

Ai Weiwei, Joan Baez honored by Amnesty International

By Isolda Morillo and Jack Chang
The Associated Press

BEIJING — Amnesty International has awarded its top honor to Chinese dissident artist Ai Weiwei, who has spent years shining light on his country's restrictive political atmosphere, and to U.S. folk singer Joan Baez for her civil-rights activism.

Both were named Ambassador of Conscience Award recipients, which recognize lifetime human-rights leadership.

Ai told The Associated Press that the award reminded him of his social responsibilities as an artist, especially as the Chinese government tightens its grip on free expression and activism.

He noted that the repression was affecting "ordinary people around us concerned about basic issues" while answering a question about five women's rights activists who remain in custody for planning anti-sexual-harassment protests.

"I think as an artist, I use my own way to fulfill my responsibility to society," the bearded 57-year-old said. "Whether we have compassion for our own people or



ARTISTS OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY. Chinese dissident artist Ai Weiwei walks near a playground outside a shopping mall in Beijing. Amnesty International awarded its top honor to Ai, who has spent years shining light on his country's restrictive political atmosphere, and to U.S. folk singer Joan Baez for her civil-rights activism. (AP Photo/Andy Wong)

but said China hopes Amnesty can regard China "objectively."

Ai made his first big splash by helping design Beijing's iconic Bird's Nest stadium for the 2008 Summer Olympics. He fell afoul of Chinese authorities after taking up causes such as those of parents angry over what they said was shoddy construction of schools that collapsed in the 2008 Sichuan earthquake, killing hundreds of children.

Ai said he hasn't had a passport since his 2011 arrest for tax evasion, which he has called politically motivated, but still hoped he would be able to attend the May 21 award ceremony in Berlin.

Previous award winners include dissident Aung San Suu Kyi and rock band U2.

Associated Press writer Louise Watt contributed to this report.

other countries, we all have to take responsibility."

Baez was cited by Amnesty International for her involvement in U.S. civil-rights activism since the 1960s.

Over the past four years, Ai has paid a high price for his activism, having been

beaten by the authorities, imprisoned, and blocked from leaving the country. In the process, he's become one of China's most internationally known figures, a fame that has partially protected him.

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying declined comment on the award,

Lee eulogized at funeral as architect of Singapore

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competitive.

Today, Singapore's GDP is among the highest in the world at \$54,000 per head, according to the World Bank, and it consistently ranks at the top of surveys of competitiveness, while other Southeast Asian nations lag far behind.

Lee gained "disproportionate influence" in international politics because of his record in shaping Singapore into the kind of nation that would be useful to the international political and economic order, said London-based author Salil Tripathi, who was a foreign correspondent in Singapore in the 1990s.

"His sharp intellect gave him the aura of an elder statesman, allowing his admirers at home and abroad to overlook more complicated facts about him, including how political opponents were treated," he said, and "how there was little space for imagination on that crowded island."

Don't just eat that ramen: Go to a museum and learn about it

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Bazaar, said to reproduce an "Asian night market" and "eight varieties of noodles that Ando encountered during his travels in search of ramen's origins." The food stands include Italian pasta, Vietnamese pho, and dishes from Kazakhstan, China, Korea, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia. And there's a play area (an extra 300 yen) where kids can experience the Cup Noodle manufacturing process from the point of view of the noodle.

The main attraction here, though, is the make-your-own section. For a separate fee for a timed ticket, kids (or adults) can make their own personal Cup Noodle, decorating the cup, then putting in the noodles and choosing the soup and toppings. Watch the lid get sealed and the whole cup shrink-wrapped, then your creation is enclosed in a cool protective package that you pump air into to cushion it on the trip home. There's also the much more involved Chicken Ramen Factory, a 90-minute session where participants make the noodles from scratch.

A warning: Cup Noodle Museum, educational as it is, is extremely popular with school groups and was packed with them on the weekday I visited.

Fiji reclaims Hong Kong 7s title beating NZ 33-19 in final

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gifted Domolailai the fifth and last try for Fiji.

"That's a great Fijian side," New Zealand coach Gordon Tietjens said. "They defended really well and a couple of length-of-the-field tries killed us."

Fiji did well merely to survive its quarterfinal. It led England 14-5 with a

penalty try, then lost a man to the sin-bin, too. England, at 14-12 down, gave James Rodwell a chance in the right corner, but Rawaca pulled off a brilliant try-saving tackle.

Fiji blasted to a 21-0 lead against South Africa in the semifinals then just managed to hold on 21-15 in another thriller. South Africa finished third, beating Samoa 26-5.

SAVE THE DATE!
The Asian Reporter Foundation's 17th Annual Scholarship & Awards banquet will be held Thursday, April 23, 2015 at Portland's TAO Event Center.
The awards banquet features:
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 ♦ College Scholarship Awards
 ♦ Hawaiian dinner
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 Thursday, April 23, 2015
 TAO Event Center, 631 N.E. Grand Avenue, Portland, Oregon
 Doors open: 5:15pm • Social hour: 5:30-6:30pm
 Dinner, entertainment, and awards: 6:30-9:00pm • Dancing 9:00-10:00pm
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