Gerard Choy

One Ton of Won Ton Bowls

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A homonym is a word that sounds the same as another, but has a different meaning. For native English speakers, homonyms are a spellers' irritant, but for native Mandarin speakers, homonyms are a source of humour.

Gerard Choy's sculptural installation One Ton of Won Ton Bowls, at Saint Mary's University Art Gallery, is both a literal and a metaphorical homonym. It is a play on words and meaning between cultures — an exploration of opposites. The work consists of 279 cast won ton "bowls," constituting the one-ton of concrete, configured into an evenly spaced ten-row grid on the floor. Upon entering the gallery, the viewer is initially struck by both the simplicity and the beauty of the installation. The verbal pun quickly makes literal sense, but the subtleties of the work's other possible meanings require more consideration. Disguised within the art historical references of Conceptual Minimalism are issues of identity, cultural appropriation, and commodification.

The phenomenological aspects of One Ton of Won Ton Bowls reference essential elements of Conceptual Minimalism and Op Art: simple forms, industrial materials, grids, multiplicity, and optical illusion; but each element is subverted. The bowl/object is a simplified, non-functional, solid concrete form, as Judd suggests, but the scale is human and the adornment subtle, yet evident in concrete form, as Judd suggests, simplified, non-functional, solid grids, multiplicity, and optical illusion. For Choy, there is minimal personal connection to the Icon. Yet In One Ton of Won Ton Bowls, he subversively appropriates this cultural identification. Is the intent to confront the viewer's assumptions about cultural identity, or is it an acknowledgement of his own exported existence? Depending on where the work is exhibited, it may be read as exotic Conceptualism or as banal Pop art — or, if viewed in

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