



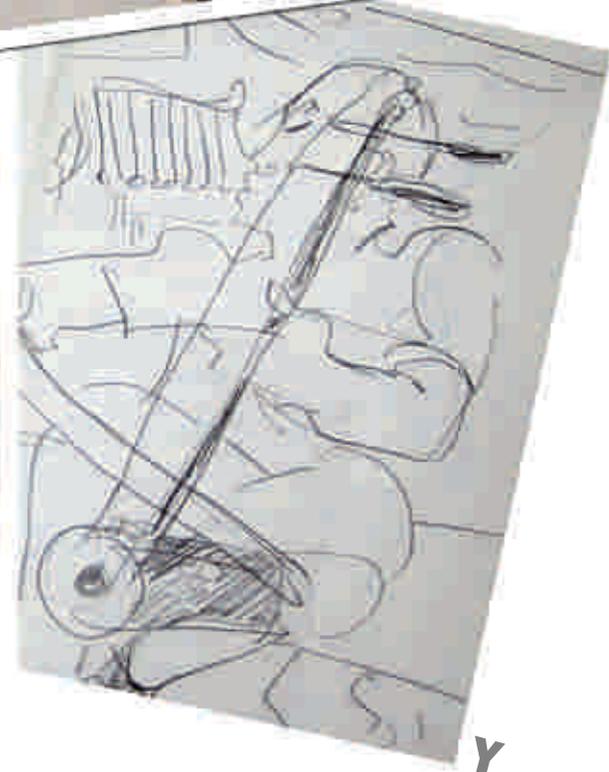
V



X



W



Y

Z

and go, strangely, after we entered the Forbidden City. Now we were surrounded by tiled buildings, glazed in turquoise, blues and browns. Large bronze stork and turtle sculptures. Terracotta tiles and trees like bonsai, cut to drape over decorative, weather-beaten rocks. Ponds of water-lilies and wooden, brightly painted corridors leading to lake boats. The concubines' enclosed quarters, with the back door where they were secretly taken out after they died. Bunches of tourists walked in groups, as if they were all joined together.

"Um-goy" (thank you). Often expressed silently by bowing the two forefingers on the table — a custom left over from when the Emperor left the Forbidden City and didn't

want his minions to be seen bowing and kowtowing to him. We visit the empty Olympic city, our IWF minds full of ideas of what could be done with this leftover from the 2008 games.

I fell for Barbara from America. We had the same philosophies in life. Hillary Clinton and Barbara are best buddies. If that's the case, Hillary Clinton must be as wonderful as I thought she was.

At the silk factory, the worms were busy weaving. "Do you think this would suit me?" Each IWF woman consulted Poppy and I about the beautiful Chinese cloths, as we were the only artists in the group. Poppy bought a duvet filled with silk. We were measured for outfits to be tailored overnight.

At six the next morning, two young tailors knocked on the door and we tried on our outfits. By evening, the boxes were waiting at the reception desk.

Reaching for miles and miles into the blue mountains was the beautiful, yet aggressive Great Wall of China (W and X). Young vendors climbed with their boxes of goods strapped to their backs to sell small carvings, hats and jade without permission from the authorities. Past conflict and art leaves its mark everywhere.

"China surprises me; my mindset has been changed by this trip," said Barbara. We were looking at the park full of children, old people, parents and young people — laughing, singing and playing

extraordinary-looking instruments (Y). It seemed a huge amount of people were happy. Perhaps the torturous events in history are slowly being forgotten, and a new, relaxed China is emerging. Poppy and I flew back to Ireland with little bits of bamboo in our cases (Z — *European and Asian*; painting). ■

*Pauline Bewick's exhibition of new works opens on September 6 until September 25 in the Taylor Galleries, Kildare St, D2, tel: (01) 676-6055. Open weekdays from 10am to 5.30pm and Saturdays from 11am to 3pm. A special lecture will be given by the artist on September 18 at 11.30am. See [www.paulinebewick.ie](http://www.paulinebewick.ie)*