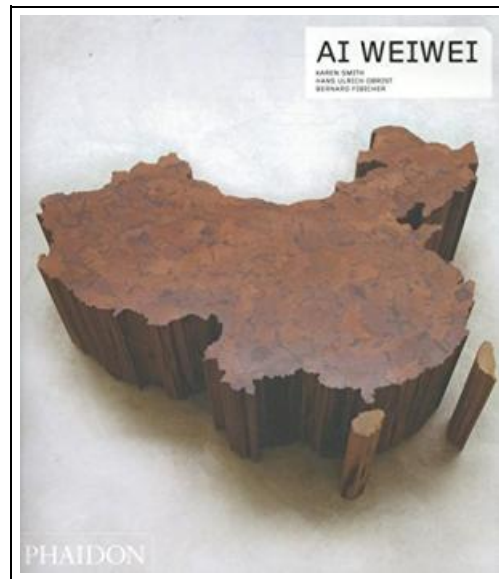


Ai Weiwei (Paperback)



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Reviews

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(Deanna Rath I)

AI WEIWEI (PAPERBACK)



Phaidon Press Ltd, United Kingdom, 2009. Paperback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book. Ai Weiwei (b. 1957) is truly an artist for the twenty-first century. In his sculptures he refashions artefacts and antiques into surprising, sometimes monumental constructions such as *Template* (2007): hundreds of wooden doors and windows taken from demolished Ming and Qing dynasty temples and arranged into a massive outdoor sculpture. As much as these materials look to the past, they also speak of the present, because never before (and probably never again) have they been available in such abundance. Like his benches carved from centuries-old temple beams, *Template* is a sly commentary on the speed with which China's building boom is obliterating its past. (When *Template* collapsed in a rainstorm two weeks after its unveiling at Documenta 12, the artist embraced its demise as a clever artistic twist.) In China today, making art that's critical of current cultural and economic policies is not a particularly safe career move. But Ai's father, the poet Ai Qing, walked a similar path, absorbing European avant-garde styles while studying in 1930s Paris and later standing by them in the face of Communist opposition, a move that eventually led to his exile to the distant provincial town where his son Weiwei came to be born and raised. In the late 1970s Ai Weiwei moved to Beijing, banding together with other pro-democracy artists in a loose collective known as the Stars Group. In 1981, following government retaliation against one of their exhibitions, Ai moved to New York, where he attended art school and lived the life of the bohemian for twelve years, his East Village apartment serving as a base for countless visiting Chinese artists. When his father became ill in 1993 Ai returned to China, settling in Beijing...



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