

VANCOUVER SCULPTURE PERFORMANCE NEW MEDIA IN PUBLIC SPACES BIENNALE →



April 13<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>  
Rio Theatre  
1660 East Broadway

# AI WEIWEI FILM RETROSPECTIVE



April 8, 2015

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Vancouver, Canada- The Vancouver Biennale kicks off the 2nd year of CineFest LIVE with a film retrospective of the internationally renowned and controversial Chinese artist and human rights activist Ai Weiwei. The 27 film retrospective will launch with a double bill featuring the Vancouver premiere of Ai Wewei: The Fake Case by Andreas Johnsen followed by the equally controversial documentary Ai Weiwei: Never Sorry by Alison Klayman. Given that the artist is restricted from leaving China, Global TV's national film critic Katherine Monk will host the Monday, April 13 screenings at the Rio Theatre.**

This will be the second event featuring Ai Weiwei at the 2014-2016 Vancouver Biennale, the first being the site-specific installation of F Grass at Harbour Green Park, an enigmatic artwork composed of 1327 cast iron pieces symbolizing the indestructibility and resiliency of the human spirit.

CineFest LIVE Director Ammar Mahimwalla says, "You can't stop people from expressing themselves, no matter how oppressive the government control. F Grass and the CineFest LIVE Ai Weiwei screenings are a clear demonstration of that, with Ai Weiwei getting his message out to the world despite his continued physical detainment in a country that seems so eager to shut him up."

As a follow up to the premiere of the Biennale's CineFest LIVE Documentary Film Festival, launched in June 2014 with Academy Award winner Oliver Stone and the Canadian premiere of his 12 part series The Untold History of the United States, this 2015 AI WEIWEI retrospective is an apt follow up and counterpoint to the discussion on freedoms, human rights, media and government interplay where the arts become a catalyst for dialogue, learning and social action.

Out of the 27 films directed by Ai Weiwei, 4 will be debuted at the Rio Theatre on April 20 and 26. The remaining Ai Weiwei films will be screened through the Biennale's educational partners and the Biennale website throughout 2015.

These films showcase Ai Weiwei as a controversial and outspoken political artist and activist, critiquing human rights and the government of China, art and architecture, contemporary culture, and actively embracing online platforms like blogs and Twitter to share and spread ideas despite government persecution.

### **Ai Weiwei Film Retrospective**

**DATE:** Monday April 13th, 2015, **TIME:** 6:30pm – 10:00pm

**VENUE:** Rio Theatre, 1660 East Broadway, Vancouver, BC

**TICKET PRICE:** Double Screening - \$20 in Advance – [CLICK HERE TO BUY TICKETS](#) \$30 at the Door

**SPECIAL PROMO:** CINEFEST LIVE FESTIVAL PASS: \$35 – Watch all films featured at the Ai Weiwei Film Retrospective

### **AI WEIWEI: NEVER SORRY**

Ai Weiwei is China's most famous international artist, and its most outspoken domestic critic. Against a backdrop of strict censorship and an unresponsive legal system, Ai expresses himself and organizes people through art and social media. In response, Chinese authorities have shut down his blog, beat him up, bulldozed his newly built studio, and held him in secret detention. AI WEIWEI: NEVER SORRY is the inside story of a dissident for the digital age who inspires global audiences and blurs the boundaries of art and politics. First-time director Alison Klayman gained unprecedented access to Ai while working as a journalist in China. Her detailed portrait provides a nuanced exploration of contemporary China and one of its most compelling public figures.

### **AI WEIWEI: THE FAKE CASE**

After 81 days of solitary detention, world-famous Chinese artist Ai Weiwei is put under house arrest. He suffers from a sleeping disorder and memory loss, 18 cameras are monitoring his studio and home, police agents follow his every move, and heavy restrictions from the Kafkaesque Chinese authorities weigh him down. Journalists, the art world and

his family all want a piece of him, and on top of that he is met with a gigantic lawsuit from the Chinese government, soon to be named 'The Fake Case'. Ai Weiwei is shaken, but during the year on probation he steadily finds new ways to provoke and challenge the mighty powers of the Chinese authorities in his fight for human rights. Ai Weiwei strongly believes that China is ready for change. And he will do everything to make it happen.

**DATE:** Monday April 20th, 2015, **TIME:** 6:00pm – 8:30pm

**VENUE:** Rio Theatre, 1660 East Broadway, Vancouver, BC

**TICKET PRICE:** Single Screening - \$10 in Advance – [CLICK HERE TO BUY TICKETS](#) \$15 at the Door

### **Ai Weiwei's Appeal ¥15,220,910.50**

Mandarin with English sub-titles

Ai Weiwei's Appeal ¥15,220,910.50 opens with Ai Weiwei's mother at the Venice Biennale in the summer of 2013 examining Ai's large S.A.C.R.E.D. installation portraying his 81-day imprisonment. The documentary goes on to chronologically reconstruct the events that occurred from the time he was arrested at the Beijing airport in April 2011 to his final court appeal in September 2012. The film portrays the day-to-day activity surrounding Ai Weiwei, his family and his associates ranging from consistent visits by the authorities, interviews with reporters, support and donations from fans and court dates. The film premiered at the International Film Festival in Rotterdam on January 23, 2014.

**DATE:** Sunday April 26th, 2015 **TIME:** 12:00pm – 4:30pm

**VENUE:** Rio Theatre, 1660 East Broadway, Vancouver, BC **TICKET PRICE:** Afternoon Pass - \$10 in Advance – [CLICK HERE TO BUY TICKETS](#) \$15 at the Door

### **Disturbing the Peace**

Mandarin with English sub-titles

"LAO MA TI HUA" or Disturbing the Peace is a documentary of an incident during Tan Zuoren's trial on August 12th, 2009. Tan Zuoren was charged with "inciting subversion of state power". The Chengdu police committed an obstruction of justice when they detained witnesses during the trial of the civil rights advocate. Tan Zuoren was charged as a result of his research and questioning regarding the May 12 Wenchuan student casualties due to poor construction of public schools by the government. Tan Zuoren was sentenced to five years in prison.

### **So Sorry**

Mandarin with English sub-titles

As a sequel to Ai Weiwei's film Disturbing the Peace, this film (named after Ai's 2009 exhibition in Munich, Germany) reveals the beginnings of the tension between Ai Weiwei and the Chinese government. So Sorry follows the investigation led by the Ai Weiwei studio to identify the students who died during the Sichuan earthquake as a result of corruption and poor building constructions. Ai Weiwei is beaten by the police, resulting in a brain hemorrhage discovered while Ai is in Munich to prepare for an exhibition at the Haus der Kunst museum. As a result, Ai undergoes emergency surgery in Munich. These events mark the beginning of Ai Weiwei's struggle and surveillance at the hands of the state police.

### **The Crab House**

Mandarin with English sub-titles

Early in 2008, the district government of Jiading, Shanghai invited Ai Weiwei to build a studio in Malu Township, as a

part of the local government's efforts to develop its cultural assets. By August 2010, the Ai Weiwei Shanghai Studio was complete. In October 2010, the Shanghai government declared the Ai Weiwei Shanghai Studio an illegal construction, and ordered it to be demolished. In response, Ai decided to host a river crab feast at the Shanghai studio site to commemorate the demolition, and announced an online invitation for all to attend. On November 7, 2010, despite the fact that Ai was placed under house arrest by the government, over 1,000 netizens attended Ai's celebration of the "River Crab Feast" at the Shanghai Studio. On January 11, 2011, the Shanghai city government forcibly demolished the Ai Weiwei Shanghai Studio within a day, without any prior notice.

### **Join the “What The F” Movement : #VanBiennale Instameet**

The Vancouver Biennale invites Vancouver's Instagram community to join our first Biennale Instameet on Saturday, April 11 at F Grass. Come celebrate art in public space and join us in using the power of Instagram to express your passion for photography and storytelling, connect with new people and embrace freedom of expression. The Instagrammer with the most popular photo will win free tickets to the Ai Weiwei's film retrospective plus a special Vancouver Biennale package! To participate, all you have to do is:

1. Follow us on Instagram (find us @van\_biennale or [http://instagram.com/van\\_biennale](http://instagram.com/van_biennale))
2. Comment on our InstaMeet post
3. RSVP to this event on our [Facebook page](#)

**DATE:** Saturday, April 11th, 2015, **TIME:** 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

**LOCATION:** F Grass, Harbour Green Park (Cordova and Bute St)

### **JOIN THE CONVERSATION!**

Over the course of this series, audiences will gain a deeper insight into multiple cinematic perspectives on Ai Weiwei and view his films within the larger history of films addressing social change. How do international film makers, critics, artists, and activists see the significance of Ai Weiwei, how do they frame him in their films and interviews about the artist? How is he discussed within China? In contrast, how does Ai Weiwei himself use film as a tool, and what comparisons can we draw when viewing his films alongside other political documentaries? Join the dialogue!

**Facebook:** VancouverBiennale

**Twitter:** @Van\_Biennale

**Instagram:** @van\_biennale

**Hashtags:** #VanBiennale #FGrass

### **ABOUT AI WEIWEI**

Born in 1957, Ai Weiwei is a Beijing-based interdisciplinary artist in sculpture, installation, photography, conceptual art and film, architect designer and political activist whose work blurs the lines between art and activism. Over the past twenty years he has gained international attention and recognition for his diverse body of work, often addressing questions of culture, history, politics, tradition, in addition to issues such as freedom of expression, individual and human rights, and the power of digital communication both in his home country of China and around the world. He was named one of the Top 100 People of 2011 in Time magazine and has exhibited in major exhibitions worldwide. He has been the recipient of numerous awards and honors, including the Václav Havel Prize for Creative Dissent from the Human Rights Foundation in 2012 and most recently the 2015 The Ambassador of Conscience Award from Amnesty International.

### **ABOUT THE VANCOUVER BIENNALE**

The Vancouver Biennale is a non-profit charitable organization that celebrates art in public space. Each exhibition

transforms the urban landscape into an Open Air Museum, creating globally inspired cultural experiences where people live, work, play, and transit. The Biennale features internationally renowned and emerging contemporary artists that represent a diversity of cultural perspectives and artistic disciplines including sculpture, new media, performance works, music and film. The objective is to use great art as a catalyst to dialogue, learning and social action.

## **MEDIA CONTACT**

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