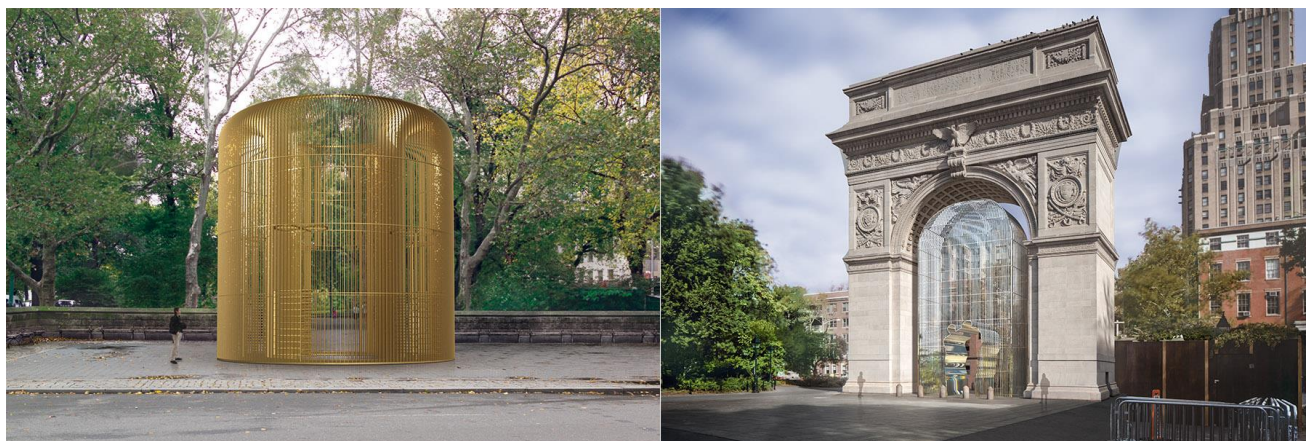




For Immediate Release

**PUBLIC ART FUND ANNOUNCES ALL SITES FOR  
AI WEIWEI'S 300+ LOCATION, FIVE-BOROUGH EXHIBITION  
IN NEW YORK CITY, OCTOBER 2017**

**INCLUDING CENTRAL PARK, WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK,  
AND THE UNISPHERE AT FLUSHING MEADOWS CORONA PARK**



***Ai Weiwei: Good Fences Make Good Neighbors***  
**October 12, 2017 – February 11, 2018**  
**Citywide**

**August 22, 2017, NEW YORK, NY—** Public Art Fund is pleased to announce new details for its ambitious, multi-borough exhibition ***Good Fences Make Good Neighbors*** by **Ai Weiwei**, opening in October 2017 as the culmination of its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year. Inspired by the international migration crisis and current global geopolitical landscape, the exhibition will transform the security fence into a powerful social and artistic symbol with interventions across the city. Large-scale, site-specific, freestanding works will be installed at **Doris C. Freedman Plaza at Central Park**, the **Washington Square Arch** in Greenwich Village, and the **Unisphere** at Flushing Meadows Corona Park in Queens, in partnership with NYC Parks. These will be joined by site-specific interventions on top of and in between private buildings located at **48 East 7<sup>th</sup> Street**, **189 Chrystie Street**, **248 Bowery**, and **The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art** at Astor Place; a series of new works at the **New York City Economic Development Corporation-managed Essex Street Market**; and sculptural interventions around 10 **JCDecaux bus shelters** in partnership with the New York City Department of Transportation. In addition to these sculptural works, Ai has created a new series of 200 two-dimensional works that will appear in all five boroughs on **lampposts banners**. The artist will also showcase a new series of 100+ **documentary images** citywide on **JCDecaux bus shelters and newsstands**, as well as **Intersection's LinkNYC kiosks**; the photos were taken by Ai during his travels and ongoing research on the global refugee crisis and will be

paired with poetic and factual texts to connect the very real stories of displaced people from around the world to Ai's symbolic interventions throughout New York City. Each of the works will grow out of the existing urban infrastructure, using the fabric of the city as its base and drawing attention to the role of the fence in dividing people. In doing so, the artist highlights how this form, ubiquitous yet also potent, can alter how we perceive and relate to our environment.

Ai has particular empathy with displaced people. Growing up amid the upheavals of the Cultural Revolution, Ai and his family were exiled to Shihezi, Xinjiang where his father, a renowned poet who had been branded an enemy of the state, was made to clean the village's communal toilets. Later he moved to New York City as an art student in the 1980s and experienced life as an immigrant in the U.S., where he pursued an interest in Western modern and contemporary art. Returning to China in 1993, Ai gained artistic success but also notoriety for his presence on social media and for using his art and public platform to engage with pressing political issues, eventually resulting in his 2011 arrest and detention by the Chinese government. Since the reinstatement of his passport in 2015, Ai has traveled to refugee camps across the globe and has dedicated much of his practice to bringing attention to the plight of displaced people, many of whom are victims of war or acts of terror. This global issue has gained a different relevance in the U.S. in the wake of new policies on immigration and border control, making the fence a particularly charged symbol of division and isolationism in this country.

"Ai Weiwei is unique in having combined the roles of preeminent contemporary artist, political dissident, and human rights activist in such a prominent and powerful way," said **Public Art Fund Director & Chief Curator Nicholas Baume**. "In many ways, *Good Fences Make Good Neighbors* is the culmination of his work to date. It grows out of his personal experience of 'otherness,' his distinguished practice as both artist and architectural designer, as well as his intensive research on the international refugee crisis and global rise of nationalism. At the same time, his long and formative history with New York has been deeply influential in the development of this exhibition."

Since the late 1960s, experimental artists have used New York City as a canvas for their practice, intervening with public plazas, buildings, the city's infrastructure, unused and abandoned spaces and more, to explore new ideas in public space and demonstrate the potential of the urban landscape to act as a platform for artistic expression. Public Art Fund grew out of this impulse, 40 years ago. Working in this tradition and inspired by minimal and conceptual artists of the 1960s and 70s like Richard Serra, Gordon Matta-Clark, and Trisha Brown, Ai will create variations on the fence – from metal chain link to synthetic netting – to form interventions that adapt to their sites, as if growing out of urban space and changing how we relate to the fence and our environment. They will be installed in key locations around the city encouraging the public to engage with the city through the eyes of the artist.

With both local and global resonances, *Good Fences Make Good Neighbors* utilizes diverse sites across the city – in locations both iconic and community-oriented – that connect Ai's personal story as an artist, activist, and immigrant, to the broader history of immigration in New York. These locations also highlight the city as a site for artistic intervention, and the charged socio-political moment reverberating around the world.

***Good Fences Make Good Neighbors* is Ai Weiwei's largest and most ambitious public art exhibition to date and will be on view October 12, 2017 – February 11, 2018, at sites across New York City.**

*This exhibition is curated by Public Art Fund Director & Chief Curator Nicholas Baume with the assistance of Associate Curator Daniel S. Palmer.*

## GOOD FENCES MAKE GOOD NEIGHBORS: SITES AND INTERVENTIONS

*\*Denotes a newly-announced location*

### **Sculptural Installations**

#### **Doris C. Freedman Plaza, Central Park, Manhattan**

Located at the southeast entrance to Central Park, at **Doris C. Freedman Plaza**, this large-scale, free-standing installation will transform the fence into an abstract, golden cage-like sculpture. While retaining references often associated with structures of division, like bars and turn-styles, the installation will be juxtaposed against one of the most visited urban public parks in the U.S. Designed as a democratic oasis and vision of utopia, Central Park has vast open areas, lush forests, and monuments of heroes and explorers, creating a powerful contrast with Ai's work. The installation will allow viewers to walk into and around the sculpture, inviting them not only to interact with the work, but also consider the inherent dualities of the world we live in.

#### **Washington Square Arch, Washington Square Park, Manhattan\***

Similarly, Washington Square Park in Greenwich Village has long been a popular site for tourists and residents alike. Bordered by New York University, the iconic park lies at the heart of culture and politics in New York City, often acting as a site for celebrations, performances, and protests. The location has deep ties to New York City's early history; originally used as farmland by Native Americans, the land was claimed by European settlers in the mid-17th century and later used as a home for freed slaves; in the late 18th century the site was turned into a burial ground before becoming a public space in 1826. Ai's nearly 50-foot tall cage structure will be located within the triumphal **Washington Square Arch**, which was created in 1892 to celebrate the centennial of George Washington's inauguration as President of the United States. The artist's sculpture will feature a polished mirror passageway in the form of two united human silhouettes, evoking the entrance that Marcel Duchamp (who frequented and also played chess in Washington Square Park) designed for André Breton's Gradiva gallery in 1937.

"When I lived in New York in the 80s, I spent much of my time in Washington Square Park. This area was one of New York's most vibrant and diverse neighborhoods – a home to immigrants of all backgrounds," said **Ai Weiwei**. "The triumphal arch has been a symbol of victory after war since antiquity. The basic form of a fence or cage suggests that it might inhibit movement through the arch, but instead a passageway cuts through this barrier – a door obstructed, through which another door opens."

#### **Unisphere, Flushing Meadows Corona Park, Queens\***

Home to the iconic Unisphere and host to the World's Fair in 1939 and 1964, Flushing Meadows Corona Park is situated between several of the most diverse neighborhoods in New York City, reflecting more recent waves of immigration. Located at the **Unisphere**, Ai's installation will create a low perimeter around the symbolic structure. Rather than impeding views of the historical site, the installation will emphasize the Unisphere's form and symbolic meaning, engaging with the steel representation of the Earth by surrounding it with mesh netting strung around metal stanchion barriers.

### **Site-Specific Installations On Buildings**

- **48 East 7<sup>th</sup> Street, East Village, Manhattan\***
- **189 Chrystie Street, Lower East Side, Manhattan\***
- **248 Bowery, Lower East Side, Manhattan\***
- **The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, Manhattan**

The Lower East Side has a rich and documented history of immigration, and as the neighborhood changes, it continues to be a hub for diverse and international communities. Ai Weiwei's subtle interventions in Lower Manhattan will grow out of the existing urban landscape, highlighting both the personal and historical stories of these neighborhoods, as well as their continuing evolving identities. At **48 East 7<sup>th</sup> Street**, the street where Ai lived in a basement apartment as a student and immigrant in the 1980s, his intervention will occupy the interstitial space between two buildings. Two additional rooftop fence installations will appear on buildings at **189 Chrystie Street**, a sign factory in the 1920s that is now home to a nightclub, and **248 Bowery**, a historic building dating back to pre-1830. These will draw attention upward to the unused spaces on top of these lower lying buildings on the vibrant Lower East Side, a neighborhood that has been home to many immigrant groups, particularly in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Farther north at Astor Place, Ai will install another sculptural variation on the fence at **The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art's** iconic Foundation Building, which for more than 150 years has served as a beacon of democracy, free speech, equality, and educational rigor in New York City. The work will fill the open arched spaces on the north portico façade of the building, simultaneously covering these open spaces but remaining porous.

### **JCDecaux Bus Shelters, Downtown Brooklyn and Harlem**

Transportation is a key component in the conversation about immigrants and refugees today; the forced emigration from their homes and subsequent restrictions of their free movement are central to this debate. In New York, the construction of transportation infrastructure has played a central role in the American immigrant story. The workforce to construct the City's roads, bridges, and tunnels were made up of immigrants, and that infrastructure continues to be vital to the flow of millions of people each day. Interventions at **ten JCDecaux bus shelters in Downtown Brooklyn**, along Fulton Street and other major roadways, and in **Harlem**, will highlight the importance of access and movement in a thriving city, as well as the city's easily-navigated grid system, city infrastructure, and public transportation. The installations will incorporate additional seating, effectively functioning as both sculpture and urban amenity.

### **Citywide Interventions**

#### **Lampposts Banners\***

#### **Documentary Images (JCDecaux Bus Shelters & Newsstands; Intersection's LinkNYC kiosks)**

For Ai, the grid of New York City reflects the ideal of a democratic and accessible society, which defines how people engage with the city both physically and psychologically. The citywide components of the exhibition will include **200 lampposts banners** featuring portraits of immigrants from different periods, and a new series of **100+ documentary images** on advertising platforms including **JCDecaux bus shelters and newsstand kiosks**, as well as **LinkNYC kiosks**, emphasizing democratic engagement. The documentary photographs will be paired with information and quotes from poets and writers about global displacement, connecting the very real stories of today's immigrants and refugees with the exhibition's sculptural works. These works will be located at prominent sites with significant pedestrian traffic, major transportation hubs, and near other site-specific installations in order to create arteries that connect clusters of sites across the city.

## **ABOUT THE ARTIST**

One of the leading cultural figures of his generation who is recognized for the artistic influence and profound social impact of his work, Ai Weiwei has built a remarkable interdisciplinary career across a variety of media. He inhabits many roles, including those of sculptor, architect, filmmaker, photographer, writer, publisher, curator, and activist. In each of these outlets he explores the dynamics of institutional power and draws attention to urgent humanitarian crises and civil liberties violations through resonant images and installations.

Ai Weiwei (b. 1957, Beijing, China) lives and works in both Berlin and Beijing. He attended the Beijing Film Academy and later, on moving to New York (1983–1993), continued his studies at the Parsons School of Design. Major solo exhibitions include the National Gallery in Prague, Czech Republic (2017); Palazzo Strozzi, Florence, Italy (2016); 21er Haus Museum of Contemporary Art, Vienna, Austria (2016); Helsinki Art Museum, Finland (2016); Royal Academy of Art, London, UK (2015); Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin, Germany (2014); Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C. (2012); Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taiwan (2011); Tate Modern, London (2010); and Haus der Kunst, Munich (2009). Architectural collaborations include the 2012 Serpentine Pavilion and the 2008 Beijing National Stadium, with Herzog and de Meuron. Among numerous awards and honors, he was granted the lifetime achievement award from the Chinese Contemporary Art Awards in 2008 and the Václav Havel Prize for Creative Dissent from the Human Rights Foundation, New York in 2012; he was made Honorary Academician at the Royal Academy of Arts, London in 2011. He was given the Ambassador of Conscience Award by Amnesty International, London in 2015.

## **A BRIEF 40-YEAR HISTORY**

Public Art Fund celebrates 40 years of presenting bold, impactful, ambitious works of contemporary art throughout New York City with a series of exhibitions in 2017 that is emblematic of the organization's mission and innovative history. Since Public Art Fund's founding by Doris C. Freedman in 1977, the organization has worked to break down the inherent boundaries between audiences and institutions, by presenting work outside the confines of the traditional white cube. 40 years later, Public Art Fund continues to demonstrate the power and potential of public art to transform the urban environment, while encompassing experiences as diverse and wide-ranging as the artists who have imagined them.

## **SUPPORT**

### **Partnering Sponsor: Frahm & Frahm**

Lead support is provided by Jill & Peter Kraus, Jennifer & Matthew Harris, and Anonymous.

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Jill & Peter Kraus, Jennifer & Matthew Harris, the Charina Endowment Fund, Elizabeth Fearon Pepperman & Richard C. Pepperman II, Jennifer & Jason New, Oliver's Realty Group/RAL Development Services, Elise & Andrew Brownstein, Holly & Jonathan Lipton, Marcia Dunn & Jonathan Sobel, Stavros Niarchos Foundation, Patricia & Howard Silverstein, The Silverweed Foundation, Katherine Farley & Jerry Speyer, The Marc Haas Foundation, and Sydney & Stanley S. Shuman

**ABOUT PUBLIC ART FUND**

As the leader in its field, Public Art Fund brings dynamic contemporary art to a broad audience in New York City and beyond by mounting ambitious free exhibitions of international scope and impact that offer the public powerful experiences with art and the urban environment.

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Rendering of one piece in the multi-part Public Art Fund project *Ai Weiwei: Good Fences Make Good Neighbors* at Doris C. Freedman Plaza, courtesy of Ai Weiwei Studio/ Frahm & Frahm

Rendering of one piece in the multi-part Public Art Fund project *Ai Weiwei: Good Fences Make Good Neighbors* at Washington Square Park, courtesy of Ai Weiwei Studio/ Frahm & Frahm