

Multiply!!! Power In Numbers in Contemporary Chinese Art

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Chinese artists have known the power of copying and multiplying as tools for studying and glorifying original artworks. From the grand display of the Terracotta Warriors in Xi'an to Cai Guo Qiang's AR fireworks above the Forbidden City, the experience of the "multiplier" is the core of Chinese artmaking. Printmaking was invented in China in 700 A.D. and molds were used for even the earliest of bronze sculptures. Today, Chinese artists rely on the tools of reproduction to create, duplicate and distribute their creations. Yet, beyond practical uses of multiplication, "multiplicity" has become a central theme in Chinese contemporary art with many young Chinese artists replicating a mass of identical objects and images to create astounding spectacles.

This exhibition examines a group of artists for whom multiplication and repetition are the very point of their artworks, rather than merely a tool for easy replication and widespread distribution. Instead of the usual selection of prints and multiples that are expected in such an exhibition, here is a survey of artists who are pushing the envelope demonstrating the spectacular effect that can be achieved by grouping masses of similar objects together in the same space. There are artists who still rely on classical techniques, such as molds, printmaking and paper cutting. But there are also many others who challenge the very notion of an "original" or a "limited edition" by employing the latest technology, including 3D printing, multi-channel animation, artificial intelligence, virtual reality and NFTs. The exhibition demonstrates that rather than wowing an audience with a single unique work, such as the Mona Lisa, a greater impact can be achieved through amassing a crowd of works in total environments that invite interaction.

The use of multiplication to create spectacle is the core of this exhibition. Like synchronized drummers at opening ceremonies or omnipresence of images of social media idols, China excels at this form of spectacle yet its artists' use of multiplication has rarely been investigated in a museum exhibition. Here, instead of attaching shame or illegality to multiples, the exhibition celebrates the power of the crowd and highlights those artists who make use of reproduction to beautiful and thought-provoking ends.

中国艺术家们向来熟谙蕴藏在复刻与倍增中的力量，将其作为研究与升华艺术创作的手法。从西安浩浩荡荡的兵马俑到蔡国强绽放在紫禁城上空的AR焰火，「倍增」在中国艺术创作中一直占

据着核心地位。公元 700 年，中国就发明了版印技术；在更久远的青铜器制造工艺中，“模具”也被制作者分享使用。今天，中国艺术家们借助复制性工具创作、翻制、传播自己的作品，「倍增」不仅在实践中广泛应用，也成为了中国当代艺术领域的核心主题。诸多中国艺术家将复制与倍增作为方法，打造出令人惊叹的奇观。

本次展览呈现的艺术家，不仅将倍增复制作为快速翻制作品并加以传播的工具，更将其视为创作主旨。同类展览中也许会展出成套印刷品与复制品，本次展览则试图挑战一项极限——将大量相似的物品置于同一空间内，共同探索展览景观效应的边界。有些艺术家依然运用翻模、版印以及剪纸等传统创作技术，另外一些则运用 3D 打印、多通道动画、人工智能、虚拟现实等最新技术，向“原作”及“限量版”等概念发起挑战。这次展览表明，比起像《蒙娜丽莎》那样用一件独特的作品来震撼观众，在邀请互动的整体环境中聚集一群作品可以产生更大的影响。

本次展览的核心在于运用倍增来创建奇观。中国以此类形式奇观见长，比如开幕式上众多步调一致的鼓手，社交媒体上无所不在的网红照片，但有关中国艺术家对于倍增法的运用的讨论则仍留有不少空白。《繁衍生息》并不打算为成倍增长的复刻品贴上耻辱或非法的标签，相反，我们赞美群众的力量，关注艺术家如何运用复刻与倍增的重复力量诠释发人深省之美。