WEISS: You mentioned that when you were working on 9/11, you had been brought up much more strict, and they didn't want their kids to be fettered by being in a certain direction you're being political, but it's just the facts, I'm not telling you how it should be. I'm not teaching. I'm just giving you the facts, and I think that's the only way to do it, is just present the facts, and then anyone can interpret it any way they want it. And that's why I keep saying that I'm not interested in giving someone an organized craziness. It is just the facts. And if we are fortunate, they'll say, "Oh, I understand why you do what you do. In a way, I'm much more interested in that I have no idea why it's important. It's just the facts." And that's what's important to me.

MAYA LIN: I've always been pretty fascinated on water. Maybe it's because it exists in multiple natural borders and building her own topography. I've always been interested in water, but a cultural divide to anyone who comes from another country and is missing water. I'm always feeling like, well, where is home? That's dehumanizing. God, we're hunters and gatherers. I think that's totally human, and I think we need to acknowledge that. And that's what's so great about art to me is that it brings us back to our human selves and our human nature, and I think that thoroughly grounded me, as well as coming of age during the '70s environmental movement. Everyone says, "Well, that's population." Well, if you took the entire world's population and multiplied it by the number of deaths, and you then put it on the edges of the world, you would see a picture, of 7.3 billion of us, right? And you'd say, "Well, that's overwhelming."

MAYA LIN: One of the things that you mentioned, that I think is really interesting is that scientists tend to be extremely cautious, and they thought, "Oh, it's going to take years."

WEISS: What's funny is that New York's always been under attack. It's always attack whether it's 9/11 or a pandemic. The 9/11 Memorial is one of the saddest days of my life. I don't want the memorial to be a place that you walk in and you have to see the reality of it. I want it to be a place of healing, and that's why it's so important for me to think about what is it that we're trying to build. I was going to say a metaphor, and I think it's really important to present the facts. I think it is very hard, and as an artist, you have to be extremely careful that it does not become prescriptive. I want to give you facts, and that's the way I've always connected it in your brain. It's not just like this is what it is, this is how it is. It's, "This is what it is."

MAYA LIN: I think that's one of the things that's so great about art, and it's a non-verbal way of talking about things. You can even trace it back to the Vietnam Memorial; I saw it as a park, and I wanted to make a map. Imagine a park where you could read the ground. It's a metaphor for reading the world. That's what I was trying to do, is to make a map about time. I think the idea, what's a map? And can I make a map about time? I think the ground is a great metaphor for the world. You can read the ground. You can read the park.

WEISS: That's interesting because the climate change debate seems to rely so much on the science. You're a memorialist. "And I went, "Hmm."

MAYA LIN: One of the things that I'm really interested in, and aquifers, which again, it's very, very hard to visualize. It's like underground water. It's underground, and you actually never know what it is, because even if you could scan it in an X-ray, you can never know exactly what's underground. And my interest in water, but a cultural divide to anyone who comes from another country and is missing water.

MAYA LIN: And that's where some people just don't get it, or they'd prefer it if the work was a lot more prescriptive. What is art? "Organized Craziness." But you thought you were going to be a scientist, and then you thought you were going to be a landscape architect, and then you thought you were going to be an artist. But you can never really do any of those things. And I think I'm never going to be able to completely commit to anything, but I think I'm going to try to make it interesting for anyone who's curious about it, and then they can interpret it any way they want it. And I think, as an artist, that's my only way to communicate. I'm not trying to communicate what I believe, but I'm trying to communicate what I've learned, and it's up to you to translate it into something else. I mean, I think that's the whole idea of art. I don't want to be prescriptive. I want to give you facts, and that's the way I've always done it. It's not just like this is what it is, this is how it is. It's, "This is what it is."

WEISS: But you mention that when you were working on 9/11, you had been brought up much more strict, and they didn't want their kids to be fettered by being in a certain direction you're being political, but it's just the facts, I'm not telling you how it should be. I'm not teaching. I'm just giving you the facts, and I think that's the only way to do it, is just present the facts, and then anyone can interpret it any way they want it. And that's what's important to me.

MAYA LIN: You mentioned that when you were working on 9/11, you had been brought up much more strict, and they didn't want their kids to be fettered by being in a certain direction you're being political, but it's just the facts, I'm not telling you how it should be. I'm not teaching. I'm just giving you the facts, and I think that's the only way to do it, is just present the facts, and then anyone can interpret it any way they want it. And that's what's important to me.