

Etrangement Beau

23.01.21 — 06.03.21

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Opening on Saturday 23rd January 2021

Gallery Paris-Beijing is pleased to host, for the first time, the work of sculptor and ceramicist Zhuo Qi in the PB Project space. Zhuo Qi was born in Fuxin, China, in 1985. He has been living and working in France since 2008.

For the last three months of 2020, Zhou Qi was invited to be an artist-in-residence at the Fondation Martell in Cognac. The foundation offered him the rare opportunity to have unlimited access to a glass-blowing workshop; this is how he was able to develop his latest series of works, *Bubble-Game*, which combines ancient Chinese sculptures with glass blowing techniques.

As an artist, Zhuo Qi's approach is based on the notion of culture shock. The encounter between Chinese culture and Western culture is a foundational element in his work, both linguistically and historically, and with relation to the traditions

and techniques of ceramics, which he learned at ENSA Limoges. Originally from the city of Fuxin in China, the artist returns regularly to Jingdezhen, the city considered to be the world capital of porcelain. In the mountains of waste generated by this industry, he finds some of his raw materials – materials charged with history, which he aims to restore as an iconoclastic ceramicist working directly on ceramic pieces using various processes which we might believe to be experimental, but which he has, in fact, mastered perfectly.

The result is a unique technique marrying Chinese and French traditions, in which porcelain is both the material and the subject. Zhuo Qi uses this material in a radical and performative way, disrupting traditional ceramic forms in order to create surprising sculptures that break away completely from the objects' habitual use.

His new series of sculptures, *Bubble-Game*, which will be on display in the gallery, fits perfectly within the trajectory of his oeuvre, but the raw material has evolved: it is no longer ceramic pieces that the artist abuses in this work, but rather excellent reproductions of ancient Chinese sculptures that he has meticulously collected over the course of his visits to China.

Often deteriorated with time, these sculptures are broken, fractured and missing members. Zhuo Qi has taken it upon himself to give them life again – to restore them in his own way. He uses blown glass to fill in the void, the part that has been lost, thereby creating a new piece from an existing work of art. A new cycle of life is created, recalling the Buddhist cycles of reincarnation. The alchemy that



© Zhuo Qi, *Bubble-Game*, 2020, Courtesy Galerie Paris-Beijing. Work produced during the artist's residency at Fondation d'entreprise Martell, Cognac

takes place between the form of the original stone sculpture, which sometimes dates back thousands of years, and the contemporary and delicate aspect of the colored glass that it bears leads us towards the strange and the incongruous, notions dear to the artist, for whom humor and transgression are natural forms of communication. The contemplator is struck by the paradox that surrounds each work in the series: the aesthetic and the power of these thousand-year-old Buddhist sculptures is augmented by that of the fragile, colorful glass cushions, and the result is strangely beautiful.

Zhuo Qi is born in China in 1985 in Fuxin, Liaoning province. Graduated with honors from Le Mans Higher School of Fine Arts (the DNSEP Diploma), post graduate program KAOLIN of ENSA Limoges in France and Geneva University of Art and Design in Switzerland, he has been working and living in France since 2008. He was in residency at Fondation Martell in Cognac, France in 2020.



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