

Fenced In

Public Art Fund and contemporary artist Ai Weiwei activate New York City with artful fences and imagery in over 300 locations.

BY ALLISON BERG

Ai Weiwei's *Good Fences Make Good Neighbors* marks the culmination of Public Art Fund's 40th-anniversary year—and perhaps the pinnacle of the acclaimed artist's career. In this unprecedented citywide exhibit, Ai transforms a quotidian item—fencing—into a poetic, multilayered metaphorical presentation.

A political dissident and human-rights activist, Ai empathizes with displaced people. His *Good Fences* is informed by the current international migration crisis and is intended to be experiential. Each site-specific work offers a different perspective and sensibility. "It's fun to explore New York through Ai Weiwei's eyes," says Public Art Fund's director and chief curator, Nicholas Baume.

Through February 2018, fences will grow out of buildings, rooftops and spaces between. A freestanding golden cage reigns over Doris C. Freedman Plaza, while a human-silhouette sculpture echoes the form of the Washington Square Arch. The fencing continues with cut-vinyl lamppost banners throughout all five boroughs. Images from Ai's refugee camp documentary, *Human Flow*, adorn bus shelters, newsstands and LinkNYC kiosks.

Public Art Fund is central to the city's civic dialogue. "As an artist who has been sanctioned and censored, Weiwei exemplifies the importance of creative expression at a very basic, human level," Baume points out. "We take that tremendous privilege for granted. We need to celebrate, defend and advocate for it." publicartfund.org



From top: Ai Weiwei's golden cage, part of his citywide exhibition *Good Fences Make Good Neighbors*, commands Central Park's Doris C. Freedman Plaza; a portrait of the artist, 2012.

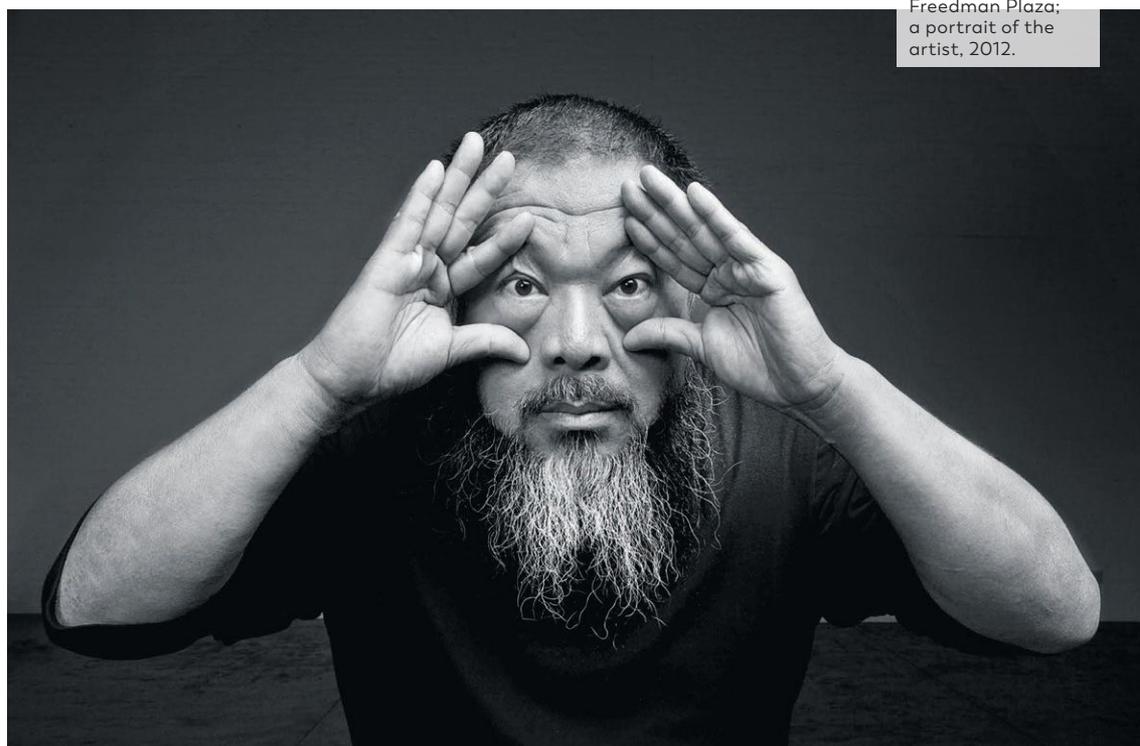


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