

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – November 12, 2015

FOR-SITE Foundation to host *Ai Weiwei: LEGO Collection Point* at Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture



Single Panel Portrait of Ai Weiwei, 2014. Plastic LEGO®, 15 x 15 in.

San Francisco – *Ai Weiwei: LEGO Collection Point* is the artist and activist's latest work challenging censorship. In an Instagram post on October 23 Ai announced: "In September Lego refused Ai Weiwei Studio's request for a bulk order of Legos to create artwork to be shown at the National Gallery of Victoria as 'they cannot approve the use of Legos for political works.'" Calling LEGO's decision an act of censorship, Ai's response triggered a flood of offers of LEGO® bricks from individuals around the world. Inspired by the groundswell of support, Ai later posted on Instagram

that he would "make a new work to defend freedom of speech and 'political art'" using donated LEGO® bricks. Cultural institutions around the world have since organized collection points, including the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Royal Academy, London; Contemporary Art Center, Malaga, Spain; and the Brooklyn Museum, New York.

In September 2014, FOR-SITE opened *@Large: Ai Weiwei on Alcatraz* featuring Ai's now iconic first work rendered in LEGO® bricks, *Trace*. Including 176 portraits of prisoners of conscience, *Trace* is composed of 1.2 million LEGO® bricks assembled by 82 volunteers in San Francisco over the course of more than 1,600 hours. Echoing this power of collective participation, *Collection Point* encourages broad public involvement, and invites participants to reflect on their individual role in defending freedom of expression.

Organized by FOR-SITE in collaboration with Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture, the San Francisco *Collection Point* location features a 1997 dark green BMW 528i parked at the edge of the Fort Mason Center parking lot, straight past the entrance gate, by the bike

racks. LEGO® bricks in any amount and in any shape and color can be deposited through the car's sunroof every day from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Donations can also be made by mail to FOR-SITE at 49 Geary Street Suite 205, San Francisco, CA 94108. For *Collection Point* updates, follow Ai on Instagram and Twitter @aiww.

About Ai Weiwei

Ai Weiwei is a Beijing-based artist and activist whose work encompasses sculpture, installation, photography, film, architecture, curation, and social criticism. His art has been featured in major solo exhibitions including FOR-SITE's *@Large: Ai Weiwei on Alcatraz*, San Francisco, 2014-15; *Ai Weiwei at Blenheim Palace*, Woodstock, UK, 2014; *Evidence* at the Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin, 2014; and *Ai Weiwei: According to What?*, which was organized by the Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, in 2009, and traveled to North American venues in 2013-14. Ai collaborated with architects Herzog & de Meuron on the "bird's nest" stadium for the 2008 Beijing Olympics. He has been the recipient of numerous awards and honors, including Amnesty International's Ambassador of Conscience Award in 2015.

About the FOR-SITE Foundation

Established in 2003 by Cheryl Haines, the FOR-SITE Foundation is dedicated to the creation, understanding, and presentation of art about place through commissions, artist residencies, and educational programs. Since 2008, FOR-SITE has broken new ground and provided a model for engaging the public through artistic collaborations on national park land. Learn more at for-site.org.

About Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture

Decommissioned by the U.S. Army in 1962 and converted from a military installation into a nonprofit cultural center in 1977, Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture has long been host to a lively mix of arts, educational and cultural programming on San Francisco's northern waterfront. Each year, Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture provides more than \$2 million in support to local arts organizations, enabling groups to produce diverse and innovative art works at the historic waterfront campus. With a nearly four-decade history as an arts and culture destination in a National Park setting, Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture is now focused on reinvigorating its programming and amenities to better serve and engage the evolving and dynamic Bay Area creative community. Central to this new vision is the commissioning and presentation of adventurous and unconventional art works best realized in nontraditional or historic settings.

From November 14, 2015 through January 18, 2016, Fort Mason Center and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art are co-presenting the California debut of Janet Cardiff's immersive sound installation *The Forty Part Motet*. Learn more at fortmason.org.

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For Inquiries:
Alison Konecki
Development and Outreach Associate
FOR-SITE Foundation
415.362.9330
alison@for-site.org