

BLOUIN ARTINFO

Ai Weiwei to Display New Works at Alcatraz

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Chinese artist Ai Weiwei at his home in an arts district on the outskirts of Beijing.
(Courtesy Frederic J. Brown/AFP/Getty Images)

Ai Weiwei will show an exhibition of new works at the iconic **Alcatraz** prison, San Francisco, in September next year.

Ai says the show won't directly relate to his own 81 days in prison, which is an experience he thoroughly covered in six dioramas depicting his internment that he showed in Venice earlier this year. Ai was famously imprisoned by the Chinese government in 2011 on dubious tax evasion charges. His arrest followed after he began investigations into the shoddy state construction jobs that led to school collapses during the Sichuan earthquake.

The Alcatraz exhibition will be privately funded and free to attend. Ai is working with **Cheryl Haines**, a San Francisco gallery owner who also founded the non-profit foundation **For-Site**, to realize the project.

Ai's exhibition will mark the first time the former prison, which receives 1.5 million visitors each year, has been used to show contemporary art.

Frank Dean, a National Park Service superintendent for the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, which administers the island, told the *New York Times*, "We couldn't do something like this lightly, because the island is so popular — and small. There are also logistical challenges: The island is not connected to the electrical grid, and we have to bring water out on the barge."

While the show is to be called "Ai Weiwei on Alcatraz," it's unlikely the artist will be able to attend his own exhibition.

"My passport has been in the hands of police for almost three years now," Ai said. "I've lost my ability to travel."

Ai will consequently miss the grand opening of the **Pérez Art Museum Miami** this week, where his retrospective is the main event.