

查尔斯，你好！

我很高兴，因为这个准备了两年多时间的项目可以启动了。尽管资金还很不充分，但是这点资金可以让我行动起来，开始这个项目的工作。

昨天晚上，当我拖着疲惫的身体从上海回到苏州的家里时，我的妻子张芳看着我，很认真的问我：牧，你有没有认真的想过，你到底为什么做艺术？我沉默良久，不知以何作答。

这是一个看似简单的问题，可是对于像我这样把艺术作为职业的人，变得复杂了，因为我想要的太多——我想创作出伟大的作品，我想成为伟大的艺术家，我想改变这个世界，我想不枉此生……。可是，我何曾问我自己，我做艺术的根本目的是什么？那些东西真的很重要吗？来的时候，我一无所有，也一无是处；走的时候，我也一样一无所有，一无是处。那么，这些所谓的伟大对我还有什么意义呢？

回到我们的这个项目来说，我应该回到最初来看问题。我出生在这个村子里，我在这个村子里成长并离开，我的亲人生活在这个村子里。如今，我回到这个村子里，我带着我的艺术，知识和经验和我的村子建立一种关系，探讨彼此的相处和影响的可能性。或许，我能够通过这些活动，找回我自己，找回我真正想要的东西和我的方向。我想，一个艺术项目不管有多复杂和庞大，它始终都不应该偏离的是，这是关于人的项目，它应该始终保持着人身体上的温度。

今年夏天，我走访纽约的蔡国强工作室，向他讲述了我的这个项目，他说：一个人不管走的有多远，他在精神上都离不开他出生的地方。那里是他生命开始的地方，也是此生的源泉所在。

这个项目的发生应该从今年的冬天到明年的春天，在明年的五月份，春暖花开的时候，也是这个项目的结尾，我邀请你和 Davide 来到村子里，分享这些艺术作品的成长。我邀请你和 Davide 作为这个项目的策划人，我希望能和你时刻保持沟通的状态，我们一起来完成这个项目。

作品的记录很重要，我在寻找一个助手来协助我拍照和录像。

祝你工作愉快！

李牧

2012. 12. 12

Dear Charles,

I am so excited that we can start the project, which we prepared for more than two years. Though we are still short of money, this fund enables us to start. Last night, I left Shanghai and came back to my home in Suzhou. I was totally worn out. My wife Fang looked at me seriously and asked: Mu, did you ever think about this: why do you want to be an artist? I went silent for quite a while and didn't know how to answer.

This seems to be a simple question, but for a full time artist like me, it's much more complex. Because I want too much-----I want to create great art works, I want to become a great artist, I want to change the world, I want to fulfill my life..... But did I ever ask myself what is the real purpose of doing art. Is it that important to me? I have nothing when I was born; I will bring nothing with me when I leave the world. So, If I claim to be great will it still mean that much to me?

Back to this project, I think I should return to my original intention. I was born and grew up in the village. But I left it while my family and relatives still live here. Now I come back to the village with my art, knowledge and experience. I want to build up a new relationship with the village, to figure out whether there is the possibility for me to get along with it and to influence it or be influenced by it. Maybe I can find the lost me, what I really want and my direction by doing this project. I think, no matter how big or complicated an art project is, it should be always about humans. It should have the temperature of humans.

This summer I visited Cai Guoqiang's studio in New York. I mentioned to him about this project. He said: no matter how far a person can go away from where he is born, he can never cut himself off from that place mentally. It's where his life starts and will be the source for his whole lifetime.

This project lasts from this winter to the spring of next year. It will end in May of next year when the weather is turning warm and the flowers are in blossom. I invite you and Davide to come to my village at that time. You and Davide are the curators of the project. I wish to keep in touch with you all the time. Let's get this project done together.

The recording of the project is very important. I am looking for an assistant to film and take pictures of the whole process.

All the best,

Li Mu
December 12, 2012

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