In Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction, Benjamin talked about the how traditional art is reinvented under the context of reproduction. First he mentioned how the method of mechanical production advances the state of art itself, much similar to how the technical production of lithography gives rise to illustrated newspaper and how photography gives rise to sound film. The means by which an art is created has an impact on the art form itself. We see an interesting parallel in the establishment of the 798 art district. Although previously considered a utopia for artists, the art district quickly rose to international prominence and garnered foreign press interest on the basis of its rebellious and anti-authoritarian spirit embodied in the art themselves. This entire process is facilitated by active and planned organization of exhibitions and performances. Since only when the audiences observed the art itself does the process of art creation come to an end, we could argue that such means of disseminating an artwork is an indispensable step in art creation. The active advertisement of itself as a cultural commodity led to the success in altering the government’s decision to demolish the pre-industrial site; the art work itself is representative of a grassroots spirit even if the original intent of artists go in wildly different directions. We see how technical production of art has a direct consequence in the art form itself.

Another important point that Benjamin mentioned is how mechanical reproduction emancipates work of art from its dependence on a ritual, and how the authenticity of an art ceases to be applicable to its production but instead depends on other practice-politics. In the context of 798 art district, after its success in branding itself as avant-garde of contemporary art, the mechanical creation of art turns what was once an artistic ritual to a huge component of government politics. In the 1980s and 1990s, 798 district is a place where artists gathered for purely artistic pursuit. They expressed their opposition to architectural heritage destruction in their own art work. The art themselves are the manifestation of such a ritual, backed up by a nontrivial cause. However, after the rise of the art district as an international destination for its contemporary art, what was rebellious and niche art become mainstream. The commercialization of the place eroded its uniqueness, the protection and support of governments that the art work originally fought for now exerts control over what who is allowed to undertake art creation and what kind of art could be created. Successful artists engage in the capitalist market and aid in the commercialization of their product. The production of art is stripped away of its grassroots context, and is instead used by the city as a way of advertising its openness and commoditize its cultural values to the world. The art that is created now in that area is not the art that helped in conceiving the 798 art district; something is lost along the way.