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NEVADA MUSEUM OF ART WELCOMES AI WEIWEI'S CIRCLE OF ANIMALS/ZODIAC HEADS: GOLD

Exhibition engages issues of looting, repatriation and cultural heritage while expanding upon ongoing themes in Ai Weiwei's body of work that explore fakes, copies and ideas related to authenticity.



Reno, Nev. The Nevada Museum of Art welcomes 12 gilded bronze sculptures representing the animals from the traditional Chinese zodiac. *Ai Weiwei Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads: Gold* engages issues of looting, repatriation and cultural heritage while expanding upon ongoing themes in the artist's body of work that explore fakes, copies and ideas related to authenticity. This exhibition will be on display July 23 through October 23 at Nevada Museum of Art, Donald W. Reynolds Center for the Visual Arts, E. L. Wiegand Gallery located at 160 West Liberty Street in downtown Reno.

Chinese contemporary artist Ai Weiwei drew inspiration for the twelve zodiac heads from those originally located at Yuanming Yuan (Old Summer Palace), an enormous complex of imperial palaces and European-style gardens built outside of Beijing, China by the Qing emperors in the 18th and 19th centuries. Designed and engineered by Giuseppe Castiglione, an Italian Jesuit lay brother and artist to the imperial court; and Michel Benoist, a French scientist and Catholic priest of the Jesuit order, the heads at Yuanming Yuan originally functioned as an ornate fountain clock, each head spouting water at two-hour intervals.

Once accessible only to 18th and 19th-century Chinese elite, the Beijing garden complex was set afire, destroyed, and looted by Anglo-French troops in 1860 during the Second Opium War. The original zodiac heads were lost, and later turned up in private and public collections in Europe and Asia. Five heads remain missing, while the seven heads still known to exist (*Monkey, Pig, Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, and Horse*) have since been returned to China.

Ai Wei Wei's Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads: Gold will be on view from July 23 through October 23 at Nevada Museum of Art, Donald W. Reynolds Center for the Visual Arts, E. L. Wiegand Gallery located at 160 West Liberty Street in downtown Reno's Liberty District.

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About Nevada Museum of Art

www.nevadaart.org

The Nevada Museum of Art is a museum of ideas. The only accredited art museum in the state, it is a private, non-profit organization supported by the generosity of its membership as well as by sponsorships and grants. Through creative programming and scholarship, the Museum provides the opportunity for people to encounter, engage and enjoy a diversity of art experiences. The Museum is open Wednesday through Sunday, 10 am to 6 pm, late on Thursdays until 8 pm, and closed on Mondays, Tuesdays and national holidays. Admission is FREE for members, \$10 General Admission, \$8 Student / Senior, \$1 children 6 to 12 years and free for children 5 and under. Annual Museum Membership starts at just \$30.

IMAGE CAPTIONS: (1) Ai Weiwei, Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads Gold, 2010, Bronze with gold patina [Dog], 25" high x 15" wide x 19" deep. Private collection. (2) Ai Weiwei, Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads: Gold, 2010, Bronze with gold patina. Private collection. 3) Ai Weiwei, Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads: Gold, 2010 Bronze with gold patina, [Dragon] 25" high x 15" wide x 19" deep. Private collection.