

China, Painting, Reviews, Reviews and Photo Stories

Guo Hongwei: Plastic Heaven at Chambers Fine Art

November 28, 2017 by [Alison Martin](#)



Guo Hongwei, *Transformed by the Setting Sun No 1*, 2017, oil on canvas, 78 3/4 x 59 inches.

Chambers Fine Art gallery in Chelsea is currently presenting a collection of work by Beijing-based artist Guo Hongwei for the exhibition entitled *Plastic Heaven*. For this show, Hongwei unveils several of his signature oil paintings, made up of both still-lives and abstractions.

Hongwei's use of the medium is very distinct. He mixes his oil paints with different types of varnishes and traditional materials such as *megilp*, a mixture of mastic resin and linseed oil that was widely used in the 19th century. Hongwei has the ability to create 'confined' brushstrokes which can be manipulated separately in order to create different textures and forms. In doing this, he carefully maneuvers each brushstroke based on the appearance of his subjects.



Guo Hongwei, *The Gate*, 2017, oil on canvas, 78 3/4 x 59 inches.

One piece that truly stands out is a colorful painting known as *The Gate*, depicting an entrance or doorway in the middle of a gray fence, with sapphire-blue doors topped with a curved, rose-colored crown. Below the doors lies a rose-colored base, with an emerald-green step leading up to the entrance. According to Hongwei, *The Gate* was inspired by a plastic walker used by his young son as he was learning to walk. Sitting out on the balcony one morning, he noticed sunlight streaming through the brightly colored doorway, as if the plastic doors were the entrance into another realm. *Plastic Heaven*, the title of the exhibition, shares its name with one of Hongwei's paintings in the show. The piece depicts two golden signs with Chinese characters, based on an actual photograph. The original image on which the piece is based caught Hongwei's attention, and during the process of transforming the image to canvas, he purposely framed the piece in such a way so that the signs lost their original meaning, and the two fragments instead formed a new phrase: *Plastic Heaven*.

Hongwei also depicts objects that are covered or disguised in some way, shape, or form. Several of these paintings illustrate objects wrapped in Styrofoam netting such as *Green in Snow* and *Red in Snow*, which both depict pieces of fruit in their respective colors, wrapped in a pure white lattice. Similarly, *Rose in Azure* depicts roses wrapped in light blue netting, as the title suggests. A pair of paintings depicting covered objects, *Transformed by the Setting Sun* and *The World Unfurled No. 1* are much darker by contrast as they depict barely distinguishable, unidentified objects wrapped in dark colored cloths with a pitch-black backdrop.

At [Chambers Fine Art](#), 522 W. 19th St., through Dec. 9. The gallery is open Tue.-Sat. from 10 a.m.-6 p.m.