been denied entry. So the city is deprived of a cultural exchange that is taken for granted in



all open democratic societies. The expulsions are a blatant violation of the principle of ‘One country – Two systems’ that was guaranteed as part of Hong Kong’s reunion with China in ‘97.

In 2013 Galschiøt managed to enter Hong Kong to repair ‘The Pillar of Shame’. In these very years Hong Kong stands on the precipice of realizing the 1997 agreements with China, to develop a real democracy in Hong Kong. But they are under a lot of pressure from non-democratic forces. The results of these negotiations are crucial for the future of Hong Kong.

Throughout 2019 and 2020 massive demonstrations in Hong Kong took place. They fought for their basic human rights that China promised Hong Kong’s citizens when they took over the country in 1997, But **the peaceful demonstrations have been met with comprehensive violent force from Hong Kong’s police.**

Today China has passed landmark legislation to force national security laws in Hong Kong, effectively crushing the city’s autonomy, removing pro-democratic forces from the parliament and sending pro-democrats in jail.

A functioning democracy on Chinese ground, even though only in Hong Kong, has been an extremely important symbol for the more than one billion living in mainland China. With the new security law, this symbol is gone.

The Pillar of Shame was taken down by university of Hong Kong on Dec. 22, 2021. It was done in the cover of night, without any information to the sculptures rightful owner, Jens Galschiøt.

As of Nov. 2022, the sculpture is locked in a container somewhere in Hong Kong. Dialogue with University of Hong Kong to get access to it has been to no avail.

Useful links:

[Download the documents about Tiananmen 1989](#)

[Galschiøt’s activities related to China](#)

The democracy movement in Hong Kong:

[HK Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China](#)

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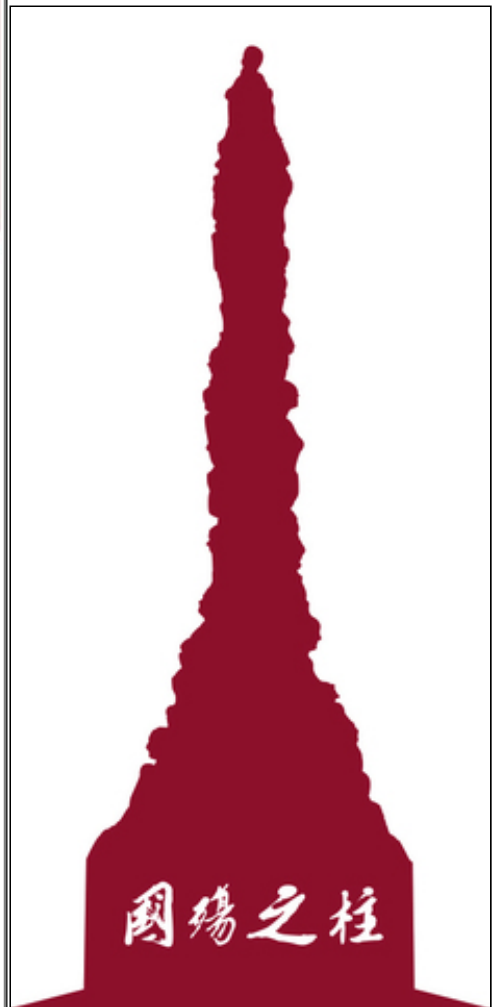
NOTE - The democracy movement is no more, and many of its members are in jail due to Hong Kongs security Law.

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About Jens Galschiøt:

Danish artist Jens Galschiøt has created many socio-critical sculptures and installations through the years. Most often they are placed in public spaces around the world – as needle-sticks and silent reminders of a world that, in his opinion, is out of balance, and where exploitation of the world’s resources, inequality and migration are a constant part of the picture.





This mail has been sent from the sculptor Jens Galschiøt's workshop.

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