



The facade of a former casino is decorated with a mural by German graffiti artist Boogie reading "Game Over" in Berlin. — AFP photos



A work featuring a likeness of former US president Donald Trump by the "Drink and Draw Berlin" art collective is pictured.

IN BERLIN, A STREET ART SHOW BEFORE IT'S 'GAME OVER' FOR SITE

From an image of Hulk who suddenly leaps over your head to a painting that changes its colors, one Berlin street art exhibition offers visitors a chance to experience paintings in 3D. Called "Game Over", the exhibition inspired by videogames is housed in a former casino stretching over 2,000 square meters (21,500 square feet) which is due to be torn down. Eighty artists are showcasing their work here, with a dedicated app enhancing the experience. "After all these dry months with the coronavirus and this, yes, dark world, we have finally created a bit of color, not only in our lives, but hopefully also in the lives of the visitors and admirers,"

said Joern Reiners, a member of art group The Dixons and one of the curators of the exhibition. "We try to bring together the right artists who will continue to develop and evolve creatively and ultimately create completely new layers and processes here." The Dixons organized a similar pop-up exhibition in 2017, with artists plastering the walls of an old bank with their paintings before the demolition crew moved in. This time the works stand out against a minimalist background. But the special app allows visitors to point their phones at the images to discover what lies beyond the analogue painting. For painter Gita Kurdpoor, the show "which

we have created here, together, is like a bit of a school trip feeling." Berlin is a hub for urban culture and its particularly vibrant street art scene has left its mark on many of the capital's facades. Tours are organized regularly for visitors to check out the most iconic images. Most famously, the longest remaining stretch of the Berlin Wall is covered with murals, first painted in 1990 and later restored. — AFP



View of the lobby for the "Game Over" exhibition in Berlin.



A guide (center) presents work by artist Slava at the "Game Over" exhibition.



A visitor watches digital animation by A Muse Vision on a tablet in a room designed by the "Tape That" art collective featuring a sculpture by German sculptor Andreas Hoferick at the "Game Over" exhibition in Berlin.



A guide presents the work "Imagine You Could See All the Colors" by Berlin-based illustrator and street artist Herr von Bias at the "Game Over" exhibition.



A visitor holds up a tablet featuring digital enhancements by VR4content in front of a portrait by German artist Anne Bengard at the "Game Over" exhibition in Berlin.



A stairwell decorated by Kazakhstan-born Berlin-based artist Xuli is seen at the "Game Over" exhibition in Berlin.



A comic by artists Gogoplata and Deedeekid explains the meaning of NFTs (Non-fungible token), digital assets related to the purchase of digital art, at the "Game Over" exhibition in Berlin.

Danish artist hires lawyers to reclaim Hong Kong Tiananmen statue

The Danish artist behind a Hong Kong sculpture mourning those killed in Tiananmen Square has instructed a lawyer to secure his work and bring it overseas after the city's flagship university ordered its sudden removal. The eight-meter (26-feet) high "Pillar of Shame" by Jens Galschiot has sat on the University of Hong Kong's (HKU) campus since 1997, the year the city was handed back to China. It features 50 anguished faces and tortured bodies piled on one another and commemorates democracy protesters killed by Chinese troops around Beijing's Tiananmen Square in 1989. Last week Hong Kong's oldest university ordered it to be removed by 5pm on Wednesday citing "legal advice" as authorities crack down on dissent. Galschiot told AFP he had hired a local

lawyer and requested a hearing with the university over the future of the pillar. "I hope that my ownership of the sculpture will be respected and that I will be able to transport the sculpture out of Hong Kong under orderly conditions and without it having suffered from any damage," he told AFP via email. The University of Hong Kong said it was "still seeking legal advice and working with related parties to handle matters in a legal and reasonable manner"—and as the 5pm deadline passed authorities made no move on the sculpture.

Galschiot said he would prefer the statue to have stayed in the city. If it was destroyed by authorities, he said, Hong Kongers should collect "as many pieces of the Pillar of Shame as possible". "These pieces may be used to make some symbolic manifestation that 'Empires pass away - but art persists,'" the artist said. Galschiot said he had also been in contact with people in Hong Kong who were making 3D scans of the sculpture to produce miniature versions.

Crackdown on dissent

HKU's removal order was penned by global law firm Mayer Brown and addressed to the Hong Kong Alliance, a now disbanded organization that used to organize the city's annual Tiananmen remembrance vigils. Mayer Brown said

the university was a longstanding client who was being helped to "understand and comply with current law." "Our legal advice is not intended as commentary on current or historical events," a spokesperson told AFP. Hong Kong used to be the one place in China where mass remembrance of Tiananmen's dead was still tolerated.

But the city is being remolded in the mainland's own authoritarian image in the wake of huge and often violent democra-

cy protests two years ago. Scores of opposition figures have been jailed or fled overseas and authorities have also embarked on a mission to rewrite history and make Hong Kong more "patriotic". Many of the alliance's leaders have been arrested over the last year and the last two vigils have been banned with officials citing the coronavirus. Authorities have also warned that commemorating Tiananmen could constitute subversion under a new national security law that

Beijing imposed on the city last year. A museum run by the alliance was also raided and shuttered, its exhibits carted away in police vans. Hong Kong boasts some of Asia's finest universities and long billed itself as a bastion of academic freedom. But university management teams have become key enforcers of the state's new push for political orthodoxy. Many academics critical of the government have found their contracts terminated while multiple universities, including HKU, have also severed ties with their student unions. In recent days, students and residents flocked to the Pillar of Shame to take photos and selfies. "Nowadays I have become more careful in daily life on campus," an art student visiting the pillar, who gave just his first name Vincent, told AFP on Wednesday. "At the back of my head I am always thinking about what things at the university are no longer allowed." — AFP



In this file photo a member (center) of the University of Hong Kong student union speaks to the media before cleaning the 'Pillar of Shame', a monument that commemorates the victims of the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown, at the University of Hong Kong. — AFP