

April 14, 2011

Arts Group Calls for Worldwide Sit-In for Ai Weiwei

By Kate Taylor

Artists and curators will hold a sit-in outside Chinese embassies and consulates on Sunday to protest the detention of the Chinese artist Ai Weiwei. Mr. Ai was detained on April 3; on April 7, a Chinese official told The Times that he was being held on suspicion of “economic crimes.”

The form of Sunday’s planned protest—in which participants will bring chairs and sit down outside Chinese government buildings around the world — draws on an installation titled “Fairytale: 1001 Qing Dynasty Wooden Chairs,” which Mr. Ai did at Documenta in Kassel, Germany, in 2007. In it, he arranged 1,001 late Ming and Qing Dynasty wooden chairs around the exhibition; he also recruited 1,001 Chinese citizens through the Internet to volunteer to go and live in Kassel for the length of the show. The plan for the protest took shape after Anne Pasternak, the president of **Creative Time**, posted a question on Facebook asking what the art community could do to support Mr. Ai’s release. Steven Holmes, an adjunct curator at the Bass Museum of Art in Miami Beach, listed “about 11 ideas all based on Ai Weiwei’s work, and I thought that was really beautiful,” Ms. Pasternak said in an interview.

With a friend from Sweden and others, Ms. Pasternak put up a Facebook page for the protest, titled “1,001 Chairs for Ai Weiwei.” The protest will take place at 1 p.m. on Sunday.



Demonstrators carrying posters of the artist Ai Weiwei gathered outside a Chinese government office in Hong Kong