



On View Past Exhibitions

AI WEIWEI: ZODIAC HEADS/CIRCLE OF ANIMALS: GOLD

Thursday, Feb 23, 2012 through Sunday, Jul 29, 2012 at MCASD Downtown, Jacobs Building

ON VIEW



Ai Weiwei Dragon from Zodiac Heads/Circle of Animals: Gold, 2010 gold-plated bronze Courtesy of a Private Collection.

MCASD is honored to present the U.S. museum debut of Ai Weiwei's topical and sumptuous *Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads: Gold* (2010). This gallery-sized installation is comprised of twelve animal heads, each depicting a segment of the ancient Chinese zodiac. The recent works by artist and activist Ai Weiwei reference a European version of the Chinese zodiac designed by Italian Jesuit Giuseppe Castiglione. The original sculptures, with their international connections, were built for an elaborate water-clock fountain at the imperial summer home of Emperor Qianlong, just outside of Beijing. In 1860 during the Second Opium War, the imperial gardens were ransacked, displacing the twelve zodiac heads. To this date only seven have been recovered. Continuing his work of re-interpreting cultural objects from his own fantasy and historical knowledge, Ai revises all twelve zodiac heads. His work comments on the tension between what is "fake," what is a "copy," and what may constitute the better of the two.

Ai Weiwei: Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads: Gold is organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego and AW Asia, New York.

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