

Fact Sheet
January 7th, 2011

Painting the World Red

Chinese Propaganda Posters from the Collection of Burt Ehrlich, 1949-1979

The 8th Floor 17 West 17th New York, NY 10011

Opening Reception: Friday, February 4th, 2011

Open Houses: Saturday February 5th and Sunday February 6th, 2011, 12-5 PM

If all times and places have a particular art form associated with them, Burt Ehrlich notes, "Chinese propaganda posters were the art of their age." The 8th Floor is pleased to present *Painting the World Red*, an exhibition of over 40 posters from the private collection of Burt Ehrlich. Curated by Benno Weiner, PhD candidate in History at Columbia University, *Painting the World Red* will run February 4th- 28th, 2011 at The 8th Floor in New York City.

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China (1949), propaganda posters have been an inseparable part of Chinese daily life. Produced by some of the leading artists of their time, their purpose was to educate, mobilize and inspire a largely illiterate population. Although working within a mandate to depict the world not as it was but "as it ought to be," these artists created original works of art that stand among the most important Chinese cultural productions of their era.

On a trip to Shanghai five years ago, Mr. Ehrlich first became interested in these images. Initially attracted by the political content, in particular the anti-American, anti-imperialist imagery displayed in many of the posters, he began his collection. This eventually brought him to Yang Peiming, founder of the Shanghai Propaganda Poster Centre and leading expert on the subject. With Mr. Yang's help, over the next several years Mr. Ehrlich would go on to acquire what is believed to be the largest and most wide-ranging collection of Mao-era propaganda posters in the United States. In addition to posters from Mr. Ehrlich's collection, the exhibit includes items generously loaned from the personal collection of Mike Ungaro.

An opening reception will be held on February 4th, 2011 from 6-8 PM as well as two open houses hosted by Mr. Ehrlich on Saturday and Sunday, February 5th and 6th from 12-5 PM. Viewings are by appointment only. Regular hours are forthcoming.

Selected from the more than five hundred posters in Mr. Ehrlich's collection, *Painting the World Red* shifts attention away from well-known motifs such as Mao Zedong and the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Instead, *Painting the World Red* illustrates a vision of an alternate world order, one in which China leads the world's proletariat in anti-imperialist revolution and internationalist friendship. Taken as a whole, the posters project a powerful vision, one that in the not-too-distant past embraced the possibility of a very different future.

About the curator: Benno Weiner is a PhD candidate in the History Department and SYLF Fellow in the Weatherhead East Asian Institute of Columbia University. He also teaches Modern Chinese History at Rutgers University, Newark and New York University.