

RA

Royal Academy of Arts
Ai Weiwei

THE SPACE AND THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS USE 360° TECHNOLOGY TO OFFER AN IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE OF AI WEIWEI'S 2015 EXHIBITION TO AUDIENCES ONLINE

Following the success of *Ai Weiwei*, which received 372,813 visitors, The Space and the Royal Academy of Arts will extend the audience reach and the life of the landmark exhibition further with the launch of *Ai Weiwei 360*. Through innovative 360° technology, audiences are invited to experience this landmark show from the comfort of their own homes or on the move using their desktop, tablet, smartphone or virtual reality headset.

Ai Weiwei 360 uses digital innovation to bring the gallery experience to life and will offer a whole new audience the opportunity to explore the exhibition for another year. The online experience adds new colour and depth to the exhibition, including interviews with the artist himself and expert commentary from the co-curators of *Ai Weiwei*. The tour consists of navigable 360° imagery, video and audio channels. Additional features have been developed to bring the three-dimensional nature of the exhibition to life for users, who will be free to explore the galleries of the Royal Academy and the courtyard at their own pace and in any order they choose.

Listen to expert commentary provided by the co-curators of the exhibition; Adrian Locke, Senior Curator and Tim Marlow, Artistic Director of the Royal Academy of Arts. Hear contributions from WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, and a voiceover from journalist Jon Snow as you explore the 11 galleries of the exhibition.

Explore in detail the intricate craftsmanship of the individual artworks, where Ai Weiwei has transformed materials to convey his ideas.

Experience the context, scale and media of an artist, described by Tim Marlow as 'one of the most important in the world today', in extraordinary detail.

In addition to the desktop and mobile experiences, *Ai Weiwei 360* is the first exhibition to be captured in photorealistic stereoscopic 3D. It is available on both Samsung Gear VR and Google Cardboard. This immersive work combines high definition sound and stereoscopic 3D imagery with user-driven navigation to re-create the physical viewing experience.

Ai Weiwei 360 will be available on the Royal Academy of Arts website and BBC Taster, the BBC platform dedicated to testing new ways of storytelling using new technology.

Ai Weiwei 360 is a commission by The Space in partnership with the Royal Academy of Arts, produced by AVM and promoted/published on BBC Taster. With contributions from Ai Weiwei, Tim Marlow (Artistic Director, Royal Academy of Arts), Adrian Locke (Senior Curator, Royal Academy of Arts), Julian Assange (WikiLeaks) and a voice-over by Jon Snow (Channel 4 News). *Ai Weiwei 360* contains excerpts from the official Royal Academy of Arts *Ai Weiwei* audio tour produced by Antenna International.

Tim Marlow, Artistic Director at the Royal Academy of Arts, said:

“*Ai Weiwei* at the Royal Academy of Arts was a landmark exhibition in every sense: 372,813 people visited during 86 days to experience an exhibition that was intensely powerful and moving. Its installation in the great Beaux-arts spaces of the RA will live long in the memory of all who saw it. And now, thanks to a collaboration with The Space, the experience of this exhibition will live on in this innovative project.”

Fiona Morris, Creative Director and CEO of The Space, commented:

“There is huge potential in bringing together the arts and technology to reach wider audiences. It’s the role of The Space to help turn that potential into real projects for audiences, artists and cultural organisations. We’re delighted to work with Ai Weiwei and the Royal Academy of Arts in partnership to extend this fantastic exhibition, so that more people can experience and enjoy it for longer, using the latest in digital innovation.”

Ai Weiwei 360 is available to view for free via the Royal Academy of Arts and BBC Taster websites:

<http://www.royalacademy.org.uk/aiweiwei360>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/taster/projects/ai-weiwei-360>

The virtual reality experience is downloadable from the Samsung store and Google Play for use on Samsung Gear VR and Google Cardboard respectively.

ABOUT THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS

The Royal Academy of Arts was founded by King George III in 1768. It has a unique position in being an independent, privately funded institution led by eminent artists and architects whose purpose is to be a clear, strong voice for art and artists. Its public programme promotes the creation, enjoyment and appreciation of the visual arts through exhibitions, education and debate.

The Royal Academy’s landmark exhibition of the Honorary Royal Academician, Ai Weiwei was the first major institutional survey of his artistic output in Britain. The exhibition included significant works from 1993 onwards, the date that marks Ai Weiwei’s return to China following more than a decade living in New York. The exhibition also included new, site-specific installations and interventions by the artist. *Ai Weiwei* was organised by the Royal Academy of Arts, London. The exhibition was curated by Tim Marlow, Artistic Director and Adrian Locke, Senior Curator at the Royal Academy of Arts, in close collaboration with Ai Weiwei.

The exhibition *Ai Weiwei* ran at the Royal Academy of Arts from 19 September until 13 December 2015.

AI WEIWEI

Ai Weiwei was born in 1957 in Beijing where he lives and works. He attended the Beijing Film Academy and later, on moving to New York (1983–1993), continued his studies at the Parsons School of Design. Major solo exhibitions include Martin Gropius Bau (2014), Indianapolis Museum of Art (2013), Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C. (2012), Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taiwan (2011), Tate Modern, London (2010) and Haus der Kunst, Munich (2009). Architectural collaborations include the 2012 Serpentine Pavilion and the 2008 Beijing Olympic Stadium, with Herzog & de Meuron. Among numerous awards and honours, he won the lifetime achievement award from the Chinese Contemporary Art Awards in 2008 and the Václav Havel Prize for Creative Dissent from the Human Rights Foundation, New York in 2012; he was made Honorary Academician at the Royal Academy of Arts, London in 2011. Most recently, he was awarded the Ambassador of Conscience Award from Amnesty International in 2015.

ABOUT THE SPACE

The Space is a commissioning and development organisation, founded by the BBC and Arts Council England. The Space develops and commissions great art digitally. It supports artists and arts and cultural organisations to make the most of the opportunity that technology affords by increasing the reach of existing activity in innovative ways, by opening up art to new audiences and by exploring the potential to create new artistic experiences using digital technology.

ANIMAL VEGETABLE MINERAL

Animal Vegetable Mineral (AVM) are a bleeding edge entertainment company that specialise in interactive storytelling using game and video-based technology.

The company launched in 2012 with backing from Korean based venture capital and were selected for BBC Worldwide's accelerator programme BBC Labs in 2013. Since then, AVM have built their own technology platform and developed a series of innovative entertainment formats for mobile and broadcast and VR platforms.

BBC TASTER

Taster is a place for the BBC to try new ways of telling stories, develop new talent, and put new technology through its paces. It also allows the BBC to showcase a range of editorial and technology projects that may have previously remained behind closed doors.

IMAGES

Images are available on request from the Royal Academy.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The Royal Academy of Arts social media channels:

[www.twitter.com @royalacademy](https://www.twitter.com/royalacademy)

www.facebook.com/royalacademy

The Space social media channels:

[www.twitter.com @thespacearts](https://www.twitter.com/thespacearts)

<https://www.facebook.com/thespacearts>

<http://thespacearts.tumblr.com/>

#AiWeiwei360

For further press information about *Ai Weiwei* and the Royal Academy of Arts, please contact Monique Kent at the Royal Academy Press Office: 020 7300 5615 or press.office@royalacademy.org.uk.

For public information about the Royal Academy of Arts please call 020 7300 8090 and visit www.royalacademy.org.uk. Royal Academy of Arts, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1J 0BD.

For further information about *Ai Weiwei 360* and The Space, please contact Claire Hutchinson at The Space: 07932 755517 or claire.hutchinson@thespace.org.