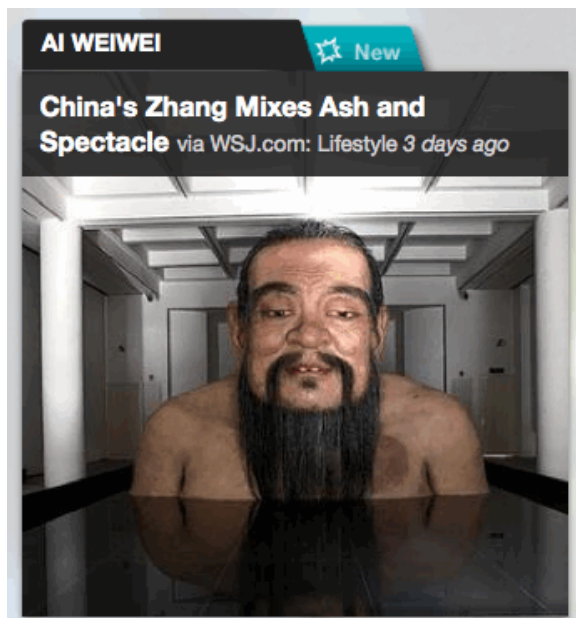


# The Daily Trap

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24 OCT 2011

## Trap of the Day: Ai Weiwei



Even if you don't recognize the name Ai Weiwei, you'll likely recall the stunning, contemporary [Olympic National Stadium](#) (aka "Bird's Nest") he helped design for the 2008 Summer Games in his hometown of Beijing.

Internationally known for his political [sculpture](#), film and performance art, the Internet exploded back in April when Weiwei was detained without cause by Chinese authorities. For three months, Weiwei said he was kept in a small room and "mentally tortured" for 24 hours a day by two uniformed military police sergeants who at times were as close as four inches away from him.

Weiwei may have been saved by his active social network and blogging fame (Chinese authorities shut it down in 2009, but its contents can be found in the book "[Ai Weiwei's Blog: Writings, Interviews and Digital Rants, 2006–2009](#)"). In early August, Weiwei began publicly speaking out on [Twitter](#) about how his contemporaries and colleagues remain detained and suffering in obscurity.

The Chinese government is hardly apologetic. This month, after [ArtReview](#) named Weiwei the number one most influential artist in its [Power 100](#) list, the Chinese Foreign Ministry retorted: "China has many artists who have sufficient ability. We feel that a selection that is based purely on a political bias and perspective has violated the objectives of the magazine."

Want to know more about Weiwei? Complex Magazine put together a cool list of "[5 Things You Need To Know About Ai Weiwei, 'The World's Most Powerful Artist'](#)" or read a [Newsweek article](#) he wrote in late August where he calls Beijing, "a nightmare. A constant nightmare."

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