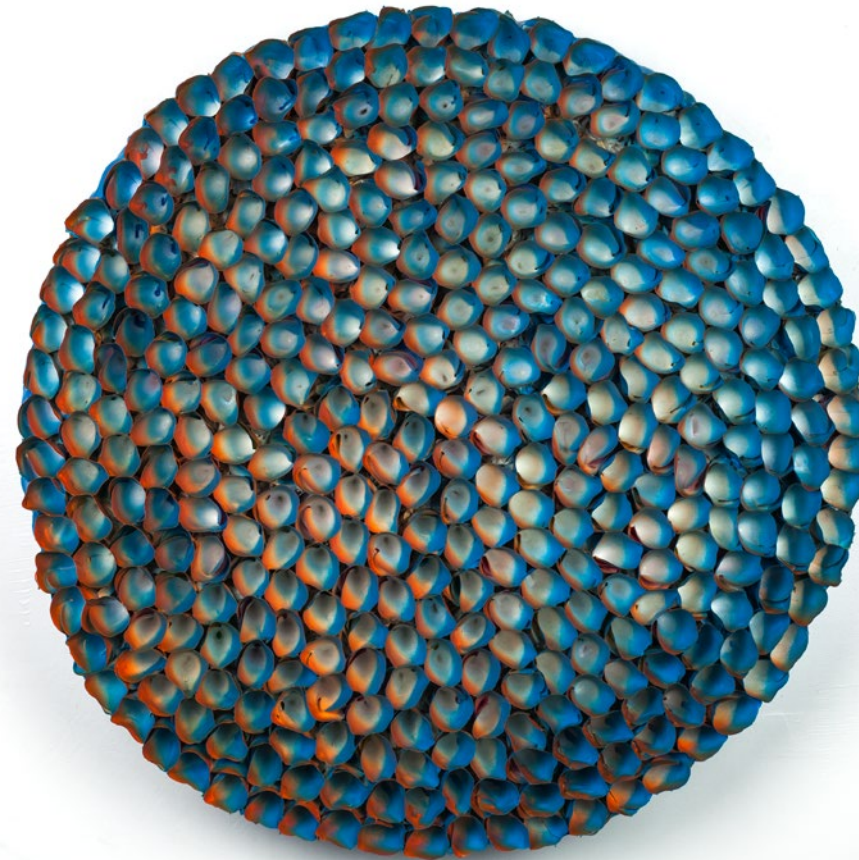
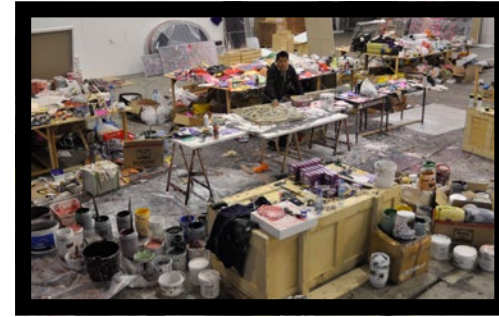




This page: *Flower Field*, 2015,  
Zhuang Hong Yi.  
Facing page, clockwise from top left:  
The artist in studio; A portrait of  
Zhuang Hong Yi; *Flower Field*, 2015.

**ART REPUBLIC  
TAKES A CLOSER  
LOOK AT THE  
BEAUTIFULLY  
CHAOTIC WORKS OF  
ZHUANG HONG YI.  
BY TYEN FONG**

## Wildflower



Chinese contemporary artist Zhuang Hong Yi has been based in the Netherlands for more than two decades but was originally born in 1962 in Sichuan, China. Living and working in two different environments, it is no surprise that his works take influence from both Chinese and European techniques. As an artist that embraces both the past and the present, his contemporary creations demonstrate a clear presence of his Chinese roots in the use of colours, themes, shapes and materials (specifically rice paper).

After graduating from the Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, he and his artist wife Lu Luo moved to Groningen in The Netherlands where they studied under the Minerva Academy. His shift from a country with well-established artistic traditions to a more liberal one saw him incorporating more daring colours and Western styles like impressionism into his practice. Even so, Zhuang still utilised the traditional Chinese material of rice paper. This gives his works




a strong traditional Chinese aesthetic, becoming meditations on colour, nature and form while emphasising the uniformity and focus in handling material (all of which he acquired from his experience in China). Overall, his 'messy' and 'chaotic' mix of impasto strokes of bright acrylic and oil paints on top of rice paper characterises most of Zhuang's work.

The flower motif dominates Zhuang's work and he usually works patiently and religiously year after year on the subject alone. This is because the flower motif symbolises many different meanings and emotions in both the Chinese and European culture that Zhuang seeks to explore through his art. Different flowers have various spiritual and social representations in Chinese culture. Flowers also hold strong significances in Western literature and customs. Furthermore, flowerbeds are exceptionally iconic features of the Netherlands.

Inspired by the flowerbed, Zhuang bends and folded hundreds of tiny buds from painted rice paper to form his flowerbed sculptures. The three-dimensionality of the paper flowers invites the audience to appreciate the tactile nature of his vibrant tapestry of colours and form.

Transitioning from the uniformity and technique of his past training in Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, where he focused on traditional skills such as printing techniques like wood carvings, to the new found freedom of expression he achieved in Europe presented a challenge for the artist. Zhuang enacts this personal struggle visually, vacillating between phases of controlled planning and emotional gesture.

Zhuang's more popular works include his 'Head' series of portraits that feature an abstracted shape of a head on a large canvas. He only began exploring the rice paper flower motif towards the end of the 90s, and became more recognised in the international art market for his 'Flowerfield' sculptures in 2005.

"Zhuang is a renowned artist with a well-established collector following in the world's major art markets of New York, Miami, London and Paris," says Chris Churcher, MD & Founder of REDSEA Gallery. To date, Zhuang has exhibited his works in renowned exhibitions throughout Europe such as the Kunsthall Museum in Rotterdam in 1999, and a solo show in 2001 at the world famous Groninger Museum in The Netherlands. In 2007, the Groninger Museum honoured him and his wife with a large duo exhibition called 'Atelier Beijing'. His work is held in numerous renowned public and private collections worldwide. 

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