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The Cleveland Museum of Art presents Ai Weiwei's Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads



The Cleveland Museum of Art



Mark Horning Cleveland Fine Arts
Examiner

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*Cleveland Museum of Art Presents Ai
Weiwei: Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads*

*Premiere exhibition in museum's atrium is
now open*

The newest exhibit at the Cleveland Museum of Art is an installation of twelve very large bronze sculptures that represent the animals of the Chinese zodiac. The bronzes are the creation of noted Chinese artist Ai Weiwei. The exhibit will be housed in the museum's new Ames Family Atrium draws on the inspiration of an 18th century Qing zodiac fountain clock locate in the Old Summer Palace of Beijing.

The original fountain and clock are long gone (destroyed during the Second Opium War of 1856 to 1860). The original figures were looted by invading Europeans during that

war. In his exhibit. Ai Weiwei refiaures the original works in the contest of beina looted as well

as their repatriation. His is a work that reflects on the original statues as symbols of Chinese national pride as well as a lesson as to how history can be used to illustrate the good and the bad of humanity.

Ai Weiwei: Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads is now open and will be at the museum until Sunday, January 26, 2014, and is organized by the Cleveland Museum of Art and AW Asia.

“The multifaceted Zodiac Heads make for a bold and meaningful statement in the new atrium of the Cleveland Museum of Art,” stated Reto Thuring, associate curator of contemporary art at the Cleveland Museum of Art. “The museum’s outstanding encyclopedic collection functions as a perfect backdrop for a work that raises the question of how we deal with the past and the sometimes complex relationships between East and West. At the same time, the monumental installation emphasizes the CMA’s commitment to prominently featuring contemporary art.”

The suite of sculptures has traveled on a world tour that has already reached São Paulo, New York, London, Los Angeles, Taipei, Houston and Washington, D.C. AW Asia Founder Larry Warsh and organizer of the Zodiac Heads: Bronze world tour, says "The Cleveland Museum of Art is home to one of the most outstanding collections of Asian art in the world, and we are thrilled that the Zodiac Heads are being exhibited at this ideal venue."

The Cleveland presentation of Ai Weiwei: Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads has been made possible in part by the by the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation.

About Ai Weiwei

Ai Weiwei is an artist and a social activist. His work encompasses the fine arts, curating, architecture and social criticism. Among numerous awards and honors, he won the Václav Havel Prize for Creative Dissent from the Human Rights Foundation in 2012, and was selected as Honorary Academician at the Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK in 2011. His recent major solo exhibitions include Ai Weiwei: According to What? at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C. (2012), Ai Weiwei: Absent at the Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taipei, Taiwan (2011), Circle of Animals at the Pulitzer Fountain, New York, NY

(2011), Interlacing at Fotomuseum Winterthur, Winterthur, Switzerland (2011), The Unilever Series: Ai Weiwei at the Tate Modern, London, UK (2010), So Sorry at Haus der Kunst, Munich, Germany (2009), and Ai Weiwei: New York Photographs 1983-1993 at Three Shadows Photography Art Center, Beijing (2009).

Related Program

Symposium

Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads

Saturday, September 21, 1– 5:00 p.m.

Gartner Auditorium

Ames Family Atrium

Ai Weiwei Film Series

“Ai Weiwei: Never Sorry”

Wednesday, September 4,

7:00 p.m.

“The World”

Wednesday, September 18

6:30 p.m.

About the Cleveland Museum of Art

The Cleveland Museum of Art is renowned for the quality and breadth of its collection, which includes almost 45,000 objects and spans 6,000 years of achievement in the arts. Currently undergoing an ambitious, multi-phase renovation and expansion project across its campus, the museum is a significant international forum for exhibitions, scholarship, performing arts and art education. One of the top comprehensive art museums in the nation, and free of charge to all, the Cleveland Museum of Art is located in the dynamic University Circle neighborhood.

The Cleveland Museum of Art is generously funded by Cuyahoga County residents through

Cuyahoga Arts and Culture. Additional support comes from the Ohio Arts Council, which helps fund the museum with state tax dollars to encourage economic growth, educational excellence and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans. For more information about the museum, its holdings, programs and events, call 888-CMA-0033 or visit www.ClevelandArt.org.