

M A R Y B O O N E G A L L E R Y
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AI WEIWEI

On 7 January 2012 the Mary Boone Gallery will open at its Chelsea location *Sunflower Seeds*, an Installation by world-renowned artist and human rights activist AI WEIWEI.

Seen for the first time in New York, *Sunflower Seeds*, as in the related Installation that debuted at the Tate Modern in London in October 2010, is a field comprised of millions (five tons) of hand-painted porcelain sunflower seeds. Each actual-size seed is unique and intricately hand-formed and painted by artisans in the historic porcelain-producing city of Jingdezhen in northern Jiangxi, China.

The sunflower, with its destiny to follow the sun, became a common metaphor for The People during China's Cultural Revolution. At the same time, the seeds of the flower provided sustenance at all levels of society, and the ubiquitous discarded husks provided evidence of an individual's existence. Ai Weiwei demonstrates that a staggering quantity of individual seeds may produce a deceptively unified field. The work is a commentary on social, political and economic issues pertinent to contemporary China: the role of the individual versus the masses, and China's long history of labor-intensive production and export.

Sunflower Seeds is on view at 541 West 24 Street through 4 February 2012. For further information, please contact Ron Warren at the Gallery, or visit our website www.maryboonegallery.com.