DeCordova Announces its Support of the International Call for Release of Chinese Artist Ai Weiwei

Lincoln, MA, May 31, 2011—In response to the recent arrest and detainment of celebrated Chinese Artist Ai Weiwei, deCordova is joining the international call for his release. Joining institutions, Museum directors, and political leaders around the world, deCordova has chosen to express its concern for Ai Weiwei’s freedom in the form of a large red banner reading “Free Ai Weiwei” on the building’s façade, installed last week, as well as informational handouts at the front desk to educate visitors and raise awareness of this international injustice.

Ai Weiwei, one of the most prominent Chinese artists working today, was detained by the Chinese police on April 3, 2011 in the Beijing airport; his whereabouts are currently unknown. Officials have reported that he is under investigation for economic crimes; however, police have released limited information to the artist’s family.

The artist is best known for his “social sculpture,” his political activism around the earthquake that hit China's Sichuan Province in 2008, and his outspoken criticism of the Chinese Communist Party. Many also know Ai Weiwei as the artist consultant for the iconic “Bird’s Nest” stadium of the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing. Since then he has faced physical abuse from Chinese authorities; his new studio was recently demolished and his work has been censored throughout China. Weiwei’s disappearance comes as China carries out a massive crackdown on activists, arresting and detaining citizens in the midst of online calls for protest which began to circulate in February of this year.

Around the world, individuals and institutions have displayed posters and continue to participate in peaceful demonstrations calling for Ai Weiwei’s immediate release. From the Guggenheim Foundation’s petition to the Tate Modern’s posted message of “Release Ai Weiwei” on its roof, international art institutions are attempting to draw awareness to Ai Weiwei’s situation while also making a broad statement against censorship and advocating rights of speech.

DeCordova’s Director Dennis Kois has joined over 100,000 signatories, including Richard Armstrong, Director, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Foundation; Kaywin Feldman, former President, Association of Art Museum Directors and Director and President, Minneapolis Institute of Arts; Glenn Lowry, Director, Museum of Modern Art; and more.
Art, New York; Sir Nicholas Serota, Director, Tate; Michael Govan, Director, Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Jim Cuno, President and Director, Art Institute of Chicago; Jill Medvedow, Director, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; and Thomas W. Lentz, Elizabeth and John Moors Cabot Director, Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, MA, in the continued call to the Ministry of Culture of the People’s Republic of China for the release of Ai Weiwei through the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation’s online petition.

About deCordova
Established in 1950, deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum features unique indoor and outdoor venues, allowing visitors to celebrate and explore contemporary sculpture and art across 35 acres. Outside, deCordova’s Sculpture Park hosts more than 60 works, the majority of which are on loan to the Museum. Inside, the Museum features a robust slate of rotating exhibitions and innovative interpretive programming. DeCordova is committed to exhibiting high-quality, accessible art of nationally and internationally recognized artists, while also maintaining a strong relationship with established and emerging New England artists. DeCordova offers one of the largest non-degree granting studio art programs in New England, enrolling approximately 2,000 students in various classes and workshops throughout the year and also maintains a Permanent Collection of approximately 3,400 works. DeCordova’s Corporate Program provides businesses the opportunity to support the institution and New England-based contemporary artists through membership initiatives and the Art Loan option—a unique program created to exhibit artwork from New England artists and deCordova’s Permanent Collection in Corporate Member offices. Museum attracts more than 100,000 visitors from New England and tourists from around the world to its campus each year.

General Information
DeCordova is open Tuesday through Sunday, from 10 am to 5 pm and on select Monday holidays. General admission during Museum hours is $12 for adults; $8 for senior citizens, students, and youth ages 6–12. Children ages 5 and under, Lincoln residents, and Active Duty Military Personnel and their dependents are admitted free. The Sculpture Park is open year-round during daylight hours. Guided public tours of the Museum’s main galleries take place every Thursday at 1 pm and Sunday at 2 pm. Tours of the Sculpture Park are given on Saturday and Sunday at 1 pm from April to November. All guided tours are free with Campus admission. Visit decordova.org or call 781.259.8355 for further information.

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