For Immediate Release:

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Ai Weiwei and Bert Benally Create *Pull of the Moon* Through an Unprecedented International Art Collaboration

Santa Fe, NM, June 26, 2014 – Ai Weiwei, internationally acclaimed Chinese dissident artist, and Navajo artist Bert Benally through a remarkable collaboration, will create *Pull of the Moon*, a temporary, site-specific art installation in a remote part of Coyote Canyon on the Navajo Nation. *Pull of the Moon* is part of Navajo TIME (Temporary Installations Made for the Environment), a unique partnership between New Mexico Arts and the Navajo Nation Museum. The installation will feature earth-based drawings using sand.

Bert Benally said of *Pull of the Moon*, “The concept is based on Navajo aesthetics, the idea that for the Navajo, art is more about the process rather than the finished product.”

The installation will be created on June 28, 2014. Due to the remoteness and lack of facilities, this event is not open to the public. A limited amount of media passes are available on a first come, first serve basis. Members of the media wishing to obtain access should contact Chuck Zimmer at (505) 476-0523 or (505) 699-6496.

A free and public launch event for *Pull of the Moon* will take place on July 16, 2014, from 5:00-7:00 p.m. at the Museum of Contemporary Native Arts (MoCNA) in Santa Fe, Alan Houser Park, and will feature a live performance by German sound artist Robert Henke and Bert Benally based on sounds captured at Coyote Canyon during the installation.

A documentary film entitled *The Making of Pull of the Moon* by Daniel Hyde and Blackhorse Lowe highlighting the collaboration between Ai Weiwei and Bert Benally at Coyote Canyon opens at MoCNA on July 16, from 5:00-7:00 p.m., and runs through October 16. A 3D modeling digital landscape has also been created by xRez Studio Inc. and can be viewed in either 2D or 3D formats at MoCNA from July 16-October 16.

An exciting immersive fulldome experience of this digital landscape based on *Pull of the Moon* is not to be missed at Museum Hill in Santa Fe on Friday, July 18 from 5:00-9:00 p.m. and Saturday, July 19 from 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. New Mexico Arts intends to tour the dome around the state. All events at MoCNA and Museum Hill are free and open to the public.

“Cultural landscape is very important to this project. That is why Coyote Canyon was chosen with its rich history and traditions. When it is travels to different locations it will carry the power of the initial place with it. One of the objectives of this project is to connect art with cultural landscape,” said Navajo Nation Museum Director Manuelito Wheeler.

*Pull of the Moon* signifies the transformative power of art through international collaboration and is a reminder of the immense challenges faced by many cultures and the capacity for growth and healing from very impactful events. Despite being unable to travel outside of China, Ai Weiwei’s boundless spirit and creativity still touch many around the globe. Pottery shards from past projects have been ground down to a fine powder that will be used in the installation at Coyote Canyon. “The shards were intentionally placed there as evidence of the powder’s origin,” explained Ai Weiwei, “I think this is an interesting idea because we can only see ourselves, our past, through material evidence such as these shards. It is important to pass on to future generations where we are from and to give a glimpse of the mind and soul of the people living in that time.”

“I am very excited about this unparalleled partnership between the State of New Mexico, Navajo Nation and Ai Weiwei that we have been able to create,” said Chuck Zimmer, Deputy Director and Public Art Manager of New Mexico Arts. “From the beginning our intention has been that the land itself be the starting point, a blank canvas for artists to transform through their creative process into something larger, something that can bring healing and harmony to the land and to the community. With this as our goal, I cannot think of more appropriate artists to create this installation than Bert Benally and Ai Weiwei.”
Ai Weiwei and Manuelito Wheeler holding Navajo Nation flag at Ai Weiwei’s studio in Beijing. Photo by Eric Hanson.

Ai Weiwei wearing Navajo Nation Museum Jacket at his studio in Beijing. Photo by Chuck Zimmer.
Rendering of Bert Benally’s concept for *Pull of the Moon*, by xRez Studio Inc.

Rendering of Ai Weiwei’s concept for *Pull of the Moon*, by xRez Studio Inc.