

Beat: Arts

## **AI WEIWEI THE CHINESE ARTIST WHOSE INCARCERATION HELPED HIS CAREER WAS REFUSED SIX MONTHS VISA BY UK**

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**USPA NEWS** - The United Kingdom has granted a six-month business visa to dissident Chinese artist Ai Weiwei after rejecting his application amid claims he failed to declare a 'criminal conviction'. The artist posted a letter on his Instagram account from the United Kingdom Home Office...

The United Kingdom has granted a six-month business visa to dissident Chinese artist Ai Weiwei after rejecting his application amid claims he failed to declare a 'criminal conviction'. The artist posted a letter on his Instagram account from the United Kingdom Home Office refusing his bid for a six month business visit and suggesting he made 'false claims' on his visa application form.

The letter does confirm that Ai Weiwei will be able to attend his upcoming Exhibition at the Royal Academy when it opens in September. He was granted a 20-day visa to mark the opening of the landmark show in London 'Exceptionally, it has been decided to grant you entry clearance outside the immigration Rules for your stated dates of travel to the UK'.

Also the letter was adding 'Should you wish to clarify any of the answers you state in a visa application form, there is a section at the end of the form ('Additional Information') that allows you to do so.' Still, in a separate post on Instagram, Ai Weiwei stated 'has never been charged or convicted of a crime' and has 'attempted to clarify this claim with the UK Visas and Immigration Department and the British Embassy in Beijing over several telephone conversations.'

Now, Ai Weiwei is in London for a major retrospective of his work at the Royal Academy of Arts. The Exhibition looks at the last twenty years of his work, including political pieces relating to his time under arrest in China and to the 2008 Sichuan earthquake. It will be from September 19 to December 13, 2015. He is strongly promoted by the Royal Academy of Arts as 'Major artist and cultural phenomenon Ai Weiwei takes over our main galleries with brave, provocative and visionary works.' Also, 'Curated in collaboration with Ai Weiwei from his studio in Beijing, we present some of his most important works from the time he returns to China from the US in 1993 right up to present day.'

Berlin is the place where many of the works, that will be appearing at the London show, were made. Berlin is his European base. When the Chinese authorities returned him his passport last July, Berlin was his first destination (his partner and son living there). On his arrival, the city greeted him as artist-activist royalty with a red-carpet welcome by the mayor and a teaching post at the University of the Arts. Like many successful artists, he operates a version of the traditional atelier system, with a crowd of assistants and fabricators producing his work. Although, many of the pieces were conceived in his studio in China.

### **Article online:**

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-5463/ai-weiwei-the-chinese-artist-whose-incarceration-helped-his-career.html>

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