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Song Dong: Waste Not

I am interested in considering the reception of Beijing-based artist Song Dong's "Waste Not" installation when it was presented at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. What are the challenges for cross-cultural readings of the work? Is the specificity of the references available to audiences? What are the benefits of misreadings or subjective interpretations? Research of records of audience responses, art reviews and general press clippings, as well as interviews with MoMA staff will provide a basis for my discussion of the success and challenges of presenting work with such specific cultural reference yet universal themes to a varied and cosmopolitan audience.

MoMA presented Waste Not (2005) Song Dong's large-scale installation comprised of items that his mother and grandmother collected over five decades. The assemblage follows the Chinese concept of wu jin qu yong, "waste not," as a prerequisite for survival and is comprised of thousands of ordinary household items which make up a narrative history of family life.