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### **Erwin Wurm's "Narrow House"**

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Artist Erwin Wurm says his "Telekinetically Bent VW Van" was created with the help of Mahesh Abayahani, a guru from India.

Wurm told the crowd gathered for his weekend lecture at the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA) that the guru insisted on a business class ticket from India and \$2,000. In addition, the artist and his assistants had to pledge to concentrate on bending the bus in good faith.

"He bent the bus," Wurm said, showing a slide of the kind of van favored by hippies, warped in the middle by a 30-degree bend between its two axles. With its wheels straight, this bus would go in a circle forever.

An audience member asked if the telekinetic guru also helped create another of Wurm's pieces, a boat on a dock with the front half drooping into the sea - the maritime cousin of Dali's clocks melting in the desert sand. "It was cheaper and easier to bend the boat ourselves," Wurm replied.

Wurm was in Beijing for the opening of his show *Narrow Mist*. Wurm's fans include the Red Hot Chili Peppers, whose video for the song "Can't Stop" was inspired by Wurm's *One Minute Sculptures*, a series of photos and videos featuring ridiculous scenes including an office worker shoving markers, tape, staplers and other office supplies in every orifice of his face.

Wurm is proud of the political content of his work, dubbing his style "Critical Cynicism." During his lecture, Wurm noted, "Go back to biology. Something growing constantly is cancer." Wurm added that a major theme of his work is mistrust, noting, "I mistrust government in general." He added, "Where are all the young radicals?"

In Beijing, Wurm premiered a new work, "Narrow House," a full-scale model of his childhood Austrian home in two dimensions - length and height. But the home is less than two meters wide. A normal man can barely squeeze down the main hallway. There are two entrances to the home, but no way for people walking in opposite directions to pass each other.

Pictures of Wurm's family hang on the walls. The toilet is long enough to sit on, but narrower than a few fingers. His parents' bedroom is the width of a hand. The telephone, sink, oven, and refrigerator magnets are similarly skewed.

Wurm said he had always wanted to be an artist. To him it represented intellectualism and a spiritual life, things lacking in the narrow-minded world of his parents and their relatives, who were all clerks, businessmen, and engineers and the like.

"That's the reason why I made this narrow house," he said. When Wurm told his father, a police detective, that he wanted to be an artist, the father reacted with anger. "Father thought artists had one foot in the criminal world."