

Exhibition of Arrested Chinese Artist's Works Opens in NY

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Photo: AP

Artist Ai Weiwei arrives at the Wenyuhe court to support fellow artist Wu Yuren during his trial in Beijing, November 2010 (file photo)

An exhibition of sculptures by famed Chinese artist Ai Weiwei opened Wednesday in New York City, even though their creator remains imprisoned in his country.

New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg opened the exhibit at an entrance to Central Park, and joined several artists there in praising Ai's work and calling for his release.

Security personnel took Ai into custody in Beijing a month ago, and he has not been heard from since. The artist, whose works have been exhibited around the world, has criticized China's Communist Party rulers, and called for political reform. The United States and other countries have called for his release.

Chinese authorities say he is suspected of committing economic crimes.

He is among the scores of artists, journalists, human rights activists and lawyers arrested in China this year in a crackdown on dissent. Many

Asia political analysts say the crackdown appears to be intended to make sure the anti-government uprisings seen this year in the Middle East do not spread to China.

Ai's sculptures of the heads of the 12 animals in the Chinese zodiac will go on a world tour after the exhibition in New York.