



Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads (detail), 2010. Ai Weiwei (Chinese, born 1957). Bronze. Private Collection, USA. Photo credit: Tim Nighswander

Ai Weiwei: Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads

Wednesday, July 24, 2013 to Sunday, January 26, 2014

Ames Family Atrium

Chinese artist Ai Weiwei's installation of twelve bronze sculptures representing the animals of the Chinese zodiac, *Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads*, will be mounted in the Cleveland Museum of Art's newly opened atrium this summer. While the installation is meant to be playful and appealing to a broad audience, Ai Weiwei's notorious passion for engaging China's political and cultural history in sometimes controversial ways lurks just below the surface. The inspiration for *Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads* is an 18th-century Qing imperial fountain featuring the twelve zodiac characters whose bronze heads were looted by invading Europeans during the Second Opium War. By recreating the disembodied heads of these figures on a monumental scale, Ai Weiwei raises issues of cultural patrimony, national pride, and China's ongoing relationship with its own history. The Cleveland Museum of Art's renowned collection of Chinese art creates an apt backdrop for this contemporary work, which both reinterprets a traditional Chinese theme and questions our relationship with cultural objects and their histories.

Ai Weiwei: Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads is organized by the Cleveland Museum of Art and AW Asia.

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Tuesday, Thursday,
Saturday, Sunday
10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Wednesday, Friday
10:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m.
Closed Monday

Free General Admission

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