

Lydia Ziqi Yan

Harvard University Graduate School of Design

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EDUCATION

Harvard University Graduate School of Design | Sept 2023 - May 2025

Design Studies (Ecologies Domain), Master of Design Studies (MDes)

Open Project: "Home on the Chip: Cultural, Economical, and Ecological System with Flavoring Technology"

Advisor: Malkit Shoshan

Massachusetts Institution of Technology

Cross registration at MIT Media Lab and MIT Sloan School of Management

Harvard Kennedy School

Cross registration

New York University Shanghai | Sept 2019 - May 2023

Cum laude with honors in Interactive Media Arts

Double Major in Interactive Media Arts and Humanities (Media Studies)

Capstone Project: "The Breath of Life"

Advisor: Weixian Pan, Marcela Godoy

Thesis: "Entering The Technosphere Through Food: Approaches To Analyze Food in Science Fiction Films"

Advisor: Weixian Pan, Brad Weslake

New York University Abu Dhabi | Aug 2021 - May 2022

Study away

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

2024.3 – 2025.5 **AlgaMatrix**

Harvard Sustainability Grant | Cambridge, MA, USA

International Design Excellence Awards (IDEA) 2025 Bronze Award

Partner: Angelina Zhang, Benedetta, Zuccarelli, Skye Gao

AlgaMatrix is the first steps towards algae-based bioreactor systems integrated into buildings to promote sustainable urban habitation methods. Addressing climate change and the environmental impact of the building sector, the system uses advanced materials, computational technology, and biophilic design. It features modular structures housing living microalgae converting water and CO₂ into organic compounds. An IoT interface enables real-time monitoring and control of algae growth, promoting self-sustaining, carbon-neutral architecture, and facilitating dynamic human-nature interactions.

2025.4 – 2025.5 **Cool Forest**

Venice Architecture Biennale | Cambridge, MA, USA

Supervisor: Max Piana and Craig Douglas

The installation features trees that are adapted to hotter, drier weather—assisting plant migration that is essential in designing resilient landscapes. Embedded sensors track thermal comfort, tree growth, and change within the installation, while an expanded sensor network tracks microclimate conditions across the city of Venice. Lined with coir logs that double as shady comfortable seating, elements of the installation will be planted and redeployed in the city and lagoon after the exhibition closes.

2022.3 - 2022.9 **Estrangement and Imagination: Urban Memory of Home**

NYU Shanghai Dean's Undergraduate Research Fund | Shanghai, China

Mentor: Weixian Pan, Assistant Professor of Interactive Media Arts

Partner: Deyin Zhang, Jingchen Xiao

Discuss the meaning of home in the context of the global Chinese diaspora from personal and female perspectives during the pandemic. Focus exclusively on Beijing, and encourages gathering and presenting the individual and collective memory of the city as one's home. Consist of two parts: a city walk guide, and a documentary, with the

former exploring the unfamiliar in the familiar home space while the latter is a trilogy on narratives of Beijing as home in the past and the present.

2021.9 - 2022.5 **Desert Media Art**

NYU Abu Dhabi Visiting Student Undergraduate Research Assistantship Award| Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

Supervisor: Michael Ang, Assistant Professor of Practice of Interactive Media

Peer assistants: Michael Leo, Yuewen Zhou

Develop an Interactive Media major course for undergraduate students at NYU Abu Dhabi. Create sample projects for future students to better understand the media arts in local inhabitants. Provide better learning resources for the students to ensure optimal academic achievement in the course. Design a bionic robot and test it in Al Khatim desert. Co-design the robot workshop at Sikka Art Festival 2022.

2021.6 - 2021.8 **Premade Food in China: Study of Present Chinese Food Culture in Media Representations**

NYU Shanghai Dean's Undergraduate Research Fund | Shanghai, China

Mentor: Weixian Pan, Assistant Professor of Interactive Media Arts

Partner: Jiayin Fan

Investigate the preservation of regional and local food culture, and the perceptual change in the social-technical process of 'semi-cooked', including "traditions," food labor, and social relations around food. Compare cultural imaginations between the representation of semi-cooked food and the more refined/theatrical food documentary. Intend as a starting point to discuss the relations between emerging food technology and cultural identity/implication of food.

RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE

Arelyx | Design Fellow/Associate | May 2025 – Present

- Designed the full-stack experience for both enterprise dashboards and customer-facing mobile apps, ensuring seamless flow between complex data inputs and simplified user outputs.
- Conducted deep-dive user research to understand the core needs of student-parent communities, utilizing findings to iterate on wireframes and prototypes.
- Unified brand and product by creating a cohesive visual identity system that resonated across marketing collateral, merchandise, and digital products, aligning with the founder's long-term vision.

Sam | Creative Designer | Mar 2025 – Present

- Led end-to-end UX/UI strategy for the core procurement and request management platform, translating dense technical requirements into intuitive workflows for non-technical users.
- Championed ownership of the design lifecycle, collaborating directly with engineers and PMs to reduce design turnaround time by 40% through improved processes and system documentation.
- Built and scaled a comprehensive Design System from scratch, ensuring visual consistency across web, tablet, and mobile interfaces while optimizing for development speed and scalability.
- Drive growth and engagement by redesigning the onboarding framework and producing investor-facing assets, directly contributing to a 60% increase in platform sign-ups.

Harvard Graduate School of Design | Research Assistant | Apr 2025 – May 2025

With Professor Craig Douglas, working on the "Cool Forest" project for Venice Biennale 2025

Harvard Graduate School of Design | Lecturer | Dec 2024 – Jan 2025

Designed and taught J-term course "Waste, Food, Media: Rethinking and Speculating Consumption and Communication" for students at Harvard Graduate School of Design.

HarvardxDesign Conference Branding Lead | Oct 2024 – Apr 2025

- Manage the marketing and product team, creating brand identity, ensuring seamless, multi-platform consistency for a conference expecting 500+ in-person and online participants.
- Collaborate with outreach and product teams, designing assets, and event materials to maximize audience engagement.
- Craft user-centered marketing strategies, optimize audience interaction, accessibility, and brand storytelling.

Harvard Graduate School of Design - Research Assistant | Apr 2025 – Apr 2025

-Assist Professor Craig Douglas with the project Cool Forest for Venice Architecture Biennale 2025.

-Develop physical computing components with sensors and actuators for public installation.

Conflux Collective - Art Residency Director | Nov 2024 – Feb 2025

- Led and managed the residency program, mentoring 12 fellows and the development of 7 tech-driven projects over a 2-day showcase.
- Curated an innovative exhibition featuring immersive projection, interactive fashion, sensory-driven installations, and an interactive archive, translated between physical and digital interactions
- Coordinated with 15+ guest speakers and multiple sponsoring institutions, delivering the most visited exhibition in Harvard FAS CAMLab's history, drawing 400+ attendees.

Annuario d'Arte Contemporanea Cina-Italia | Academic Review | Jul 2024 – Oct 2024

Harvard Chinese Students and Scholars Association | Media & Technology Co-Chair | May 2024 – May 2025

- Manage the MT team with 12 felows in designing advertising materials for HCSSA events.
- Operate the HCSSA Official WeChat account and website for event announcements, reflection, and collaboration.

Harvard University FAS CAMLab | Research Intern | Jun 2024 – Aug 2024

- Managed and edited promotion videos for 2024-2025 exhibitions customized to social media platforms.
- Initiated and designed the *Art Mind Technology* conference's program, developed the panel topics and potential speakers.
- Researched the architectural construction of Dunhuang Caves for the upcoming international exhibition.

Tsinghua Future Lab | Space & Media Group Intern | May 2024 – Aug 2024

- Managed the installation and presentation of 10 exhibitions with *Summer Palace*, *NeoCogito*, *Embassy of Argentina*, etc.
- Coordinated spatial reconstruction of historical sites with the administrative group and the design team.
- Created construction plans and visual renders of the assigned exhibition space, presented selected options and materials.

Harvard University Frances Loeb Library | Publicity & Events Assistant | Mar 2024 – Present

- Organize and coordinate with all relevant departments to conduct Faculty Colloquium.
- Collect information and design promotional materials for upcoming events for staff and students across the university.

HarvardxDesign Conference | Branding Fellow | Oct 2023 – Apr 2024

- Design branding materials for the 2024 HarvardxDesign conference. Generate the main visuals with 5 other teammates.
- Create merchandise and facilitate speaker coordination materials with 3 other conference departments.

Harvard Chinese Students and Scholars Association | Media & Technology Fellow | Oct 2023 – May 2024

- Design advertising materials for HCSSA events, including posters, social media posts, brochures, and apparels.
- Operate the HCSSA Official WeChat account and website for event announcements, reflection, and collaboration.

NYU Shanghai Remakerspace | Research Assistant | March 2023 – May 2023

- Researched grassroots textile and artistic techniques as a sustainable replacement.
- Constructed and reflected on the cultivation process and made tutorials on the research lab website.

NYU Shanghai | Learning Assistant | Sept 2020 - May 2021; Sept 2022 - Dec 2022

- Facilitated 200 students with their projects. Assisted professors in class in the *Interaction Lab* and *Communications Lab*.
- Reflected weekly reviews on the course. Put forward practical improvements for following teaching process.

Yidian Zixun | Marketing Intern | July 2022-Aug 2022

- Designed marketing plans for the metaverse application for BMW, Sinopec, Hubei Cultural Department, etc.
- Researched recent metaverse usages in the international market, summarized and presented the applications.

NYU Abu Dhabi Visiting student -|Undergraduate Research Assistantship| Sept 2021 - Dec 2021

- Developed and managed research website, wrote more than 20 posts of research progress, and new course development.
- Collaborated and designed robots with teammates. Mainly responsible for physical construction and digital fabrication.

NYU Shanghai | IMA Studio Assistant | Jun-Aug, 2020

EXHIBITIONS

- 2025 Cool Forest, *the 19th International Architecture Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia*, Venice, Italy
- 2025 AlgaMatrix, *Future of Home*, Kirkland Gallery, Cambridge, MA, USA
- 2025 *After|I*, Harvard CAMLab, Cambridge, MA, USA (Director & Curator)
- 2024 ECHO, *Atmospheric Encounters*, Harvard ART Lab, Allston, MA, USA
- 2024 The Celebration of Hair, Exoskins, "The Elastic Umwelten," *Ars Electronica 2024*, Linz, Austria
- 2024 The Immortal's Palm, *D ARCH Film Festival Spring Show 2024*, ETH Zurich, Zürich, Switzerland
- 2024 The Immortal's Palm, *HarvardXR*, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, United States
- 2023 Chromasphere, *幻境集市| Fantasy Market*, New Bund 31, Shanghai, China
- 2023 Chromasphere, *IMA Capstone Show 2023*, NYU Shanghai, Shanghai, China
- 2022 Whego Workshop, *Sikka Art & Design Festival*, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

CONFERENCE

2024 AlgaMatrix, *Design Research Forum*, Harvard Graduate School of Design, Cambridge, MA, USA
2023 Digital Qiang Garden, *Design Research Forum*, Harvard Graduate School of Design, Cambridge, MA, USA

AWARDS

Bronze Award (AlgaMatrix), International Design Excellence Awards (IDEA) 2025
Golden Winner (The Immortal's Palm), MUSE Design Award 2025
Major Honors in Arts and Science (with honors in Interactive Media Arts), NYU Shanghai
Cum laude (Latin Honors), NYU Shanghai
NYU Shanghai Excellence Award, NYU Shanghai
2022 Recognition Award, NYU Shanghai
Spring 2022 Undergraduate Research Assistantship Award, NYU Abu Dhabi
Fall 2021 Undergraduate Research Assistantship Award, NYU Abu Dhabi
2022 Deans' Undergraduate Research Fund, NYU Shanghai
2021 Deans' Undergraduate Research Fund, NYU Shanghai

SKILLS

Language: Chinese (Native), English (Native Bilingual), Spanish (Basic).

Computer Technique:

Microsoft Office Applications, Figma, Stable Diffusion, Operating and editing WeChat official account

Coding Language: HTML, CSS, JavaScript, D3(JS Library), ml5.js (JS library), Python, Arduino (C), Processing (Java);

Visual: Adobe Suite (Premiere, Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, After Effects), Davinci Resolve, Final Cut Pro, ArcTime, Canva

Sound: Adobe Audition, Audacity

Modeling engine: Maya, Unity, Rhino (Grasshopper), Cinema 4D, Blender, Fusion 360, Nomad Sculpt, AutoCAD

AI Tools: Adobe Firefly, Midjourney, Stable Diffusion, UX Pilot, ChatGPT / Claude / Perplexity