



Ai Weiwei Talks Alcatraz Exhibition

By Andrew Dalton
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Photo: Sam Breach

After the [October announcement](#) that celebrated Chinese dissident Ai Weiwei would be bringing an exhibition to Alcatraz island, the New York Times has [tracked the man down](#) to spill some more details on the project, which will just be called "Ai Weiwei on Alcatraz."

The location is a fitting one for Ai, who was imprisoned in for 81 days in 2011 for what his supporters say were bogus tax evasion charges. "I have too many friends today who are still in jail," he told the New York Times. "The fact that people who are fighting for freedom have lost their freedom being incarcerated is more than ironic." Ai is still something of a prisoner himself: his passport was confiscated by Chinese police about three years ago and it's unlikely he'll make

it to his own show when it opens sometime in fall of 2014. Because of Ai's status in China, the exhibition had to be cleared with the State Department.

Cheryl Haines, Ai's intermediary at San Francisco nonprofit For-Site, says it's too early to discuss which of the artist's works will be on display in the former federal penitentiary, but Ai claims he won't be installing work that directly relates to his own time in behind bars. According to the Times, the works will be on display in the main prison building and another laundry building next door.

As for the National Parks Service, which oversees the island and the daily tours as part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, superintendent Frank Dean tells the Times his group is fully onboard with the exhibition and that the individual locations were selected so they don't interfere with the architecture or (more importantly for the park) the thousands of daily visitors on Alcatraz tours.

The exhibition will run from September 27, 2014 to April 26, 2015 and will be open to anyone who buys a regular \$30 tour ticket. Those tickets, as you might now, regularly sell out months in advance and it's unclear at the moment if tickets during the exhibition period will go on sale earlier than usual. In the meantime, Ai has apparently been catching up on his Alcatraz trivia, watching DVDs of old Steve McQueen movies and taking a whole bunch of Instagram selfies:



aiww

Instagram

