



US-born artist Redic's home and studio in Shanghai's Xuhui District is an old lane house that he transformed into a small museum. — Zhou Shengjie

‘I’m not collecting trash, I’m transforming potential’

I wanted to salvage some of the history, some of essence of neighborhoods, and then from a bigger standpoint, reinterpret them in art with the themes that I imbue in my mind.

Redic
American artist

Lu Feiran

Mannequins. Card boxes. Mirror shards. Poetry on the wall. Painted handrails and ceilings. Splashes of color. The lane house where Chicago-born artist Redic lives in Xuhui District is a veritable art gallery of imaginatively recycled junk.

The interdisciplinary artist, poet and singer from the US, who has lived in Shanghai for 12 years, takes an innovative approach to discarded furniture and other daily-life articles. He prowls the city streets, looking for what others might consider trash to use in his artworks.

“It’s not that I’m randomly picking up things,” Redic said. “It’s something about an object in itself that speaks of ‘purpose.’ I’m not collecting trash; I’m transforming potential.”

Redic attended Morehouse College in the US, where he started to create art with recycled materials. He was based in Los Angeles before coming to China in 2010. His artistic interest in discarded objects began before he first stepped foot on Chinese soil for a performance scheduled in the southern city of Guangzhou.

However, the contract for the performance didn’t go to plan. With some unexpected time on his hands, Redic decided

to visit the World Expo being staged in Shanghai.

He slept on the couch of friends for several nights before deciding that he didn’t want to leave the city. There was something about Shanghai that made him feel destined to stay, he said.

Redic rented one of four units of a lane house built in 1940 and has spent 10 years transforming it into what is now literally an art gallery.

He is always happy to give visitors a tour of his home, explaining the backstories of each piece of artwork — from chancing upon an object of potential to its transformation.

The work “Sisters,” for

example, which is on a hallway wall, is derived from two mannequins salvaged from a closing shop. Redic said the piece is a tribute to his own sisters.

Another work, based on boxes holding face masks and dotted with mosaic mirrors, is part of his “Pandemic” series.

“You see a lot of mirrors in my work,” he said. “I want to give a viewer the opportunity to reflect and come inside a work.”

Shanghai’s rapid-fire development offers him opportunities to artistically link the past, present and future. Finding objects discarded in the name of progress saddens him, Redic said.