

* COPY



With Love From China

Originale werden immer seltener – sichern sie sich ihre Kopie!
Originals are becoming more rare – safeguard your copy!

China ist der große Produzent von Massenwaren auf der Welt. Viele europäische Firmen lassen in China produzieren oder kaufen ihre Waren dort billiger ein. Die Gefahr bei der Produktion in Fernost auch die Kopierer auf den Plan zu rufen ist groß. Die Massenproduktion in China und die enormen Mengen an Kopien, die dort gleichwohl hergestellt werden, faszinieren mich und schrecken mich gleichzeitig ab. Wie funktioniert dieser Markt – Wie ist die Zusammenarbeit zwischen chinesischen Herstellern und europäischen Auftraggebern – Erfüllt China noch immer jeden auch noch so unverständlichen Kundenwunsch wie einst beim Exportporzellan?

Um die Mechanismen besser zu verstehen und selbst zu erleben, unternahm ich einen Selbstversuch. Ich entschied mich für eine sehr persönliche Variante: Eine Kopie meiner Selbst, als Büste in Porzellan und 75% verkleinert.

China is responsible for a large percentage of mass-produced goods in the world. Many European firms have their wares produced in China or buy goods at cheaper prices there. The risk with production in the Far East is also that the imitator gets his own plan. The mass-production taking place in China and the enormous quantities of copies that are still manufactured is both fascinating and shocking for me at the same time. How does this market function? How do the Chinese manufacturers and European clients work together? Does China still always manage to achieve all, even the more perplexing customer wishes, like in early days with the exportation of porcelain?

I undertook a test in order to understand the mechanism better as well as to experience myself. I opted for a very personal variant: a copy of myself, as a bust in porcelain and reduced by 75% in size.

Please copy me...

Hello Mr. Lee,

Alibaba ist Ausdruck der boomenden Wirtschaft Chinas: Die Website wurde 1999 von Jack Ma, einem chinesischen IT-Unternehmer, gegründet. Acht Jahre später 2007 ging Alibaba an die Börse. Es war der größte Börsengang eines Internet-Unternehmens seit Google. Alibaba.com hat nach eigenen Angaben einen Kundenstamm von mehr als 24 Mio. Benutzern aus über 200 Ländern und Regionen.

Alibaba is an expression for the booming economy of China. The website was set up in 1999 by Jack Ma, a Chinese IT-entrepreneur. Alibaba went to the stock exchange eight years later in 2007. It was the largest such transaction from an Internet enterprise since Google committed itself to the same move. According to their own figures, Alibaba.com has a client base of more than 24 million users from over 200 countries and regions.

Der Prozess der Herstellung von der ersten Kontaktaufnahme bis zur Lieferung des Pakets mit den fertigen Büsten stellt für mich einen wichtigen Teil der Arbeit dar. Sämtlicher Kontakt lief über E-Mail. Dieser Weg ist nicht unüblich – längst fahren die Händler nicht mehr mit ihren Schiffen nach Kanton um ihre Bestellungen aufzugeben. Heute kann alles bequem über das Internet geregelt werden. Ich bin weder zu der Firma nach China gefahren, noch habe ich meine chinesischen Produzenten persönlich kennen gelernt. Ich habe die Firma nicht besucht und weiß daher nichts über die Bedingungen vor Ort.

Das Internet ermöglicht eine schnelle und problemlose Kommunikation um den Globus und baut doch gleichzeitig auch eine Distanz auf und führt zu Missverständnissen.

Meine Porzellanbüste sollte vor allem in ihrer Physiognomie dem Original, also mir, ähnlich sein. Dennoch wollte ich beim Auftrag zu ihrer Herstellung Raum für die eigene Interpretation der chinesischen Modelleure lassen. Es war von Vorteil, dass mich die Modelleure nie gesehen haben – so mussten sie an Hand kleiner Fotos mein Gesicht rekonstruieren. Das gelang nicht sofort sondern bedurfte mehrerer Überarbeitungen.

„Meine“ Firma, China Ceramic International, habe ich über die Internetplattform Alibaba.com gefunden. Alibaba ist eine so genannte „Business to Business“ Plattform – eine Kontaktbörse zwischen chinesischen Exporteuren und Produzenten und dem Weltmarkt.

40 Porzellanhersteller kontaktierte ich über Alibaba. 31 antworteten mir umgehend. Nach genauer Beschreibung meines Vorhabens, der Menge und des Zeitfensters sagten 11 ab, weil

I consider an important element of the work to be the process of manufacturing - from the first establishment of contact, to the supply of the finished busts. All communication was conducted via Email. This method is not uncommon as it has been ages since dealers have stopped delivering directly to cantons with their ships. Today, everything can be comfortably regulated over the Internet. I drove neither to the company in China, nor did get to know my producers personally. Since I did not visit them, I therefore also know nothing about the company and its local conditions.

Internet makes it possible to have fast and problem-free communication with others around the globe. Yet this distance can at the same time nevertheless also cause misunderstandings.

My porcelain bust should be similar the original, particularly in its physiognomy and thus to me. However, I wanted to leave some interpretation open for the Chinese modellers in the way it is actually produced. It was an advantage that the modellers never saw me and had to reconstruct my face on the basis small photos. That process was not immediately successful and required several revisions.

I found the firm in question, China Ceramic International, through the Internet platform Alibaba.com. Alibaba is a so-called “business to business” platform - a contact agent between Chinese exporters and producers, and the world market.

I got in touch with 40 porcelain manufacturers through Alibaba. Thirty-one of them replied immediately. After specifying the details of my project, the quantity I wished to have it produced and the time scale, 11 refused such an order due to the number of items being too small, and a further four did so too because they only manufactured tableware. Six assured me of the possibility for reproduction. I selected the company China Ceramic International

ihnen die Stückzahl zu klein war, 4 weil sie nur Geschirr herstellen. 6 sagten mit Nachdruck zu. Die Firma China Ceramic International habe ich ganz pragmatisch ausgewählt, weil sie die schnellste war.

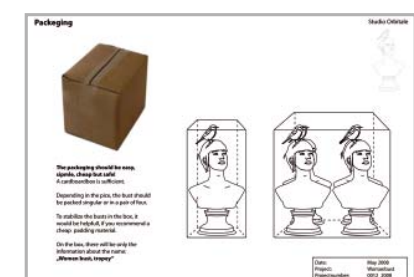
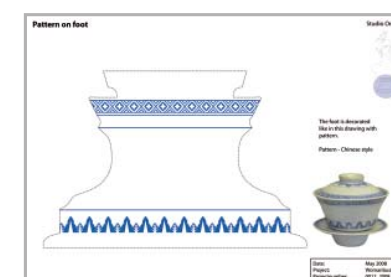
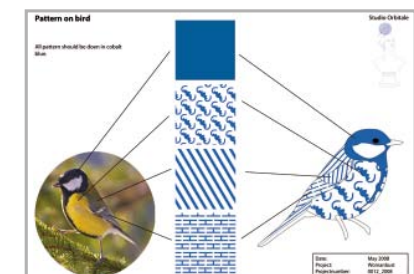
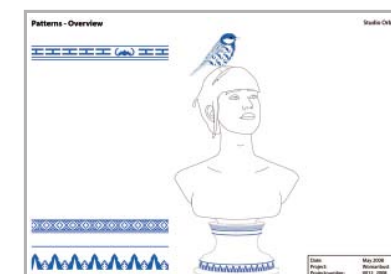
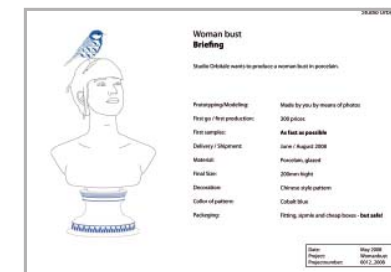
Der Verlauf der Produktion lässt sich an Hand des E-Mailkontakts mit der Herrn Lee, Manager der Firma China Ceramic International nachvollziehen:

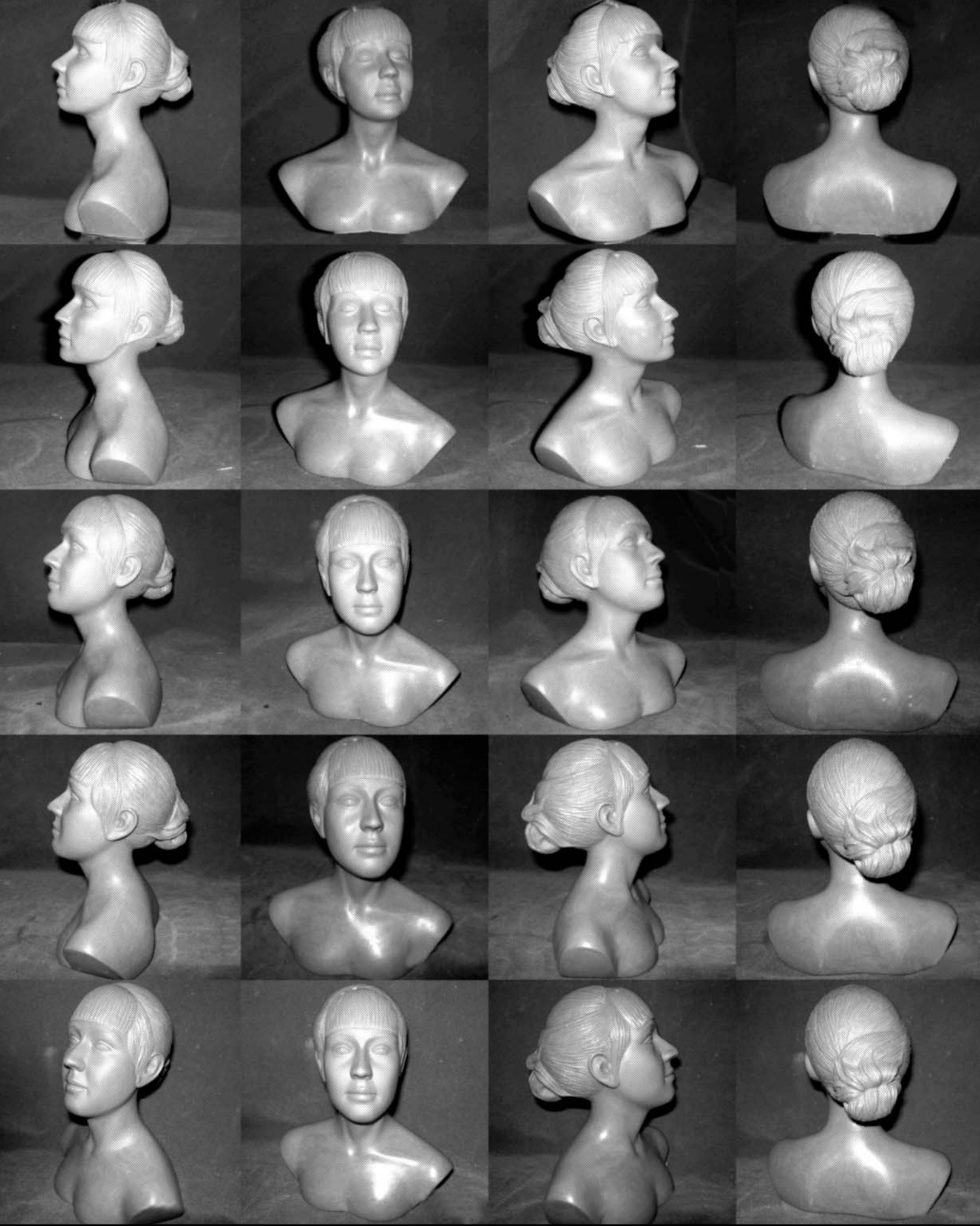
on a wholly pragmatic basis, as it seemed to be the fastest manufacturer.

The process of production can be followed according to the Email contact I had with a Mr. Lee, the manager of the company

01.05.2008

Dear Sir and Madam,
I am in search of a porcelain manufacturer to take over the production for a copy of myself. I am looking for a faithful, reputable manufacturer, who can ensure a fast production and is able to organize the shipping to Germany as well.
I would like to have my upper part done as a woman bust.
The bust should be made in porcelain and decorated with blue ornaments.
If this production order might be considered for your company, please don't hesitate to contact me.
In this case, I would send you more information about the project.
Thank you for looking into the above.
Sincerely
Laura Strasser





Please don't hesitate...

5.May 2008

Hello Ms.Strasser,
Very glad to receive your inquiry about the porcelain production. The delivey time is in 45days after we receive the deposit. Would you please send me some pictures about the products you need, so that we can get further understanding on your required products. If you need to know any more details, please feel free to send email to me.
Our quality and delivery time are absolutely guaranteed, for our aim is to provide the finest quality and best service to our clients. Wish a nice cooperation between us in the future.
Looking forward to hearing from you soon !!
Sincerely
Edward Lee

China Ceramic International

8.May 2008

Hello Mr. Lee
Thank you for your fast replay.
With this email, I send you the briefing for my project. Because of my time schedule, I need to have the bust done quite quickly anh as soon as possible. I want to show first samples of bust at its first presentation in June.
Please dont hesitat to contact me if you have further queries.
Sincerely
Laura Strasser

9.May 2008

Hello Ms. Strasser,
Thanks a lot for your kind inquiry, proud to say that would be not problem to meet your requirement , here I would arrange a skillful sculpting master to develop the prototype , of course during the sculpting. And as ordinary , this item would take me about 2-3weeks for the development.
Waiting for your kind reply. Please don't hesitate to contact with me at any time. Good luck and best regards,
Edward Lee

China Ceramic International

11.May 2008

Hello Ms Strasser,
Here I am wondering whether you have got my former email about the woman bust developing item, sorry to say that I haven't got any response from you.
Your prompt reply would be very appreciatd.
My best regards,
Edward Lee

China Ceramic International

13.May 2008

Hello Mr. Lee,
I am sorry, I am answering today. We had a national holiday in Germany. So there were nobody in the studio on Friday and Monday as well as during the weekend.
I do agree with the modeling charge. It is really important, that you send pictures during the modeling process- we appreciate your proposal very much.
Sincerely
Laura Strasser

14.May 2008

Hello Ms Strasser,
Glad to say that I would begin my clay sculpture tomorrow, I am wondering which quality class you prefer, ordinary art craft gift or high quality class for collection,as you know different class,different price, the collection class would be three times higher than ordinary one.
Waiting for your kind reply. Best regards,
Edward Lee

China Ceramic International

16.May 2008

Hello Mr Lee
Thank you for your email.
The face should be very good, so the face will be recognizable.The detail of the hair is not as important as the face - it can be quite simple as in the drawing. Only some details, but there should be definitely some strand of hair, so that it can be recognized to be hair. And it should be seen, that the hair is pinned up, like in the photos. In general, my physiognomy and bust's should look alike. It is „my“ bust!
Thank you very much and best regards
Laura Strasser

20.May 2008

Hello Ms Strassser
Here are the first results, please check.
Best regards,
Edward Lee

China Ceramic International

21.May 2008

Hello Mr Lee,
I sent more pictures (see attached). I really like the foot, the bird and the hair. Really good.
The face need some adjustments.
Thank you and best regards
Laura Strasser

21.May 2008

Hello Ms. Strasser,
Thanks a lot for your pictures which looks clearly than before, and „She“ is much younger than before ,too. They are very clearly ,but it seems the face change a lot, are they the same persons? The latter one looks like Chinese except her nose.
Waiting for your suggestion.
Best regards,
Edward Lee

China Ceramic International

22.May 2008

Hello Mr. Lee
No, the person in the pictures is always me.
Looking forward to hear from you
Best regards
Laura Strasser

22.May 2008

Hello Ms. Strasser,
Please varify the attached picture of the sclptur.
Edward Lee

China Ceramic International

24.May 2008

Hello Mr. Lee,
See the adjustments attached.
Best regards
Laura Strasser

29.May 2008

Hello Ms. Strasser,
Here are the result of the bust for its original sculpture,please check.
Best regards,
Edward Lee

China Ceramic International

[...]

4.June 2008

Hello Ms. Strasser,
Please find the attached picture of modified sculptur.
Edward Lee

China Ceramic International

[...]

9.June 2008

Hello Ms. Strasser,
Here is the adjustment, please check and waiting for your kind advice.
Best regards,
Edward Lee

China Ceramic International

10. June 2008

Good evening Mr. Lee,
We like the results very much!
We have no further adjustments.
So, please start with the sampling in porcelain, as agreed.
Sincerely
Laura Strasser

15.June 2008

Hello Ms. Strasser,
Thanks a lot for your mention and confirmation, gald to say that the prototype had been moulded, I am waiting for mould dry enough for porcelain moulding,recently in my City ,it keep raining heavily all day long ,it will take more time.
After burning ,i will show you pictures again.
My best regards,
Edward Lee

China Ceramic International

27.June 2008

Hello Ms. Strasse,
The samples are now on its way to you, you could track it via <http://www.dhl.de> with the tracking number 1220891582.
It should arrive at your place on monday, 7.July.2008
Please kindly give us your feed back once you received the sample, so we could proceed with the production inorder to meet the delivery requirement.
I hope you will like it. With love from China.
Edward Lee

China Ceramic International

To size

Made in China

Büste: Die Büste diente traditionell der Erinnerung und Repräsentation des durch die Büste »anwesenden Abwesenden«. Sie bildet in plastischer Darstellung den oberen Teil eines menschlichen Körpers ab. Die Büste eines Verstorbenen sollte über dessen Abwesenheit hinwegtrösten. Die Büste von Herrschern wurde in großer Auflage hergestellt und sollte selbst in den entlegensten Provinzen seines Reiches dessen Macht und Abwesenheit repräsentieren. Die Büste schwankt zwischen naturgetreuer Nachbildung des Menschen, den man in der Büste wieder erkennen möchte und der Idealisierung des Portraitierten, den man über seinen Tod hinaus als schönen, tugendhaften, starken oder erfolgreichen Menschen in Erinnerung behalten soll. So stellt sich bei jeder Büste die Frage ob es sich um eine »physiognomische, seelische oder ideelle Ähnlichkeit« mit dem Portraitierten handelt. Lange Zeit hatte die Büste eine rein repräsentative, dienende Funktion und war bis in das späte 18. Jahrhundert der gesellschaftlichen Elite vorbehalten. Diese Rolle wandelte sich mit dem Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts. Künstler begreifen die Büste fern von Stilisierung und übertriebenem Pathos und entdecken sie als Ausdrucksform ihrer künstlerischen Ideen.

Ich habe eine Kopie von mir in China herstellen lassen und komme damit in gewisser Hinsicht den Kopierern zuvor. Zumindest dieses Mal konnte ich das Aussehen der Kopie, meiner Kopie, mitbestimmen. Ob das auch in Zukunft und bei anderen Kopierversuchen gelingen wird ist fraglich.

Die Büste als Ergebnis eines Kopiemechanismus wirft eine wesentliche Problematik der Kopie auf: Meine Büste kann nie den Anspruch einer perfekten Kopie erfüllen.

Meine Büste ist Ab-Bild und kann in Bezug auf sein menschliches Ur-Bild und Original niemals vollkommen sein. Selbst ein Klon wäre äußerlich absolut identisch mit seinem Original doch niemals in seinen geistigen Eigenschaften. Die Umwelt prägt und formt den Geist maßgeblich. Dieser Kontext, in dem ein Mensch aufwächst und sich entwickelt, kann niemals mitkopiert werden. Eine Büste als Ab-Bild ist noch viel unbrauchbarer als eine perfekte Kopie, da sie nur einen Augenblick festhält. Sie kann nie eine universale Wiedergabe des sich durch Mimik, Haltung und Ausdruck ständig in Veränderung befindlichen Gesichtes sein.

Mit meiner Büste habe ich in meinen Augen einen Abklatsch meiner Selbst geschaffen.

Als ein weiteres sinnloses Produkt kann sie als Massenware nun den Weltmarkt überschwemmen.

I had a copy of my likeness manufactured in China and in some respects it mirrored the copiers in this manner. At least this time I could have some say in the appearance of the copy, since it was after all my copy. Whether that will still be so in the future and whether other attempts at imitation will succeed, is questionable.

The bust as the result of a copiemechanism brings up a essential problem of the copy: My bust can never meet the demand of meeting the standard of a perfect copy.

My bust is a representation, therefore a copy, and can never be complete in relation to the original image. From the outside, a clone is absolutely identical to its original, yet never in character. The environment influences and shapes the character a great deal. The context in which a person grows up and develops can also never be imitated. A bust as representation is further impractical as an ideal duplicate, since it only holds one's gaze. It can never be a universal rendering of one's gestures, postures and facial expressions that are in a state of continuous change.

With my bust I created a rip-off of my self. As another senseless product it is now ready to flood as a mass product the global market.

Bust: Traditionally, busts served the purposes of memory and representation by alluding to a "presence of an absent one". They illustrate the top section of a human body in a sculptural version. The likeness of a deceased person could, it is hoped, provide comfort for such human absence. The figures of rulers were produced in large editions for reasons of representing their realm of power and presence, even in the most remote provinces. Such objects vary in style between reproductions of humans that are true to scale so one can recognise the person depicted, and an idealised version of portrayal. For the latter kind one is expected to retain such people in memory even beyond their death as being beautiful, virtuous, strong or successful. Thus the question is raised whether the busts display a "physiognomic, mental or idealistic similarity" with the person depicted. Busts had for a long time a purely representative function, and were reserved for the social elite as far back as the late 18th century. This role changed with the beginning of the 20th century. Artists understand them as being representations that are far different from the actual name and the accompanying exaggerated pathos; they discovered them as forms of expression of their artistic ideas.

