

## Museum in San Diego to Stage Protest of Ai Weiwei's Detention on May 19



Visitors walk around Ai Weiwei's "Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads" at Somerset House in London May 11, 2011. The exhibition which comprises of 12 bronze animal heads recreated from traditional Zodiac sculptures, is on view from May 12 to June 26. REUTERS/Andrew Winning.

**SAN DIEGO, CA.** - The [Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego](#) announces a 24-hour protest to call for the release of detained Chinese artist Ai Weiwei. On Thursday, May 19, a broad roster of MCASD staff, members, and community leaders will participate in a silent yet symbolic event.

Beginning at 11 AM on Thursday, May 19 and continuing through 11 AM on Friday, May 20, volunteer participants will occupy two traditionally styled Chinese chairs for one-hour periods. This 24-hour sit-in references Ai Weiwei's sculpture series, Marble Chair, two of which are currently on view in the Museum's exhibition, Prospect 2011. These impressive yet haunting marble sculptures were acquired on May 11 by the Museum's International and Contemporary Collectors.

Internationally acclaimed Chinese artist Ai Weiwei was detained April 3 at the Beijing airport as he attempted to board a flight to Hong Kong. MCASD has stood alongside members of the international art community in voicing its disapproval and encouraging action from members, the community and the government to call for the artist's release.

Hugh Davies, the David C. Copley Director and CEO considers the silent protest a way to express the Museum's support of the artist, whose Beijing studio Museum supporters visited just months before Ai's detention.

"As the time of his detention lengthens, we grow more concerned for Ai's welfare and want to make a collective gesture in support of his release," said Davies.

Members of the community are invited to participate by offering an hour of their time to sit in the replica chairs during the 24-hour demonstration. Volunteers can RSVP on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/mcasd](#) or by emailing [mdaniels@mcasd.org](#) with the subject line "Sitting in Solidarity," and will be contacted to confirm a time.

Visitors may observe the silent protest during the Museum's open hours, which are 11am to 7pm on May 19. Participants will continue to occupy the chairs throughout the night after the Museum closes; the public can still view the protest since the chairs will be stationed directly behind the glass entry of the Joan and Irwin Jacobs Building.

For one week following the initial 24-hour demonstration, the chairs will remain on site and available for people to sit in, either for a minute or an hour. Participants are encouraged to post photos of themselves sitting in the chairs to the Museum's Facebook page to serve as a visual petition.