INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

MICHAEL MURRAY

Interviewer: Jane DeBevoise **Date:** 31 Oct 2009 **Duration:** about 1hr 32mins **Location:** New York

Jane DeBevoise (JD): We are delighted to be here to speak with you about your experience in China and in particular, your experience with artists at that time. So please feel free to start where you want to start, say what you want to say, with the understanding that we're going to try to keep it to the 1980s.

Michael Murray (MM): Okay. I actually recently got back from China; I was in different parts of China but spent a week in Beijing and came back last Sunday. And I hadn't been back there [in Beijing] for nearly, well, over twenty-five years, so today I will be talking about an experience that was framed twenty-five years ago.

I was invited to be a visiting professor at Peking University in 1983; that was the circumstance that brought me to China initially. I didn't go there in search of art or anything like that, but wherever I visited, I was interested in art and in the philosophy of art and aesthetics. As I was getting ready for this trip, a colleague of mine who knew Hung Huang, a graduating senior at Vassar in Political Science, said I should have a chat with her before I go. So I did. She wasn't my direct student, but I had previously had long chats with her, and she said 'When you get there, you should give me a call and look us up as I will be there some of that time, and you should meet my father who is a professor of philosophy too'. She didn't tell me anything more than that. So maybe I'll tell you this one little story about meeting her stepfather. Her father is actually quite famous too, but her stepfather is very famous. She, of course, didn't tell me anything about this at the time. So, anyway, we went over there and met her mother who was a charming, lovely woman and who spoke New Jersey-perfect-English. If you hadn't known better you would've thought she were a New Jersey housewife. She was Mao's translator, his English translator, and has had an interesting career and life of her own.

(JD): And her name was?

(MM): I can't remember how to say her name, but if you ask anyone in Beijing, they would know her [Zhang Hanzhi]. When my partner and I were recently in Beijing, our guide told us five things about her family; what was current in their family and so forth. So, we went to Hung Huang's house for dumplings and we chatted together, but her father wasn't there to join us because he had a special diet and couldn't eat what we were eating. Afterwards, I was escorted into the living room with a large study off to the side. This was in a Ming Dynasty home, a hutong and a fairly rundown one; quite elegant, but also physically a mess. So we're having this discussion about philosophy – he got his PhD in the 1930s, in Berlin and -

(JD): What language were you speaking?

(MM): This conversation was mostly in German, actually. It's one of the languages I actually use, and do a lot of work in. And, to continue, I said to him, 'In the States, in the 60s and 70s, there was a lot of interest in Marx…'; I was trying to get to some point of connection, somehow or other. I figured to start with the 1844 manuscripts of early Marx's writings; it was only around that time they were first translated into English. He immediately said 'That's not right.'. And of course I thought I had to be right, but he got up off his chair and went into his study and came out bearing a small, blue, paperback edition, maybe around ninety to a hundred pages long with selections, translated into English, of the 1844 manuscripts. Published in Moscow, which basically meant it was probably in a steel cage out there somewhere – it wasn't published in the sense that it

was really out there in the world, but he was right, it was published, published in Moscow. I bet no American scholar knew that this existed, and in translation too.

So anyway, we had discussions about this, that, and other things, and I was in China giving these lectures, and a related seminar called 'Hermeneutics, Deconstruction and the Great Wall of China'. That was overall title of these lectures. These lectures were actually published in Chinese later with some very interesting deletions. You know…one thing they would not have was the 'Great Wall of China' in the title of the Chinese publication. However, the Chairman of the Philosophy Department wrote an introduction to it, and in it, he mentioned that I use 'The Great Wall of China' figuratively to talk about certain structures.

(JD): This was at Peking University?

(MM): Yes, at Peking University. So, for every lecture I gave, there were, distributed three days in advance, about three pages of notes; paragraphs, quotations and little formulations so that people had, in both English and Chinese, points of reference.

(JD): Who was your audience?

(MM): The audience consisted of university students and lots of other intellectuals as well as artists. No one checked you at the door; you didn't need a special ID to get into this seminar. Lots of people came. The average attendance was between a hundred to one hundred twenty-five people. The lectures were one hour long, but because they were given in both English and Chinese, they became two hours long. I had a great translator, Zhong Longxi [張隆溪]– he now lives and works in Hong Kong, if you happen to come across him. He read the materials before, and sight-translated everything brilliantly well.

At any rate, at some moment in these lectures I thought it would be helpful to create levity or humor because first of all, the room was so hot, and one had to listen for two hours, and much of the information was new and unfamiliar. So, getting back to the interview. So, I asked my interpreter Zhang Longxi, what he thought – we were at Hung Huang's home at the time. I said I wanted to discuss approaches to literary theory and there were these American literary theorists who have jokingly been called The Gang of Four. I was thinking of saying that, but wouldn't say it if it didn't sound funny, and if it sounded offensive. So I asked him what he thought, and he said, after a long silence, 'Yes, perhaps…'

In the meantime, Hung Huang had come in and said – and we're speaking English at this point - 'Dad, did you show Professor Murray your mementos and your pictures and things? And he said no. So we went into the study where there were glass cases and little tables and things like that. The first thing I really see is a small Lucite square with a thin sheet of gold in the middle of it and when you look closely at it, you see a continental maps which show the United States, China and a little tiny gold airplane flying from Washington to Beijing. So I'm thinking, 'Okay, this is kind of interesting…what exactly is this about…' And then I get to their set of family albums, which were like a set of kitschy albums with Mickey Mouse and things on the cover – things that I just thought were awful myself, but then when you opened them up, you had all these fabulous family pictures – there was one with Henry Kissinger and his tall wife, and other things like that – and then of course I begin realizing that this is somebody, but I didn't ask him and it didn't actually come up – who exactly he is and was, but I could tell that he was really high up, because he wouldn't be in photographs with these people. It was only until afterward, no-thanks to Hung Huang, who was always discreet about whom he was, that I found out that he was the Foreign Minister of China, and he was related to The Gang of Four. He was very involved in the opening of China, but he was also very involved in the work of The Gang of Four, and he had just come out of arrest – he had been out only one month.

It was after that, when I was walking on the campus of Peking University and besides the people I already knew, that there was always a set of other people; these cadres and Marxist-a-logs. They wouldn't come up to you, but they would come nearby, and they would always want to pick something up…I didn't really mind. But

I was walking with a couple people I knew well and one asked 'What have you done lately?' and I said, 'Well, I had lunch with Qiao Guanhua'[喬冠華] and their ears pitched a certain way. They looked sure that I had spoken wrongly – they always assume you've got the words mangled and of course, half the time you do have them mangled. So I said 'No, I'm pretty sure it was him…' and proceeded to say some things that would signify his life, and they began to realize it really was him…and it was at this point in time I realized who I had met, the former Foreign Minister of China.

When I got home from that trip and experience, Time magazine published – you may want to look up this issue, it's quite interesting – an issue on China featuring an interview with Teddy White and Qiao Guanhua. It's forty pages long; I don't think there's been a longer piece in Time magazine's history, and then I think one month after that interview, he passed away. I think he had throat cancer or something like that. How I came to that encounter was because I was a visiting professor there and a student of my college just happened to be his stepdaughter. That's what brought me there. But mostly, my experience there, on the political, military and police front, was very warm and open; when I came back and told stories I would get questions like 'Did they tell you what to say, what to think, what you could see…' and I said 'No, mostly, they didn't'. Sometimes you had to get visas to make certain visits, but once you had that, no one was ordering anyone around. It was a free and open atmosphere.

(JD): Who initiated the invitation for you as a guest professor?

(MM): My go-between was another Vassar student of mine, who had been at the University for two years; his name is Tom Canellakis. He comes from a Greek-American family, grew up in China, and he was there. He arranged this professorship. I had two interviews, one with Xiong Wei [熊伟教授], who was Deputy Director of the Foreign Philosophy Institute, and another with Zhong Longxi, who was in the Department of Language and [Western] Literature at Peking University. I was interviewed by both of them, one in German and one in English, in the year before that time. I then found out I was going to be an invited professor, but had to wait for the personal invitation from the President of the University; an invitation with a special stamp on it which came four days before my flight left – I was worried because if it didn't come, then it wasn't going to work, but it did indeed come. When I arrived there, they didn't believe I had this letter because they saw very few of them; I was in the first of a handful of Western scholars to teach at Peking University. There were very few of us. That's what brought me to China initially.

And then I gave a series of lectures as well as a seminar regarding a similar topic, supposedly at a more advanced level but it probably wasn't really because of their background, and their willingness to speak was slight. In American seminars, students speak and it's expected that you do; Chinese seminars, at least at that time, it was expected that you don't speak. I told my Chinese students 'I'm going to talk for about ten minutes, and then I'm not going to talk anymore and I'm going to entertain some questions from you' and I sat their for the ten longest minutes of my life, and no one said anything. But I knew if I gave in, it was death; I would never recover. Finally, the first person to ask a question was the youngest student in the seminar, probably about eighteen, nineteen years old from Shanghai. He was very smart, understood a great deal and asked a series of hard, hard questions. So to me, it was a wonderful breakthrough. Then others would start talking. There were also these cadres who would sit in for the presentation and then just fall asleep. They basically thought education was one that you memorize, recite and then fall quiet on. But it showed there were some really bright students.

(JD): And the topics? What was the range of topics you covered?

(MM): Well, the overall theme of these lectures were developments in Western hermeneutics and deconstruction, so the principal figures would have been Heidegger, Gadamer and Derrida, as well as American deconstruction.

(JD): And your lectures were published later?

(MM): Yes. I was shown, before it was done, all the editing that had taken place, and it was very clear – in red ink – what was being deleted. About 10-15% of sentences were being deleted, as well as the title, which I mentioned earlier. But it was done intelligently; I didn't feel that it was bowdlerized or made bland. I think if I had strongly objected they would have withheld it from publication. You mentioned publishers or people supportive of the developments – some of them could be in very official circles and positions. Zhong Longxi knew the editor who was handling this, and said the editor will do what he can – because he was very good. On the whole, I thought it was a decent job, as far as I could tell.

(JD): Was the publication a literature magazine? Or a book series on –

(MM): It was an individual separate thing; the whole book was about fifty to eighty pages long. It could be bought in bookstores at an incredibly cheap price. At the time a large book may cost a dollar or two and a small one would cost fractions of that.

(JD): I think that was one of the reasons why material was disseminated so widely.

(MM): Yes. I remarked in the introduction to the catalogue of a show that I curated, that it both confirmed and disconfirmed one of Benjamin's famous remarks about technical reproduction; how it devalues and de-aura-cises the work of art, because actually these were quite aura-cised – they were not just the mere reproductions; they were valuable, evocative things, they were more than just the mere pictures of things. Lots of artists came to these lectures – some of them were friends of Tom Canellakis, the former student of mine, so I had personal connections who knew people, who knew other people, so they came to the lectures. Then, I had very posh, by Chinese standards, expert quarters. I had a small suite of rooms and could invite people to come into them. The only problem is if anyone wanted to come visit me, they would have to sign-in into a book so that they always knew who went into it. And then there was also the question of whether the room was bugged; sometimes it was. After these lectures, or sometimes on other occasions, I would invite some people over; I would say somewhere between five or ten, and mostly artists, to come to these after-lecture or after-other events, always in evenings. There were some who would not come, because they didn't want their name in a book. So many of them had so much trouble in their life they would take extra precautions for discretion, even with things we would usually think as simple and not troubling. So, this was a way we could talk very intimately about things, very closely and freely. I must have had these sessions about six or eight times over the six weeks I was there. I'm sure I did it every week, or maybe more often. We also went out to dinner sometimes – I would take them out to dinner because these were people with no money. In those days, you could have a banquet with fabulous food for quite little. Maybe in not-so-fabulous places, but who cared; you had great people to talk to and everything was very reasonable, that is, it was easy for me to pay for it. So that's how they began coming to me, or so to speak, but then there was the other side of it; me going to them. This was far more difficult and a far different mode of transaction. Basically, I couldn't do this without special permission. So what we would do is, late at night, we would take our bicycles and head off into the neighborhood. In those days, there was only one light per three-square blocks, so it was pretty dark. People were leading me so I was fine, but if I were by myself, I wouldn't be confident because you couldn't really tell exactly where you were going. Then you get to the buildings, and you can't turn on any lights, so you go up flights of dark stairs, sometimes carrying your bicycle up with you. It was a little bit like hiking. I would ask myself 'What am I getting myself into?' but I was willing to give it a try…

Anyway, I was thinking back and one of the first experiences I remember was in Zhang Wei's apartment. As soon as I entered the apartment, it was a completely different world! There were about six or seven people there, they had some lighting but not too much, but it was a very friendly and warm atmosphere. The walls were splattered as though Jackson Pollock had been there to do a performance or something like that, right onto the walls. It was like being inside of a painting. I remember we had wonderful discussions about things: what they were interested in, what was going on…so then I got to know them personally and also began seeing

some of their works for the first time.

Zhao Gang's home was another home I visited – he was eighteen or nineteen at the time and living with his parents. His parents' home was one of the more old-fashioned one storey buildings; they had three rooms, a medium sized living room, a minute kitchen and an enormous 'other' room. The enormous 'other' room was Gang's bedroom and studio. He had a sister and his parents living there, so there were four of them. Three of them slept in the living room, the medium-sized room, and Gang slept in the very large room because it was also his studio. They supported him as an artist, even though, at the time, he was a-nobody. This was the explanation they gave me when I asked why he had the biggest room. I thought it was rather amazing. So, I was able to meet his family as well, on this occasion. His father had had a really hard life; he had been in prison, but he was a very good cook and loved to fix food and he was distressed if you didn't eat six pieces of whatever he gave you, rather than four, which you could hold.

Another great social space, as you probably know, was Yuanmingyuan, the ruins of the old Summer Palace, which are quite striking in their own ways. It was also the freest place in Beijing, in terms of visibility – if you got there, usually by bicycle, it had very high grass. The grass must have been five to six feet tall, so unless you came into the grass as well, you could not tell that there were five, six or many people there. There were always people there. It was a scene of conversation, partying and what not. It was there where I met Ma Desheng, he was in an army outfit and his crutches, and he started jabbering – there are so many different accents and pronunciations in China, people don't even understand them across China. I remember once when translator Zhong Longxi and I were passing along the Great Wall of China, we were talking and suddenly this group of Chinese walked by and were talking very animatedly, and so we stopped talking just to listen and afterwards, I asked him 'So what were they talking about?' and he said 'I have no idea…'. That's when I realized something about spoken Chinese. Even if you have a common language, it doesn't mean you can actually speak with people; you can speak with people in your area, but not everyone.

So, when Ma Desheng was speaking in this kind of strange way, I was thinking 'Okay, well, he's probably from this place or that place…' but the answer was no. He spoke his own language. He had a private language that only he spoke. Everybody very well knew this. So I'm meeting this person in an army suit and crutches for the first time, and everyone obviously thinks he's a striking painter, and then later on I visited him in his room, and saw lots of his ink paintings and bought some of them, and eventually put them in a show that I will talk about in a little bit. So I met Ma Desheng and I met others as well.

(JD): So it seems that when these people approached you, engaged you, they appeared to readily engage you; they were interested and curious…what did they want to know from you? What do you think their concerns and issues were at the time?

(MM): I think their interest was to get attention for their work; to let people know that they existed, that they were there. There was a whole network of artists, and they all knew each other very well. They were very supportive of one another, though, I probably under-estimated the rivalries they had between one another of which I became much more aware in later years, for example, Zhang Wei and Zhao Gong, who spoke less and less in later years whereas in their earlier years they were extremely close. So I think that was the base level, of drawing attention to themselves and letting people know they were there. Also, they were very interested in things Western, like Western thought and so forth. They had some grasp of what I was talking about because I said I produced three-page summaries of analytic content distributed prior to the lectures. So they had my guide to follow and they could write the notes they needed to as well, before the lectures. So even those who did not attend the lectures had a copy of these things; they were well circulated.

(JD): And you distributed these notes prior to meeting them socially?

(MM): Yes, yes. They were available at the University, given out by the University itself. They were agreeable to this because they thought it would be useful to aid understanding. And they were done in English and in Chinese.

I would say, of my audience of about one hundred to one hundred and twenty five students, about 60% of them understood adequate English, and then the rest did not. But they also had the Chinese version so it wasn't a problem. It was interesting to see the levity grow with the Chinese version over the English version.

(JD): Clearly, at that point in time, Western philosophy interested the intellectual community. When you engaged these artists socially, did you have philosophical discussions? What was it about your lectures that resonated with them?

(MM): One of the themes of this lecture series was the notion of totalities; whether, in theories or social organizations, there are intelligible totalities. Since I'm inclined to think that all totalities are unintelligible or have some smuggled unintelligibility within them – that was the theme of the lecture. I introduced hermeneutics and deconstruction as ways to talk about those incoherencies and instabilities that are contained in them. The idea of the Great Wall of China is that there is a single wall that encompasses the totality of China. The truth is, there never was a single wall, and that is one of the great illusioning and disillusioning experiences. When you look out, you see sections; some from this period, some from that period – there are actually lots of different walls, some being rebuilt today. So in fact, there is no great wall; it doesn't exist! But as an idea, oh! It really exists as an idea. I was exploring this notion of totality and structure and that, I think, was interesting to them because a lot of the different kinds of work they were engaged in were about these deconstructing totalities, whether they were surrealist fantasy de-totalizations, or whether they were about other dissonant things.

Gang, for example, made a painting that I have, which I got from early on in that period, where there is a very cloudy misty main background, and then a stylized river in red going across the middle, and then there is a reflection in the river of a tree on one side, however the reflection doesn't fit the tree. It's deliberately made this way; deliberately off balance. There actually may be an image of it in this catalogue here.

A lot of these artists were interested in Western art. There was a huge amount of highly derivative, highly imitative, quasi-Western art going on, but some of it was quite extraordinary. The re-iteration of the same doesn't actually produce the 'same' at all. On the side of abstraction, for example, the fact is that Western abstraction was greatly influenced by Chinese painting. So there is already a complicated connection between Eastern and Western painting in the culmination of Abstract Expressionism. In addition, when it takes place in China of course, it takes places against the background of Social-Realism, official painting the way you would imagine it. Abstraction therefore existed in a very special canon of figuration, which is a socialist, realist representation, and a special version of it that is Chinese. So, it was always under a special suspicion and a special onus because of that. It wasn't truly figurative, and it was not the right modalities of figuration – the esteemed ones or the revolutionary ones.

(JD): You were talking about art books and what they were seeing, and that you walked into Zhang Wei's apartment and his room looked like a splattered Jackson Pollock painting. Did you bring them any art materials?

(MM): I brought them no art materials, but I saw some of the ones that they had. I had the vivid awareness of these materials being circulated around. They were being lent, and they were heavily fingered, worn and frail – they were getting a lot of use. They appreciated these – some of the visiting French scholars and political people had provided them with these materials, at least that was my impression. I didn't bring materials because I didn't go to China with this project in mind; it was superfluous and accidental to what I was going there to do, or what I thought I was going there to do. It turns out to be one of the most interesting things I did during the time I was there.

(JD): You went there not as an art historian and as someone who was not particularly interested in the arts, and you inadvertently came upon this phenomenon in a sense. Do you think these artists were different than people involved in other fields? Do you think they were freer than other people? This seems to be a very common experience that Westerners in the 1980s coming to China had – coming upon these artistic people.

(MM): I think there were elements of free spirits in other areas where you would not think there were, and I say this because when Zhong Longxi, for example, told me about the editor who took the liberty to disagree with certain harsher edits. And I know this also from talking to professors at the University. Xiong Wei, who has now passed away, was a student of Heidegger's in Germany – and that was the bond I had with him because I'm a Heidegger scholar and have been published very widely on Heidegger. (I met for an interview in Chinatown, and it was conducted entirely in German and was even at times devoid of discussing Heidegger.) So, an example of this was when I was invited to dinner at his house – he and his family especially killed a chicken for the meal and though he was a very senior person at the University, he lived very simply. I think there may have been a living room and bedroom and that was it, with a little kitchen on the edge, or something like that. One thing I noticed about senior people in China was that they don't open up very easily or quickly – there is a lot of formality; it takes a long time before they open up to you to have a real discussion about anything really personal, unlike the artists, the young people with whom you could quickly talk specifics. The senior people were very, very discreet. At one point after dinner, Xiong Wei looked at me and pointed to the bookshelf in the living room, and there was a huge series of the famous edition of Marx and Lennon's work; blue volumes, maybe about twenty of them or something like that. He said 'It's important to have these books here'. So I nodded, but he went on saying 'But I have some other books too'. So he pulled some of these books out from the case, and behind them were other books – and some of them were of Heidegger's books and other things. And then later in the evening, we went into his bedroom and he pulled from underneath his bed, or hidden in the bed itself, an original edition of Heidegger's book Being and Time, his most important book, as you know. He had specially kept this book as his own; his personal thing; I'm sure it dated from the time he was in Germany, and he kept it as a kind of little treasure and now he was showing it to me. I opened it and could see his notes in it, how carefully he had read it…but this book would never be on his bookshelf, because you never knew who would be visiting.

It took a long time until the stage where you could openly have something like that or see something like that. Also, personal things; how they had suffered during the Cultural Revolution – the Cultural Revolution is the background to everything; it's the background for why there were so many miscreant young men who were denied good training or any kind of education, had to fend for themselves and were always at odds with society; with family, the police...my friend Gang was a perfect example of this. That's why I helped him get into Vassar. People at Vassar didn't realize these young people were deprived of an education for a decade, and this isn't just to 'give them a consideration' because of their shortcomings or social status; it's just not that kind of thing at all. It's basically about the destitution of an entire educational order, and how people survived in it. And Xiong Wei with whom I had little picnics with away from everything, would tell me some of the stories of what happened. For example, one day, the boxcars arrived and all the professors were lined up and put into them – all different ages – and then, as you know, they were sent out in different directions and told to create a rice farm. Some people died; they weren't physically capable of the work, not to mention everything else. The world was upside-down. There was another famous philosopher whose name is very hard for me to say, so I won't bumble it, but he was a member of the Vienna Circle at the time of Wittgenstein and Carnap. I met with him and he was very vivid and critical, but he said, 'They didn't do anything to me; they had no idea as to what I was saying so they couldn't; they didn't think I had it upside-down…' But he said the world really was upside-down. The dumbest ones were in charge, and the smartest ones were at the bottom of the heap. That's how things were organized. It was the upside-down of knowledge.

(JD): Can we go back to this group of young artists and your anecdote about Zhao Gang getting a room of his own… there seemed to be a certain sense in society that artists were special, and even though they were deprived of an education, they were also given a certain amount of freedom.

(MM): Yes, so in a way you could escape it; escape the official system. Some of them knew they had a kind of freedom and they were trying to exercise and find creative ways to do it.

(JD): A number of the artists you were talking to at the time could also be described as outside the system.

(MM): Yes, a few of them had spent a year or some time at the Academy, here or there – but they didn't last, and they didn't have much of a future if they had stayed either. We can talk about The Stars as an example. I like to call them 'Star-Star' [Xing-Xing] not The Stars because it gives you an idea of the difference between stars and star-star – The term The Stars makes you think you're talking about Hollywood or something – and you really aren't: you're talking about tiny pinpoints of light in utter darkness. That's what it is – it's not a glorious, glamorous thing, it's actually a tragic signification; those tiny pinpoints of available light. The memory of them was of the main events of 1979 and 1980, and they were quite vivid when I was there.

I think I must have mentioned this to you personally before, but I had this kind of premonition – when I flew on the airplane from Hong Kong to Beijing, I was reading the in-flight magazine in the seat pocket and there was an article called, something like, The Show That Twice Took Beijing By Storm, and it wasn't that bad; it was written by someone who had an understanding for what was going on, and was not using it as some sort of fodder for a doctrinal statement or something like that. So I actually had an inkling of what that had been, but I didn't realize I would have the opportunity to meet the artists of this particular group, so that turned out to be quite interesting, in retrospect. Listening to them tell the story is always a little bit different from what you read, even in the more up-to-date current summaries. One of the things that I found more fascinating, which I didn't read in other renditions of it, though Michael Sullivan's book has some things on this, and I refer to it as well, was the question of the albums; besides the two main events, like hanging the works on park fences outside the Museum, which of course had no authorization, and the second exhibition which finally had authorization. In the second exhibition, they had these enormous albums, the size of the Gutenberg bible books, where people would write down what they thought of these works. And they even had an analysis of how and what people thought. How many times in the history of great exhibitions have there been annotations by visitors? I think The Stars went about things like this because they thought that it was going to be the end of it all, and people would start saying that this work was junk. But they had some really interesting summaries about the balance between positive and negative, and the more positive comments were in the 60-70% category, and the negative, perhaps about 20%, and then others were quite critical of it.

But I think that was one of the things that gave Beijing authorities great pause. They knew a lot about what people thought – and it concerned a lot of people. And even though Star, Star was quite a tiny group, they had a big voice box because of all these things. I think that's what interested them, and also the authorities too because it alarmed them – that things could get out of control. And of course, the story doesn't end very happily; it wasn't the continuation of letting a hundred blossoms bloom. There was a big shutdown, and it was impossible for a long time to have any type of public exhibition. The only exhibitions that took place were the ones in your room, like the one I told you about. One of the sad, amusing examples Zhang Wei gave me was about the No Name Group. One time after trying to get permission to do something – but of course always getting refused, the group rented a small place at a cul de sac, and spent all day cleaning it and painting it white and everything. The next day they were going to install works in it. But the next day they arrived to see a giant padlock on the door. So everything they did was under complete surveillance; they did all this work to prepare the space, and already, after one day, the place was shutdown. I always liked this story, of trying to create this space, on their own and with their own money, but then couldn't exhibit.

(JD): Were these artists selling at the time?

(MM): Yes, yes. They were mostly doing private sales. Some of them were quite well known, like Ma Desheng. There were a lot of French followers too, and I myself bought a work of Ma Desheng's as well. He was asking for quite a lot of money for them compared to their status in the world at that time, but that's because he was a little bit unusual, we can say; a little bit crazy and whatnot. In the show that I finally curated, he did an

utterly spectacular ink painting about fourteen feet long, and it was just fantastic. He's a wonderful artist and I appreciate his work very much. He worked in totally traditional media, and it seems as though he belongs to the group making traditional painting, but of course he doesn't. This was a case where abstractionism and landscape painting takes on a somewhat traditional feel but he was really working on the edge. From a distance, you think you know what the paintings are about, but close-up, you realize you don't know what they're about.

(JD): In terms of the artists at the time, who excited you the most? Was it Ma Desheng or others? And why?

(MM): It's partly a function of those I knew better. These were, well, Ma Desheng was one of them, and Zhao Gang – he was the youngest of the bunch – I thought his work was very interesting, and it was less developed in many ways, but it was more daring and more courageous. It was bad-boy art. I don't think he's changed much since then. His work, Ma Desheng's and Ai Weiwei's as well.

(JD): By that time Ai Weiwei was in the United States.

(MM): That's right, he was already in New York, but I knew his work from fairly early on. He did this extraordinary Mao triptych for my (1988) New York show – there were three, Andy Warhol-esqe images of a Mao figure; each one had a black background with an image of a different color – one was red, one was green, and the last was I think just black and white. And the business of about selling the works took place when we got to the actual show – to negotiate the prices of these works. I wasn't a professional dealer, and I didn't do this kind of thing, so we talked to some people and to the artists, and I would say the majority of works were priced in the $500-$800 category. I would say Zhao Gang's very large canvases were twelve, thirteen hundred dollars and they sold on the first day. And then there was Ai Weiwei's work: $25,000. I mean, here was an unknown artist putting a huge price tag on his work, asking for a large sum. Of course, when he first said this, I thought maybe I would talk him down, but I think for him it was like a badge of honor – he wanted to give it a price that nobody would pay. If it were a price that someone would pay, then he would feel insulted or something like that. Now of course, if you had bought those works for $25,000, you would have some significant investment value today. So, that gave it a kind of comic art quality, the price of another world, not this world.

(JD): Let's talk about your experience when you got back to Vassar.

(MM): We began talking about the idea of assembling a show, and putting on a show in New York, and no big surprise there, all the artists were perfectly interested. The question was 'How to do this in the terms of these works?' as the works were all in China and you didn't really want to 'ask' to get them out. So basically, people would just carry them out; they would leave Beijing with these big awkward objects and have conversations with the airport officials…but that's how we were able to accumulate the works coming out of China, and it was quite difficult. Then, I approached the art gallery director of Vassar College because I was also looking for funding for the exhibition and support for the publication of the catalogue, and simultaneously, I approached the City Gallery of New York City through the Department of Cultural Affairs. Bess Myerson, was Chair at the time, under Mayor Koch, and Elyse Reissman, was Director at the time. So we filled in an application to have the first show; a major show, at the City Gallery, which at that time was at Columbus Circle, the building, which has had several reincarnations. They had a great space there, a curving, wonderful space, a haven so we were eager to be there. It was at the center of New York too.

We had a very long dragged out process of finally getting approval – we were always being asked questions about this and that – at the time I had a really nice conversation with Susan Sontag at a symposium at Vassar where we were both on the panel. In our free time, we would ask how we were doing, and when she asked, I told her about this exhibition, because she is one of the most culturally connected people in New York City. I gave her some materials and things like that, and she knew all the people I spoke of through the department… her enormous help at the end of the process helped us seal the deal, or so to speak. This was 1986.

The first show took place at the City Gallery in July-August 1986, which is actually the low season for art

showing, as you know. I remember thinking 'Why are we having such arguments over these things if you're giving us a non-prime time'? Nevertheless, we got the space and the opportunity to do this and with a minimum budget, some of the artists helped us get the show together. One of the thing you'll know about artists – this was my first experience close-up – they aren't always the most helpful about putting together their own shows; they are better at putting together someone else's show. The only one who was superb throughout was Yan Li. Yan Li would always say 'No problem!', when I'd be saying 'Oh my goodness, we're going to have to do this all over again…' Everyone else always had a big problem with their own work being presented the way it was, even after several hours of work. Gang was terrible; I had to ban him from the gallery for a while because he was so over-bearing and so worried about the display of his work. They were all, in different ways, worried about their own work, which was understandable, because they wanted to be well shown in the great space that was there.

So the artists were Ai Weiwei, Li Shuang – who was in France at this time, Ma Desheng, Xing Fei, Yan Li, Yang Yanping, Yin Guanzhong, Zhang Wei, Zhao Gang and Zhu Jinshi – who is probably the least known out of all of them. Of these I knew half of them personally quite well, and other artists introduced the other participating artists to me on separate occasions. Li Shuang came over from Paris and we had a meeting at the Chelsea Hotel. We talked about the works and the like.

Xing Fei had a marvelous work, which is in the catalogue so you can see it. It was of a wall – speaking of walls - and it was maybe about ten or eleven feet by six feet in size. It was made as a two-sided piece, with the same thing on both sides, with a hole in the middle. It really was a wall and it wasn't meant to be hung on a wall. We had it suspended in the City Gallery so when you came into the gallery you immediately saw it. Much like many Chinese spaces where there is a wall that obstructs your view before you enter. I was talking on this last trip to China with someone about the walls of hutongs – there was a certain period in Chinese history when these walls were torn down extensively in different places because they became suspicious objects to the Communists. 'Why do you need to have privacy? Why do you need something that blocks your sight so that others can't see into your home?' This of course was a part of the main aesthetics of Chinese architecture. They were torn down in a lot of places and I remember I saw a completely reconstructed wall in Xi'an – it was beautiful but all new – because it had been torn down at some point. And then I remember the story about the wall when I met Hung Huang in their family compound – there was no decoration on the front wall and it had been painted red but it was really plain, so I think at some point it must have been torn down too. Anyway, Xing Fei's wall was the opening in the show, about three feet off the ground, floating. Through the window of the wall, you could see the ink landscape painting by Ma Desheng. This exhibition then went to Vassar and then the State University of Albany, so it actually had three stops in the early '80s. It was at Vassar in the fall, and then at the beginning of early '87, it went to Albany.

(JD): What was the reception of the work like?

(MM): I've become much more involved in the arts – my daughter too is now Director of Jessica Murray Projects in Chelsea and Williamsburg so she's been in it for a while – but at the time, I wasn't that involved. It was an inauspicious time, and it was the summertime so it was quiet, but had we applied for another time we may not have had the opportunity to get our foot in the door. The show, however, was well attended and received quite a lot of attention. It had a major review in the New York Times. I mean, we deluged them and used every Vassar contact – someone who knew someone who knew someone who could have a say in this – and it got a nice, and generally quite favorable review. The review reproduced one of the works by Yan Li…there were ten artists and the opinions varied for each one. The two I liked very much – and they were personal friends of mine – were Zhang Wei and Zhao Gang and their work got very nice notes. Gang's especially. And that was striking because he was the youngest. He was the baby of the Star Group.

(Q): Who wrote the review?

(MM): Her name was Vivien Raynor, and she wrote Art: The Avant-Garde from China in Show (August 22, 1986). We had a small budget for advertisements too so we bought some advertisement space in the New York Times and the funny thing about it was that coincidentally or accidentally – I can't remember the lady who helped us with this process but – there was a blank space available so they published the advertisement twice, on the same spread. It was really nice for us; they gave us the second space for free. We had a huge opening, Qingdao provided beer for the occasion, gratis, because some of our Chinese friends knew people who knew other people…and that's how the beer turned up. It was very nice, because it was summertime and quite hot out. This gallery was air-conditioned, but the excellent lighting produced a huge amount of heat so you could never turn the lights on until five minutes before the show would start, because with the lighting and people, the space could quickly become 80 to 90 degrees.

(JD): Did you organize any talks or symposiums?

(MM): Yes. Not in New York, but when the exhibition came to Vassar, we had a symposium in the middle of the month, sometime after the exhibition had been open a few weeks. I think this was the time when Zhang Wei first came to see the show, because he wasn't here before that – it was hard for a lot of the artists to come out, with visa issues and whatnot. So – the symposium was interesting and fine. Maybe a little disappointing because I thought it was going to be more interesting than it was, you know? It may have been fatigue, or the association with doing all these things, which weren't the easiest to begin with, but it was a pleasant occasion and the Director of the art gallery at Vassar, a fellow named Jan Alderman, who had some posts in Vienna early on too, was very helpful and accepting, and I would say we had an audience of sixty to eighty people. And then there were people outside of Vassar College - people from Poughkeepsie, who came too. There was one lady who came who I had never met before, who ended up buying one of the Zhang Wei paintings. She was quite interested and knew something about art, so even from the town of Poughkeepsie, where Vassar College is located, there was interest. I wouldn't describe the symposium as a 'great event', but it was certainly interesting. We did have lots of discussions at the sequel event in Albany too, so we heard from the directors up there.

In terms of the conception of the exhibition…I knew Linda Nochlin very well – she was still at Vassar at that time, or maybe she moved to NYU by then - and I had arranged to show slides to her and a colleague of hers before the show was composed. At first it was going to be held at Helen Muller's apartment, but there was some confusion about that. Helen Muller gave a substantial amount of money to support this project – she is a Vassar alum who is very supportive of cultural projects of many kinds – and I must say, to begin with, the two of them, both very high professionals, had a lukewarm feeling about the slides that I showed. Some of the slides were not of very good quality, but I did not get an enthusiastic reception from either of them, at that stage and at that time. Even at Vassar, I'm sure there was some stand-off-ishness by some of the art historians there about the exhibition. Their quick take on it was, I think, that it was underdeveloped, amateur and imitative. It's not that this wasn't true at all. I also don't think this exhibition necessarily or completely captured the spirit of what was going on in China at the time. What I was saying about photorealism earlier was that photorealism, in a country dominated by social-realism, is quite different and has quite a different meaning associated with it. There may be a similar technique behind it, but it functions quite differently. Take abstraction against Chinese traditional abstraction and as well as against the then prevailing social-realist figuration. And the surrealist element…again, for example, in Yanping's work, it's not about maudlin Salvador Dali-type surrealism, or like any other surrealist form coming out of the West. It's quite different and distinctive. Speaking of Freud, the unconscious and other figurations, these were not very happy topics in then-Chinese official culture. So, in every case, even when the forms had elements of derivativeness, they didn't have the same significance at all. If you really understand the Chinese context and understand the work not as other pieces of Western art, then you find greater clarity. If not, then I understand that, but it's a pity.

(JD): I think the lack of context that people brought to understanding art was one of the reasons to bring it there.

(MM): Exactly. Bringing it into our context allowed us to understand why and how it was different from our context. I think they understood this too – I don't think they pretended to have a deep knowledge of the Chinese context. I think they weren't willing to give it a serious hearing, which is why I thought it was interesting to give regard to it. That's why, when we first spoke over the phone about this conversation, I told you, 'I'm not an expert in this field either, nor am I a professional expert in contemporary Chinese art', but I'm an autodidact, I came to learn a lot of things. And then when I tried to find people who knew more, there weren't a lot. So I turned out to be one of the people who actually did know a lot. I didn't know this until I was connecting with others and Joan Cohen was one who I spoke to and she was one of the first people to take a serious interest. But there really weren't very many, and it was hard to interest, even people with an interest in Asian art, it was hard to get them into it. In most cases, they were more interested in the classical traditions not contemporary ones – Michael Sullivan [Cotford] was an exception because he had been interested in everything, from the great classical masters to the present. When I contacted him, I had just formed this group, which was existent but also somewhat non-existent – called the Group for Chinese Contemporary Art – in order to have a sounding board for other experts to come together, and also as an excuse for applying for funds and things like that, to give people an idea of who we were…and also that we would have other activities going on in the future – not as vast as the activities going on at Asia Art Archive, but those were some of the reasons I formed it. Walter Fairservis, who was in the Anthropology Department at Vassar and who did a lot of work on Asian culture – he is an incredibly esteemed scholar; he used to be the number two-man in the Hall of Asian Peoples at the National History Museum here – and Michael Sullivan were both members of this group, and some others. So I put this group together, and they were all interested in the idea of contemporary Chinese art, and they were interested in the back-and-forth of traditional Chinese painting and other art forms.

(JD): I do think the situation for this group was a bit marooned at this time. It didn't fit into what Westerners wanted; it didn't fit the criteria of Western art – determined by Westerners – nor did it meet the criteria of the traditionalists who were interested in Chinese traditional art. And so – there they were, and unless you had actual experience with their situation…

(MM): Exactly right, you had those two forms of expectations.

(JD): But that changed very much after Tiananmen, when the work became much more politicized in the eyes of the Western audience, and then now, where it has become more monetized…

(MM): Right, right. Now there is a market, a vast market, and some would say a hyper-inflated market of contemporary Chinese art. But of course, in those days, there was almost no market – it existed out of a few rooms, out of a few cupboards; that kind of thing. So, when we put up the show here, and started this thing, there were a few other places that maybe sometimes sold contemporary Chinese art, but it basically didn't exist. But I didn't want it to be a show just about contemporary Chinese art; I wanted the works to go on sale too. I wanted it to be treated in a somewhat banal, normal way. They lacked some of the banalities of art existence – and even though I wasn't an art dealer, and didn't take any commissions, I wanted that to be an element of the exhibition, and I wanted it to help lead some of the artists – and it did in fact lead – to other avenues.

(JD): So Ai Weiwei's painting [the Mao triptych] never sold?

(MM): No, it did not sell, and actually, I don't know what became of it in the end – do you know what happened to it?

(JD): We know of the painting but we don't know where it is either.

(MM): There are a couple image reproductions of it in this catalogue here – there are two of the three, not all of the three –

(JD): But the other paintings sold?

(MM): I would say about half. Zhang Wei sold a painting, and Gang sold two works that happened to also be two of the largest works in the exhibition. Xing Fei's piece did not sell; maybe she sold it later on – I thought it was a wonderful work and kind of wanted it myself, but I couldn't figure out how I would hang it or have it some place. You kind of needed a special, unusual space to have it free hanging.

(JD): Looking at the catalogue now, I must say these were very strong works.

(MM): Yes, I think the reception of the works I showed, not the slide selection which was not the selection we ended up with, are good works.

(JD): Of these artists, which most of us now know, these would be considered strong works.

(MM): That's what I thought as well. Actually, a Washington D.C. collector bought Gang's paintings on the first day of the show – that was a shock because they were twelve, thirteen hundred dollars and these were large numbers in comparison to the rest, so that was exciting. Not the Ai Weiwei one, which was stratospheric, as mentioned earlier. That was kind of amusing.

(JD): And Ai Weiwei's work was so different in feel; I mean, to be doing a pop-Mao, like Warhol, at that time, was actually quite pioneering.

(MM): Yes, let me tell you a funny story about that. When the show was being installed at Vassar, I was in the gallery at the time, and coincidentally, Vassar was being visited by six Chinese [University] vice presidents. They were doing a Chinese tour of different colleges and institutions around the country. I was introduced to them, and actually had dinner with them at a very nice place on the Hudson later on, but they were there, when this show of Chinese avant-garde art was being exhibited at the time of their arrival. This wasn't planned at all. I thought 'This is kind of interesting'. I didn't lead them around, or get entangled in an unpleasant conversation, but I had the doors opened and let them walk around – plus, the show wasn't entirely mounted yet…but anyway. Ai Weiwei's triptych was mounted on the wall and it was the last thing you would see if you walked through the exhibition. Of the six, some were more forward speaking than the others. So finally, they were standing in front of Ai Weiwei's work. I was observing them – and pretending that I wasn't avidly watching, and thought to myself 'Okay, here are six Chinese vice presidents of Chinese universities, standing before three Mao portraits by Ai Weiwei…' – and what I could tell – and I call this translation from a distance, coding gestures and whatnot – was that at first, I think what the more vocal ones were trying to say was 'Oh, this is bad, it's so amateurish, any child could do this, all you have to do is this and that…' It was their way of conveying their amazement and embarrassment; a mixture of complicated emotions. But it wasn't that they were unremittingly hostile; they didn't expect this. I mean, here they were, miles from home, standing in front of a triptych by one of their countrymen…I wish I had a video of it, or a photo of it.

(JD): Did you say whose work it was at the time?

(MM): I think they have a catalogue – actually, I know it was given to them. I'm positive the Vassar President would have given them a copy – we had plenty of copies to give out – I'm sure they know who made the work.

(JD): Because they would have known his father.

(MM): Exactly, because he was very famous in China. And how much was being processed…Oh, it was very interesting. I called the introduction to my catalogue here, 'The Power of Images' but I end the discussion with images of power, so to relate the 'power of images' to the 'images of power' during the surveillance of images of all kind – not just a special Chinese preoccupation. But if you go to the images of images that survey other images – the Mao figure as an icon – I was astonished to see – well, they just celebrated the 60th Anniversary – how large he is, or how much larger than life he is. He still is. When I was at the University, I would say, during some off-moments when I was sure no one would be offended, that the standing bronze Mao, with his arm up

in the air – I'm sure you've seen it and there are probably millions of versions of it – may at some point break, and they will have to take it away for repair and maybe it just won't come back. 'It would take a long time for them to get the repair right!'. To get the right experts, the right kind of refurbishing… (Laughter) It was my own fantasy scenario. But when you see that bronze, the size of it and the arm going out that far, you'd think it's hard to keep that arm in place – like your own arm; it's hard to hold one's arm up in a steady position for a long period of time like that.

(JD): On Ai Weiwei for just a moment, he's obviously become quite a well-known figure; a celebrity almost. Did you have interaction with him at the time?

(MM): I didn't; we only had a certain number of days there, and my hope was that I would meet him, but Beijing was hard to get around. In the 1980s, there were no cars, other than white taxis and black government cars. You could zoom across the city easily; nowadays, it's a major calculation, how to get from one place to the next. I met Ai Weiwei at Gang's solo show at Michael Goedhuis' gallery on the East side. He came up to me and he was looking fuller, even larger than life. We had a great hug; it was wonderful to see him.

(JD): Back in the '80s, did you have much interaction with him?

(MM): When he moved to New York, yes, of course I did. Given that he's made an important contribution to Beijing architecture in his design work and whatnot, I don't know the concrete details about it…I wanted to find the poster he made for the show. Actually, we have a wonderful, spectacular poster, about this size, as well as a smaller poster of the symposium that I mentioned. I had asked Ai Weiwei to design it, but when the design was finished, I must say, I didn't like it all; it was so stiff and unwieldy and it wasn't eye-catching. I felt really badly about having to say that and really should have thought twice about asking any one of the artists because if you don't say yes, then…well, you know. I don't think he was too happy with my not liking his work. Gang designed part of the other poster, along with a brilliant graphic artist at Vassar. If I can get AAA one, I will definitely try to do that. Then, the last time I saw Ai Weiwei was on the East side here in New York. In Beijing, I was with my partner and we were visiting all kinds of things - so there wasn't enough time to do everything. It was already so difficult to visit Gang.

(JD): So, after you organized the exhibition, and after it traveled, did you maintain contact with the artists? Did you continue to involve yourself in the contemporary Chinese art world?

(MM): Those who lived in New York I saw quite frequently – we would get together and go to shows, dinners and parties together. This was also a time when there were other Chinese artists as well whose works were being shown here so we would go visit the works of these other artists together. I didn't necessarily know these new artists, the next wave of younger Chinese artists in New York. There wasn't a specific project I engaged in, specific to Chinese contemporary art, but I wrote many introductions; two, possibly three, catalogue introductions for Zhang Wei, and I did the same for Gang on two, possibly three occasions –

(JD): For exhibitions that they had here in the United States?

(MM): Yes, for exhibitions here. Now that you're asking me about this, I think I may have some of these catalogues somewhere…if not here, the artists definitely have copies.

(JD): And these exhibitions were for shows in the '80s or into the '90s?

(MM): These were in the '80s…maybe some in the '90s. Zhang Wei was represented by Carolyn Hill Gallery in Soho, when Soho used to be an art center of the world. And, it may have been that both his shows were there. And then ZZ – Zhang Zhang – ran Z-Gallery in Soho for many years – it existed first on Greene or Spring streets, and then it moved to a space on the second floor near the downtown Guggenheim for a while. ZZ wasn't only representing Chinese art, but she was doing a lot of it. Zhang Wei had about two to three shows through her

gallery. So between Carolyn Hill and Zhang Zhang, Zhang Wei had about five, six shows. I wrote twice for Carolyn Hill and twice for Zhang Zhang, or something like that. And then I did some writing for some shows for Gang – short essay type writing – and maybe there were others…those two artists I wrote for certain. This must have been in the late '80s or early '90s. There must be others but they are escaping my memory right now – funny because I didn't remember these catalogue introductions when I was trying to collect my thoughts earlier… The year before Gang came to Vassar, he was in Maastricht, Holland on a fellowship. That's how he got out of China, to paint and study art in Holland. I remember when he told me about first seeing paintings by Dutch masters, he said 'Michael, when I saw them I could feel the hairs standing up on the back of my neck…' He had suddenly seen great paintings that left him dumbfounded. He was there one year, and then I helped him work on his application to Vassar and helped do a lot of intervening work to get him accepted, so I'm sure he wouldn't have gotten in without my help. I had lots of meetings directly with the Director of Admissions and stated that 'I know this fellow, he's very smart and capable and has been learning English incredibly quickly…' In1983, the time we got together in Xi'an, he barely spoke any English. A Dutch patron of his had given him a very expensive and beautiful camera. He had come in from Beijing with this camera around his neck. He didn't have a place to stay in Xi'an, so – I was with my wife then, now ex. – I said 'Well, you can stay with Tom Canellakis – Tom spoke fluent Chinese and knew lots of things. I was paying for Tom's room, and Tom didn't mind so it turned out nicely. Of course, the next morning, there were police waiting for us – things are always more complicated than you think. Gang always presupposes things, which aren't usually the case. They wanted to speak with Gang and told us to go along with our day. Of course, when we got back, his things were gone, he was gone and he was taken to jail. He was there for the majority of our stay – the police were convinced that he had stolen his camera, because it was a camera worth two years of work. They didn't believe someone would give 'this little kid' a camera. The police were harsh – they could've been gangsters in another world. So, back to the point, I helped him get his admission into Vassar and he was there for two years and it was hard for him – one underestimates the number of things someone needs to know to go to an American college, you know. If you didn't have any formal education – even if you were fast, smart and good at learning English – it was a huge deficit, especially for writing. Gang learned to speak English orally fairly quickly, but transferring that to writing essays and taking exams was very tough. Zhang Wei I helped come to the United States – this was the pretext to the symposium – and helped him with paperwork. So in their two cases, I did help.

(JD): And Zhang Wei stayed –

(MM): Yes, he stayed, and only recently went back. He was here for quite a long time. Every one of them has a strange story and career itinerary to tell. For a while, Zhang Wei was showing his works in galleries, but I don't know how much he is showing now. Each one is a free spirit; with quirks of their own; those bits and pieces one has to go through in order to maintain a professional artist's life. Actually, he began by selling paintings in front of the Metropolitan Museum – remember the time when there was great controversy over whether people could sell artwork in front of the Met? You'll find major pictures in the papers with Zhang Wei in the middle of it. In the end, the city was wrong to say that artists couldn't do this. So, he was a sidewalk seller of his art and that's how he supported himself.

(JD): Did he do portraits?

(MM): Maybe sometimes, but no, these were small scale finished works, and he would show about eight or ten of them…he didn't go back to galleries – though I'm not absolutely informed – until later.

(Q): And Ai Weiwei, you met here?

(MM): Yes, I met him here in New York. At the time, he had just arrived to New York, and I was introduced to him through Gang. I was very impressed by him and his work, and knew a little about him, so that was an easy choice of inclusion for the show – and I always say that all these artists contributed something to the being

of the show, and Ai Weiwei contributed to the show through this poster that we didn't use, (Laughter) which, even with our slim budget, we had to throw away and not use. I don't know if it really got thrown out, but I'm sure it's now worth a lot and we could sell it at auction or something. It would probably be a valuable investment today!