

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 32 works made since 2000 including five 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 a never-before-seen object, called **Moonchest**, 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,” an architectural installation made specifically for the Mori Art Museum and the new version of **Chandelier**.

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 1.

Organizers: Mori Art Museum

Support: Nicolas Feuillatte

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Hours: 10:00 – 22:00 (Tue: 10:00 – 17:00) Open until 22:00 on 9/22(Tue) & 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)

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)
height 51 cm, Ø200 cm
photo courtesy of the artist

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MORI ART MUSEUM

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《ARTIST'S PROFILE》



Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn 1995
triptych b/w prints 180×159.5cm
photo courtesy of the artist

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 2005
1 ton compressed Tea, wooden base
100 x 100 x 100 cm
photo courtesy of the artist



Cubic Meter Tables 2006
huali wood 13 pieces, each 100x100x100cm
photo courtesy of the artist



Coca Cola Vase 1997
vase from the Tang Dynasty (618-907)
and paint
24 cm, Ø 18 cm
photo courtesy of the artist



"Forever" 2003
42 bicycles
height 275 cm, Ø 450 cm
photo courtesy of the artist



Bowl of Pearls 2006
porcelain, freshwater pearls
each height 43cm, Ø 100 cm
photo courtesy of the artist



Table with Three Legs 2006
Table from the late Ming or early Qing Dynasty
(1368 - 1911)
116 x 155.5 x 155.5 cm
photo courtesy of the artist

Press Images: Images are available on our website.

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