

## Ai Weiwei – *Disposition*

Collateral Event of the 55. International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia

29 May — 15 September 2013

Giudecca & Sant'Antonin, Venice

Press Preview 28 May 10am

As a collateral event of the 55. International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia, Zuecca Project Space, in collaboration with the Lisson Gallery, London, will present an exhibition of new works by Ai Weiwei, from 29 May - 15 September 2013. The artist's only major new solo show in 2013, it marks the debut of *S.A.C.R.E.D.*, an extraordinary new work addressing his April 2011 arrest by the Chinese Government and the 81-day period subsequently spent in captivity. This is the first time the artist has directly responded to his incarceration through a work in a public exhibition.

Curated by Maurizio Bortolotti, the exhibition will be presented across two locations in Venice: the church of Sant'Antonin and the Zitelle complex, home of Zuecca Project Space. Work by Ai Weiwei will also be on display elsewhere in the Venice Biennale as part of a group exhibition representing the German Pavilion.

*S.A.C.R.E.D.*, presented at the Sant'Antonin church, is composed of six parts: (i) *S upper*; (ii) *A ccusers*; (iii) *C leansing*; (iv) *R itual*; (v) *E ntropy*; and (vi) *D oubt*. This landmark work comprises six large iron boxes with small apertures - such as those found in the door of a cell - through which the viewer must peer to see the dioramas contained within. Each diorama includes large hyper-realist models of the artist and his captors, and documents in painstaking, unflinching detail the different stages of Ai Weiwei's time in incarceration.

From the moment he is first led into his cell, to periods of interrogation, to him sleeping, to even those instances when he was forced to use the toilet or wash naked under the gaze of his captors, no aspect of Ai Weiwei's life in prison is left unexplored. The artist's unflinching willingness to reveal the most intimate and painful moments of his captivity underscores the relentless assault on personal dignity and freedom that he and many others have suffered, and continue to suffer, at the hands of the authorities in China and in other countries worldwide who seek to constrain freedom of expression with force.

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Specially conceived with the Sant'Antonin space in mind, *S.A.C.R.E.D* will also function as a dialogue between the artist and the existing Baroque architecture and its religious artifacts, offering an immediate sense of the drama of an event that underlines the contradictory development of China.

In the Zuecca Project Space will be seen an expanded version of the artist's sculptural installation *Straight*. First exhibited as part of his 2012 acclaimed survey show at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington DC., *Straight* is formed from 150 tons of steel rebar recovered from the collapsed schools in which more than five thousand children perished during the 2008 earthquake in Sichuan, China.

One of the leading cultural figures of his generation, Ai Weiwei has consistently displayed great courage, placing himself at risk to affect social change through his art. He serves as an example for legitimate social criticism and free expression both in China and internationally.

The exhibition with Zuecca Project Space represents a new chapter in the long-standing historical relationship - founded on trade, as well as religious and cultural exchange - that exists between China and Venice. This relationship will acquire fresh immediacy in light of the artist's interpretation of contemporary China within the context of the city.

The Lisson Gallery has represented and worked closely with Ai Weiwei since 2010, presenting acclaimed solo exhibitions of his work at its London and Milan locations.

## Practical Information

**Opening hours:** 10am – 6 pm

**Location 1:** Complesso delle Zitelle, Giudecca  
Vaporetto Stop: Zitelle

**Location 2:** Chiesa di Sant' Antonin, Castello  
Vaporetto Stop: San Marco – Pietà / San Zaccaria (da Zitelle)

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## Notes to Editors

### About Ai Weiwei

Ai Weiwei was born in 1957 in Beijing, China, where he lives and works. Together with Herzog & de Meuron, he created the 2012 Serpentine Gallery Pavilion in London, and is the recipient of an Honorary Fellowship from the Royal Institute of British Architects.

Previous solo exhibitions include Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington DC (2012); Lisson Gallery, Milan (2012); Kistefos-Museet, Jevnaker (2012); De Pont, Netherlands (2012); Jeu de Paume, Paris, (2012); Victoria and Albert Museum, London (2011); Lisson Gallery, London (2011); Somerset House, London (2011); Kunsthaus Bregenz (2011); Stiftung DKM, Duisburg (2010); Museum of Contemporary Craft, Portland (2010); Arcadia University Gallery, Glenside (2010); Mori Art Museum, Tokyo (2009); Haus der Kunst, Munich (2009); Three Shadows Photography Art Center, Beijing (2009); Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation, Cambelltown Arts Center, Sydney (2008); Groninger Museum, Groningen (2008).

Group exhibitions include MoMA - Museum of Modern Art, New York City (2012); Ukrainian Biennale of Contemporary Art, Kiev (2012); Wolfsburg Kunstmuseum (2012); Gl. Holtegaard, Holte (2011); Rotterdam, Rotterdam (2011); MoMA - Museum of Modern Art, New York City (2011); the São Paulo Biennial (2010); Biennale Architecture, Venice (2008); Documenta 12, Kassel (2007) and Tate Liverpool (2007).

### About Zuecca Project Space

Zuecca Project Space is a not for profit space for contemporary art on the island of Giudecca. The union between the historical context in which the Space stands and its vocation for the contemporary world makes it a unique venue in which both established and emerging artists can present the results of their endeavours to a public composed of contemporary art enthusiasts and professionals.

Zuecca Project Space's mission is to act as a centre of excellence in the production and promotion of contemporary arts by means of a continuous process of exchanges of experience with local life and a communion of intents with some of the leading international cultural institutions.

### About Alessandro Possati

Alessandro Possati is the Project Supervisor and Director of Zuecca Project Space. A graduate of the Bocconi Management in Art, Culture and Communication Faculty, he runs the non-profit space of the Zuecca Project Space and collaborates as External Relations Manager with Valorizzazioni Cultural. During his years of activity, Alessandro Possati has had the opportunity to work with major institutions such as the Guggenheim Foundation, Save Venice, Venice Heritage, the Palais de Tokyo, the Pinault Foundation and the Biennale in all its facets (Art, Film, Architecture, Theatre, Music and Dance). He has also worked with artists of international repute such as, among others, Jeff Koons, Takashi Murakami, Tony Cragg, Julian Schnabel, Jan Fabre, Wim Delvoye and Rirkrit Tiravanija.

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## About Maurizio Bortolotti

Maurizio Bortolotti was born in 1961 in Brescia and he lives in Milan, Italy. He is Curator of the Zuecca Project Space program. In 2010 he served as Art Commissioner for the First International Art Fair Art Gwangju made by the Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju. Previously exhibition curated include Yona Friedman. Halç Center, Special project of Istanbul Design Biennale Istanbul (2012); Rirkrit Tiravanija, Untitled 2012 (a study for Karl's perfect day) or (the incomparable Karl Holmqvist). Zuecca Project Space, Venice (2012); Orientale (with Shwetal Patel), Zuecca Project Space, Venice (2011); Yona Friedman/Tomas Saraceno, MerzWorld (with Adrian Notz), Cabaret Voltaire, Zurich (2011); Dan Graham, Models and Video (with Gavin Wade), East Side Project, Birmingham (2011); Insight Turkey.2. Kutlug Atman. Dictionary, Galleria Francesca Minini, Milan (2009); Insight Turkey.1. Ali Kazma. Obstructions, Galleria Francesca Minini, Milan (2008). Platform Paradise, FAST, Village of Ayn Hawd, Israel (2008); Local Modernity/Global Expectations, Special project 10th International Istanbul Biennale (2007); Tomas Saraceno, Museo Aerosolar, Isola Art Center, Milan (2007). Amongst his publications: Il Critico come Curatore, Milan, Silvana (2003), (Writing of) Pierre Restany. The Critic Who Was an Artist, Milan, Domus (with Stefano Casciani) (2004); Unidentified Modern Cities, Zurich, Ringier (2011).

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## About Lisson Gallery:

Founded in 1967 by Nicholas Logsdail, Lisson Gallery maintains its unique profile and position as one of the first galleries in the UK, Europe and the US to champion a generation of artists who transformed the way art was made and presented. These young artists – including Carl Andre, Art & Language, Daniel Buren, Dan Graham, Dan Flavin, Donald Judd, John Latham, Lee Ufan, Sol LeWitt, Richard Long, Robert Mangold, Giulio Paolini and Lawrence Weiner - represented not a style but an attitude, an ethos concerning art's place in a wider intellectual, cultural and social context. Over the past 46 years, Lisson Gallery has nurtured the careers of no fewer than five Turner-Prize winners, identifying and supporting successive generations of artists with radical and distinctive approaches to the artistic possibilities of their times. These include the New British Sculptors who emerged in the early 1980s such as; Tony Cragg, Richard Deacon, Shirazeh Houshiary, Anish Kapoor and Julian Opie; and a more diverse range of international artists like, Marina Abramovic, Allora & Calzadilla, Ai Weiwei, Gerard Byrne, Ceal Floyer, Rodney Graham, Tatsuo Miyajima, Jonathan Monk, Tony Oursler, Florian Pumhösl, Rashid Rana and Liu Xiaodong, through to a younger generation such as, Cory Arcangel, Ryan Gander, Haroon Mirza and Pedro Reyes. Lisson Gallery continues to support the future of its artists, the legacy of historic figures, the evolving practice of established artists, and the wide-ranging potential of emerging and new talents.

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This collaboration is part of the *Lisson Presents* programme, where the Gallery extends its curatorial activity beyond the Lisson spaces in London and Milan, working with institutions and artists to present new initiatives around the world. Recent projects include *The Magic of the State*, a group exhibition realised in collaboration with Beirut, a new art initiative in Cairo, Egypt; and *Nostalgic for the Future*, an exhibition of British Lisson Gallery artists presented at Centro Brasileiro Britânico, São Paulo, Brazil.