

**Tuesday**

May 2, 2017



**TODAY**  
**89 / 68**  
Breezy and warm



**WEDNESDAY**  
**83 / 58**  
A 60% chance of  
thunderstorms



**THURSDAY**  
**80 / 56**  
Sunny skies



**Statesman Weather  
App: Live radar, weather  
news and alerts.**

**\$2.00**

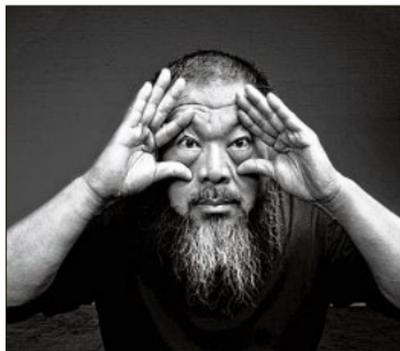
# Austin American-Statesman

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AUSTIN360, D1

**NEW EXHIBIT  
AT ANTONE'S  
BRINGS MUSIC,  
ART TOGETHER**



METRO & STATE, B1

**ART FOR  
AUSTIN**

Chinese activist  
sending 2 of his works

BUSINESS, B5

**ACL FEST  
CLAIMS \$277M  
IMPACT ON  
ECONOMY**

ARTS

# Chinese artist and activist sending 2 works to Austin

By **Michael Barnes**

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Influential Chinese artist Ai Weiwei, also one of the world's most renowned activists, is sending two of his monumental works to Austin.

The vibrant “Forever Bicycles,” a grouping of 1,200 bicycles previously seen in different configurations with different names in New York, Washington, Venice, London and elsewhere, will stand at the mouth of Waller Creek at Lady Bird Lake. It was inspired by the Forever brand bicycles that zip around Beijing.

The visually quieter “Iron Tree Trunk” draws on Chinese cultural traditions and on images the artist

collected in the mountains. The 18-foot-high metal sculpture will be seen in the Marcus Sculpture Park at Laguna Gloria. The pieces are meant to spark talk about the environment and human rights, among other ideas.

The extraordinary, long-term loans – no end dates have been announced – were arranged by the Contemporary Austin and the Waller Creek Conservancy with help from a \$1.1 million grant from the Edward and Betty Marcus Foundation. Family-friendly activities are scheduled for the Waller Creek site from 10 a.m. to noon June 3.

“This project taps into one of

**Art** continued on **B3**



Chinese artist Ai Weiwei's “Iron Tree Trunk” will be on display at the Marcus Sculpture Park at Laguna Gloria. PHOTO BY JACK HELMS

/ COURTESY LISSON GALLERY

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# Art

continued from B1

my greatest passions – bringing art directly to the public in ways and in places that they may not expect it,” said Louis Grachos, director and CEO of the Contemporary Austin. “When I started at the Contemporary, I spoke of creating a ‘Museum Without Walls,’ and these projects with Ai Weiwei are exactly what I dreamed of bringing to Austin: works that inspire wonder while addressing

important social and political issues that affect us all.”

“‘Forever Bicycles’ is a monumental work,” said Peter Mullan, CEO of the Waller Creek Conservancy. “Ephemeral, yes, but monumental all the same, so it is incredibly exciting to see it realized and to witness the impact that it will have on the public. The piece is also a window onto the future of Waller Creek and the changes that are coming to the entire Waller Creek District, so it is doubly exciting.”

Ai, whose relatives were

sent to labor camps during the Cultural Revolution, lived in the United States from 1981 to 1993. He now runs multipurpose studios in Beijing and Berlin, using unorthodox materials to produce sculpture, photography, film, writing, architecture and social media.

Since the 1990s, his work has been critical of the regime in China. As early as 2005, he blogged openly about the Chinese government, especially in the wake of a deadly 2008 earthquake. He established the Citizen

Investigation Group, which independently researched the disaster and provided profiles of the children killed when shabbily constructed schoolhouses collapsed. He used the international media to publicize what the government had hushed up.

Ai was held under house arrest in 2010 and physically detained April 3, 2011. He spent 81 days in a Beijing jail, isolated in a small room with two guards monitoring him at all times.

A designer as well, Ai consulted with Herzog & de Meu-

ron – the firm once slated to design the Blanton Museum of Art before interference from University of Texas regents caused the Swiss group to walk away – on the Beijing National Stadium for the 2008 Olympics, a project he later criticized.

He has made quite a few celebrated videos and won a number of awards and honors, including Amnesty International’s Ambassador of Conscience Award.

“This strikes me as the perfect fit for Austin,” said Melba Whatley, chairwoman

of the Dallas-based Marcus Foundation and an ardent backer of the Contemporary Austin and the Waller Creek Conservancy. “For the first time in our city, not one but two singular groups will install great sculpture in their unique and cherished public spaces. If, as a citizen, one cares about art and the public realm, it’s hard to imagine a happier collaboration.”

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