

7. Masks

Artist Workshop

Twenty years ago, Zhao Yongqi came to Beijing from Hubei Province and created a mask-making workshop that has since expanded to multiple locations and at least twenty employees. Before he started making masks, Zhao was an accomplished artist. Zhao's teacher was also a well-known artist.

Artist at Work

Although he has students to help him, Zhao designs all parts of his mask himself. The masks are based on different Peking Opera styles. Most of the masks are made out of clay, but the ones that are light enough to wear are made out of papier-mâché. The masks are hand-painted with water-based paint coated with an oil-based substance to make them shine. Some masks are as small as one inch in diameter, but others can be up to five feet in diameter.