

AI WEIWEI: ACCORDING TO WHAT?

25 JULY (SAT) – 8 NOVEMBER (SUN), 2009 MORI ART MUSEUM

The most evocative creator in contemporary China

The Mori Art Museum presents “Ai Weiwei: According to What?” from Saturday, 25 July to Sunday, 8 November 2009. Ai Weiwei is a Chinese artist whose activities cover a wide range of genres, from art and architecture to design and publishing. His international reputation was cemented by a series of highly acclaimed projects over the last few years, including **Fairytale**, his contribution to Documenta 12 in 2007 for which he brought 1,001 Chinese people to Europe, as well as his collaboration with architects Herzog & de Meuron on the “Bird's Nest” Olympic Stadium for the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Up until now, Ai's work has been focused on the connections between art, culture, and society, and on the role of the individual within society. In recent years, he has moved away from the architectural projects that had been a major part of his practice since 1999 and adopted looser parameters that allow him to explore more freely such timeless themes as culture, history, politics and tradition.

This exhibition will show 26 works made since 1990s including six new works, making it one of the largest solo shows for the artist ever held. The subtitle, “According to What?” comes from a painting by Jasper Johns, the artist whose work was the catalyst for Ai's entry into the contemporary art world. It hints at one of the exhibition's goals: to explore the connections between Ai's work and its artistic, cultural and historical backgrounds. The exhibits are varied, ranging from sculptures to photographs, video and site specific installations. They are organized into three sections: “Fundamental Forms and Volumes,” “Structure and Craftsmanship” and “Reforming and Inheriting Tradition.” In this way, the fundamental approach and motivations that unite Ai's myriad creative activities are brought into relief.

In the first section, “Fundamental Forms and Volumes,” the exhibits include a series of cubic and polyhedral forms reminiscent of minimal art and a new installation consisting of blocks of Chinese tea. A video showing the city of Beijing as though closed-circuit television cameras is also exhibited. In “Structure and Craftsmanship” works from the simple but astoundingly minutely carved “Maps” series, the “Furniture” series made since 1997 and an object, called **Moon Chest**, which straddles art, architecture and design, are exhibited. The final section, “Reforming and Inheriting Tradition,” contains a series of works based on ceramics from the Neolithic period and Han and Tang Dynasties and an installation consisting of reassembled parts from Qing Dynasty architecture. In addition, the exhibition includes a documentary video (2 hrs 30 mins) of **Fairytale**, the project from Documenta 12, which could be described as “social sculpture,” and a new version of **Chandelier** and **Snake Ceiling**.

Despite being based in a country that is experiencing one of the most rapid periods of economic and social change ever seen, Ai Weiwei manages in his artworks to link the past with the present and the individual with the world. We invite you to see this exhibition and share the visions of contemporary China's most exciting creator.

* “MAM Project 009:Koizumi Meiro” will be held during this exhibition period in Gallery I.

Organizers: Mori Art Museum

Grant from: The Obayashi Foundation

Support: Nicolas Feuillatte, BOMBAY SAPPHIRE

Mori Art Museum: 53F Roppongi Hills Mori Tower, 6-10-1 Roppongi, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-6150 Japan

Tel: 03-5777-8600 (Hello Dial) Website: www.mori.art.museum

Hours: 10:00 - 22:00 (Tue: 10:00 - 17:00) Open until 22:00 on 9/22 & 11/3(Tue).

*Admission until 30 minutes before closing Open everyday.

Admission: Adult: ¥1,500 University/Highschool student: ¥1,000 Child (4 years to Junior Highschool student): ¥500

*Ticket also valid for “MAM Project 009: Koizumi Meiro” and Tokyo CityView observation deck (Tokyo CityView opening hours differ to Mori Art Museum)

*Additional entrance fee to the Sky Deck is required: ¥300

Press Images: Images are available on our website.

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Map of China 2004
Tieli wood from dismantled temples of the Qing Dynasty
(1644-1911)
h. 51 cm, Ø200 cm
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MORI ART MUSEUM

MORI ARTS CENTER

〈ARTIST'S PROFILE〉



Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn 1995
triptych b/w prints 180×199cm
©FAKE Studio

Ai Weiwei was born in Beijing in 1957 as the son of Ai Qing, one of modern China's most renowned poets. He entered the Beijing Film Academy in 1978. In 1979 and then in 1981, Ai took part in exhibitions as a member of "Xingxing (The Stars)," the first avant-garde group in China after the Cultural Revolution. Soon afterwards Ai moved to New York, where he spent 12 years until his return to China in 1993. The influence of American contemporary art and European modernism such as the Dada movement and Duchamp is evident in his work of the 80s. After his return to China, alongside his work in publishing, Ai became involved in the founding of the China Art Archive & Warehouse (CAAW) as artistic director, and has since continued to support emerging young Chinese artists. In 2000 Ai curated the "Fuck Off" exhibition to coincide with the Third Shanghai Biennale. The extreme works that featured in "Fuck Off" were hugely controversial, yet the exhibition itself has become legendary.

Meanwhile, Ai's design for his home and studio in 1999 became a catalyst for the artist to further extend his creative activity to include architectural designing, and Ai has been involved in over 50 architectural projects within the six to seven years that followed. He designed contemporary art galleries and studio units in the vicinity of his residence in Caochangdi, an area which has been attracting increasing attention as the second art zone after 798 Art Zone in Dashanzi.

REFERENCE IMAGES



Ton of Tea 2006
1 ton compressed Tea
100 x 100 x 100 cm
©FAKE Studio



Cubic Meter Tables 2006
huali wood 13 pieces, each 100x100x100cm
©FAKE Studio



Coca Cola Vase 1997
vase from the Tang Dynasty (618-907)
and paint
24 cm, Ø 18 cm
©FAKE Studio



"Forever" Bicycles 2003
42 bicycles
h. 275 cm, Ø 450 cm
©FAKE Studio



Bowl of Pearls 2006
porcelain, freshwater pearls
each h. 43cm, Ø 100 cm
©FAKE Studio



Table with Three Legs 2006
Table from the late Ming or early Qing Dynasty
(1368 - 1911)
116 x 155.5 x 155.5 cm
©FAKE Studio

Press Images: Images are available on our website.

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 PUBLIC PROGRAM**Session “8-hour Sunday Talk Marathon – Ai Weiwei x Art x Architecture”**

*Japanese-English simultaneous interpretation

Ai Weiwei's activities encompass the creative fields of art, architecture, editorial and design. For this special eight-hour talk marathon, a select group of art and architecture specialists – each with a fascinating creative relationship or something else in common with Ai – will sit down with him to discuss his work from various perspectives, including materials, techniques, space, history, culture and context. Members of the audience will also be given plenty of time to ask questions to Ai. What insights will arise from the combination of “Ai Weiwei x Art x Architecture” and these wonderful guests? Join us to find out.

Speakers: Ai Weiwei, Uli Sigg (collector), Kuma Kengo (Architect), Sugimoto Hiroshi (Artist), and others

Moderator: Kataoka Mami (Chief curator, Mori Art Museum)

Date: 12:00-20:00 Sunday, 26 July, 2009 (Re-entry Permitted)

Venue: Towerhall, Academyhills 49, Mori Tower 49F

Organizers: Mori Art Museum, Academyhills

Capacity: 300

Admission: Adult & Student: 1,500 yen MAMC Member 1,000yen

Bookings: Advanced bookings will not be accepted. Admission tickets will be sold from 11:30 at the “8-hour Sunday Talk Marathon” counter at Academyhills 49. Tickets must be paid for in cash on the day. Ticket sales will stop once venue capacity is reached. Venue opens at 11:30. All seating is non-reserved.

* See the Mori Art Museum website (www.mori.art.museum) for program details.

* MAMC members must show membership cards for discount.

Enquires on Public Programs: Public Programs, Mori Art Museum

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