

Ai Weiwei exhibit headed to Alcatraz while New York banker plans museum dedicated to Chinese dissident artist

By Jason Rehel
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Ai Weiwei isn't taking his arbitrary detention within China lightly: The Chinese dissident artist is launching a major new exhibition this fall called "[@Large](#)" at the former U.S. prison, now park, Alcatraz. Photo Alexander F. Yuan/AP files

Ai Weiwei's latest treatment in documentary film might be called *The Fake Case* — in reference to the brutal detention he endured for 81 days and [the lawsuit the Chinese government launched](#) against him and his wife — but two new developments in the U.S. show the dissident artist is truly the real deal — an international art star and champion for human rights that makes waves wherever his works land.

And in an upcoming landmark exhibition, set to open Sept. 24, off San Francisco Bay in the off-limits areas of the former prison Alcatraz, Ai will present a show cheekily titled "[@Large](#)" a reference to the area's heritage of incarceration, Ai's own flight from China's clandestine security apparatus, and the

artist's persistent and active use of Twitter to disrupt China's forces of censorship that have long dogged his efforts to promote increased respect for human rights in the Asian country.

"Ai Weiwei is a very powerful and eloquent advocate for basic human rights, freedom of expression, and individual responsibility," said Cheryl Haines, executive director of FOR-SITE (one of the show's organizers) and the curator of [@Large: Ai Weiwei on Alcatraz](#). Haines said the show will be a "major exhibition" of "brand new installations works." The show will also contain pieces previously seen during North American displays of Ai's work, including the *Forever Bicycles* piece that was part of Toronto's Nuit Blanche art night last year.



"Our show is about freedom, and human struggles for freedom of speech, for a better world," Ai said while speaking about the difficulty of preparing the show with curators while still being held captive in China (the government has not returned Ai's passport, and hasn't explained why they're holding onto it).

Forever Bicycles is headed to Alcatraz, to be part of [@Large](#), a new Ai Weiwei exhibit set to open in the Fall. Photo Chris Young/Canadian Press files



At the same time, on the U.S. East Coast, Christopher Tsai, a New York-based fund manager, has said he wants to dedicate an art space, likely in New York City, to Ai. Inspired by private museums dedicated to a single artist, citing the Cy Twombly Gallery in Houston, Tsai, who is half-Chinese, is still building a collection of Ai Weiwei's artworks, with 40 works from the 1970s on already in his care, including the famed piece *Map of China* (2006), a 3D map made of a hunk of wood from destroyed Qing dynasty temples.