



For Immediate Release
October 24, 2011

***Ai Weiwei's Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads
to open at the Taipei Fine Arts Museum in Taiwan***

***First time the Zodiac Heads will be shown in Asia
at "Ai Weiwei Absent" exhibition***

Artist forbidden to attend his own show

Ai Weiwei's internationally acclaimed outdoor public sculpture installation *Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads* is scheduled to exhibit at the Taipei Fine Arts Museum (TFAM) from October 29, 2011 to January 29, 2012. This is the first showing of the *Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads* in Asia. The installation of the twelve monumental bronze sculptures occurs in conjunction with the TFAM's exhibition "Ai Weiwei Absent." This solo exhibition includes numerous works by the artist made between 1983 and 2011. Among these works are 100 photographic works from the New York East Village Period (1983-1993) and Beijing East Village Period (1993-2001), as well as Ai's most recent work, created specifically for TFAM, "Forever Bicycles." This installation piece is made up of more than 1,000 (the most bicycles Ai Weiwei has ever used in a single work).

Ai Weiwei's *Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads* are a recreation of the twelve bronze animal heads representing the traditional Chinese zodiac that once adorned the fountain at the Yuanming Yuan (Old Summer Palace) in Beijing. Cast around 1750, the original animal heads were located at the Zodiac fountain in Yuanming Yuan's European-style gardens, which were designed by two European Jesuit priests in the eighteenth century. In 1860, British and French troops looted the heads amid the destruction of Yuanming Yuan during the Second Opium War.

Today, seven heads—the rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, horse, monkey, and boar—have been found; the location of the other five—dragon, snake, goat, rooster, and dog—are unknown. In reinterpreting these objects on an oversized scale, Ai Weiwei stimulates dialogue about the fate of artworks that exist within dynamic and sometimes volatile cultural and political settings, while extending his ongoing exploration of the "fake" and the copy in relation to the original.



The *Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads* is the centerpiece of a global, multi-year touring exhibition that will be presented in the United States, Europe, and Asia. The *Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads* tour schedule includes the following venues (list in formation as of October 24, 2011):

- 29th São Paulo Biennale, São Paulo, Brazil
September 25 – December 12, 2010
- Pulitzer Fountain, Grand Army Plaza, New York, New York
May 4 – July 15, 2011
- Somerset House, London, England
May 12 – June 16, 2011
- Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California
August 20, 2011 – February 12, 2012
- Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taipei, Taiwan
October 29, 2011 – January 29, 2012
- Hermann Park, Houston, Texas
February 25 – June 15, 2012
- Hirshhorn Museum & Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.
October 4, 2012 – February 24, 2013
- Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Spring 2013

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Ai Weiwei

Ai Weiwei was born in 1957 in Beijing. The son of acclaimed poet Ai Qing, Ai Weiwei spent his youth in exile in the remote countryside during the Cultural Revolution. In 1979, he became a founder of “The Stars” (*Xing Xing*), one of the first avant-garde art groups in modern China. Returning to China in 1993 after more than a decade in New York, Ai co-founded the Chinese Art Archive & Warehouse (CAAW), a nonprofit loft-gallery in Beijing where he serves as director. A highly regarded artist in China and abroad, Ai has exhibited in museums and galleries around the world, and his work has been the subject of major solo exhibitions at Tokyo’s Mori Art Museum (2009) and Munich’s Haus der Kunst (2009). He has produced special projects in association with Documenta XII (2007) and, most recently, the Tate Modern in London (2010). Ai consulted the architecture firm, Herzog and de Meuron, in the design of the National Olympic Stadium, completed in 2008 for the Summer Olympic Games in Beijing. This year Ai will have solo exhibitions at the Taipei Fine Arts Museum in Taiwan and Fotomuseum Winterthur in Switzerland in addition to a large-scale architectural installation at Kunsthau Bregenz in Austria. He currently lives and works in Beijing, where he remains a colossal figure in the world of art and politics.

Additional high-resolution images available for press.

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For additional information about the Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads
please visit www.zodiacheads.com

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