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## Ai Weiwei Urges Visitors to Alcatraz Exhibition to Write to Political Prisoners

Henri Neuendorf



Letters to political prisoners inspired by [Ai Weiwei's](#) *Truly Yours*  
Photo via *China Digital Times*

Over 100 incarcerated political prisoners around the world have been receiving letters and postcards from art-loving well-wishers as part of Ai Weiwei's interactive artwork, *Yours Truly*, [the Art Newspaper](#) reports. The work is being exhibited at Ai's San Francisco exhibition "[@Large Ai Weiwei on Alcatraz](#)."

Taking inspiration from the show's location on the site of the notorious Alcatraz prison, and from the artist's 81 day detention by the Chinese government in 2011, *Yours Truly* invites visitors to write a letter to a list of over 100 political prisoners across 20 countries. The piece seeks to highlight the plight of individuals locked up for expressing their opinion and serves as a poignant reminder of the significance of free speech.

Since opening in September 2014, over 50,000 messages have been sent to prisoners around the world. 12% of letters have been addressed to recipients in the US; 8.7% have been delivered to India; and 8.1% to Vietnam.

Sukanya Prueksakasemsuk, wife of Somyot Prueksakasemsuk, a Thai editor sentenced to 11 years imprisonment for insulting Thailand's monarchy, told the *Art Newspaper* "Somyot has passed his regards to all of you who made his days in prison brightening."

The co-founder of the Egyptian activist group April 6 Youth Movement Ahmed Maher is another grateful recipient of letters from visitors to Weiwei's show. Despite being prohibited from receiving correspondence in prison, the dissident's brother, Mostafa, regularly shows him photos of the mail he has been getting, on his mobile phone during visits.

"@Large Ai Weiwei on Alcatraz" ends on April 26.