

# Fan Xiang

**Phone number:** 2019828668 **Email address:** xiangfan4545@gmail.com **Web:** zeelab.xyz  
**Custom field:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3972-0297>

## Profile

Fan Xiang is an experienced graphic and visualization designer with a passion for communicating complex information in a clear and engaging way through visualization. She received her education in China, Japan, and the United States, and is active at the intersection between art, design, and humanity research. She is also a well-known storyteller with a focus on visualization design, pictogram design, wayfinding signage design, and Japanese design history. Her work has been published in numerous articles and books, and she is the recipient of the Best Art Paper Award at SIGGRAPH 2020 and the Zhuangshi Award in 2017. She is currently an associate professor at the Academy of Art and Design at Tsinghua University.

## Academic Experience

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|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 08/2014 – present<br>Beijing, China                 | <b>Tenured Associate Professor</b><br><b>Academy of Art and Design, Tsinghua University</b><br>Teach undergraduate and graduate courses in digital media art, visualization art and design, interactive media, pictogram design, information design, and academic writing.<br>Develop curricula that introduce students to the concepts, history, methods, and artistic practices of digital media art, while encouraging them to establish their own creative approaches and visual languages.<br>Conduct research and creative practice at the intersection of visualization design, digital humanities, cultural history, and visual art, resulting in publications, exhibitions, public lectures, and presentations at international venues including SIGGRAPH and IEEE VIS. |
| 07/2023 – 07/2024<br>Cambridge MA,<br>United States | <b>Affiliate Researcher</b><br><b>Institute for Quantitative Social Science, Harvard University</b><br>Contributed to the development of a research database based on historical Chinese garden documents, supporting the study of social relationships associated with gardens in Suzhou.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 2020 – 2025<br>Hangzhou, China                      | <b>Associate Professor</b><br><b>School of Design &amp; Innovation, China Academy of Art</b><br>Supervised graduate students in research and creative practice, providing guidance on project development, research methods, visual communication, and academic presentation.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 03/2022 – 03/2023<br>Beijing, China                 | <b>China Project Representative</b><br><b>China Biographical Database Project (CBDB)</b><br>Introduced CBDB and its research applications to scholars and students in China through lectures, demonstrations, and academic exchange.<br>Explained methods for using the database, which contains biographical information on more than 515,000 historical individuals, and presented examples of how its data could support historical, cultural, and visualization                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

## Academic Experience

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research.

09/2018 – 12/2018

New York, United States

### Visiting Associate Professor

#### Parsons School of Design at The New School

Co-taught the MFA course *Machine Learning* with Travis Sven and developed and taught *Radical Visualization Design*.

Guided students in using open datasets as creative material to investigate complex social, cultural, and political issues.

Encouraged students to combine data research, critical interpretation, visual experimentation, and iterative prototyping, treating visualization not only as a means of presenting information but also as a method of inquiry, critique, and artistic expression.

08/2005 – 07/2014

Guangzhou, China

### Associate Professor and Head of the Information Design Program

#### Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts

Established and developed the Information Design program within the School of Visual Arts Design.

Served as head of the teaching and research section and taught courses in interaction design, wayfinding and signage systems, digital media design, information design, and visual communication.

Led curriculum development and promoted the integration of design research, emerging media, and information visualization into undergraduate education.

10/2003 – 10/2004

Tokyo, Japan

### Researcher

#### Tama Art University

Studied under Professor Yukio Ota, designer of the internationally standardized emergency-exit pictogram.

## Education

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09/2009 – 05/2011

Boston, Massachusetts,  
United States

### Dynamic Media Design | Master of Fine Arts (MFA)

#### Massachusetts College of Art and Design

Applied visual metaphors to interpret complex data and transform it into clear, accessible visual forms. Began using programming tools to create interactive artworks and software prototypes.

02/2000 – 03/2003

Tokyo, Japan

### Media Art | Certificate of Completion

#### Tokyo Polytechnic University

Completed the prescribed course of study in Media Art and received a Certificate of Completion. Conducted research on contemporary Japanese photography, focusing on artistic methods, visual language, and historical context. Also explored statistical and analytical approaches to the visual study of electronic products and automobiles.

09/1988 – 07/1992

Wuxi, China

### Bachelor of Arts in Graphic Design | BA

#### Jiangnan University

## Professional Experience

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2001 – 2002

Tokyo, Japan

### Wayfinding and Signage Design Intern

GK Sekkei

Assisted the design team with wayfinding and signage system projects for large public facilities, including Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport. Contributed to the development of maps, directional information, and visual navigation systems.

1994 – 1995

Shenzhen, China

### Graphic Designer

Han Jiaying Graphic Design

Worked on graphic design projects in a professional studio environment, gaining early experience in visual communication, branding.

## Publications

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*English titles of Chinese-language publications are translated by the author. Citation counts updated July 2026.*

Yu, Tongge, and Fan Xiang. "Talking to the Midnight Broadcast: Reviving 1990s City Memories with AI." *Proceedings of the ACM on Computer Graphics and Interactive Techniques*, vol. 8, no. 3, Article 41, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3736791>. Indexed in SSCI.

Xiang, Fan, and Yufeng Han. "Emerging Portraits: Reflections on the Visualization of Historical Theater Tickets." *Zhuangshi*, no. 2, 2025, pp. 37–41. <https://doi.org/10.16272/j.cnki.cn11-1392/j.2025.02.004>. Peking University Core Journal; cited 5 times.

Xiang, Fan. "The Algorithm as Metaphor: Artistic Practice in the Mural As If There Were." *Zhuangshi*, no. 5, 2024, pp. 108–111. <https://doi.org/10.16272/j.cnki.cn11-1392/j.2024.05.026>. Peking University Core Journal; cited 5 times.

Maher, Kevin, Fan Xiang, and Liang Zhi. "FaceType: Crafting Written Impressions of Spoken Expression." *Proceedings of the ACM on Computer Graphics and Interactive Techniques*, vol. 5, no. 4, Article 38, 2022, 10 pages. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3533385>. Indexed in SSCI.

Xiang, Fan. "Born to Escape: The Story Behind the Green Running Man." *Zhuangshi*, no. 8, 2022, pp. 36–39. <https://doi.org/10.16272/j.cnki.cn11-1392/j.2022.08.004>. Peking University Core Journal.

Bailey, Jason, Liang Zhi, and Fan Xiang. "The Tools of Generative Art: From Flash to Neural Networks." *Zhuangshi*, no. 5, 2021, pp. 66–73. <https://doi.org/10.16272/j.cnki.cn11-1392/j.2021.05.014>. Peking University Core Journal; cited 3 times.

Xiang, Fan, Shunshan Zhu, Zhigang Wang, Kevin Maher, Yi Liu, Yilin Zhu, Kaixi Chen, and Zhiqiang Liang. "Enhanced Family Tree: Evolving Research and Expression: Best Paper Award." *Leonardo*, vol. 53, no. 4, 2020, pp. 367–373. [https://doi.org/10.1162/leon\\_a\\_01921](https://doi.org/10.1162/leon_a_01921). ACM SIGGRAPH record: <https://doi.org/10.1145/3386567.3388570>. Winner of the SIGGRAPH 2020 Best Art Paper Award; indexed in A&HCI; cited 12 times.

Xiang, Fan, and Shunshan Zhu. "Visualizing the Flow of the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Design Experiment on the Application of Visualization Techniques." *Digital Humanities*, no. 2, 2020, pp. 1–10. Cited 9 times.

## Publications

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Xiang, Fan. "Visual Art Research from the Perspective of Visualization Design." *Theory and Criticism of Literature and Art*, no. 2, 2020, pp. 46–53. <https://doi.org/10.16532/j.cnki.1002-9583.2020.02.007>. Peking University Core Journal; cited 41 times.

Xiang, Fan, and Liang Tan. "A Critical Reassessment of the Popularity of Emotional Design." *Zhuangshi*, no. 4, 2019, pp. 78–80. <https://doi.org/10.16272/j.cnki.cn11-1392/j.2019.04.015>. Peking University Core Journal; cited 38 times.

Xiang, Fan, and Shunshan Zhu. "An Experimental Report on Visualizing Chinese Family Trees: A Practice Based on the China Biographical Database." *Zhuangshi*, no. 10, 2018, pp. 90–93. <https://doi.org/10.16272/j.cnki.cn11-1392/j.2018.10.016>. Peking University Core Journal.

Xiang, Fan, and Yilang He. "Reconsidering the Original Meaning of 'Distant Reading': Observations on Citations and the Original Text." *Library Tribune*, vol. 38, no. 11, 2018, pp. 43–48. Peking University Core Journal; cited 28 times.

Xiang, Fan. "Clarifying the Terms Ke-shi-hua, Visualisation, Visualization, and Information Graphics." *Zhuangshi*, no. 4, 2017, pp. 24–29. <https://doi.org/10.16272/j.cnki.cn11-1392/j.2017.04.007>. Peking University Core Journal; cited 91 times.

Xiang, Fan. "A Correction to the Literature Review in 'Analyzing the Autobiography of Qi Baishi by Computer.'" *Library Tribune*, 2017.

Xiang, Fan. "Visualizing Visual Archives: The Design of AwardPuzzle, a Visualization Tool for Prize-Winning Oil Paintings in China's National Art Exhibitions." *Zhuangshi*, no. 7, 2016, pp. 92–94. <https://doi.org/10.16272/j.cnki.cn11-1392/j.2016.07.037>. Peking University Core Journal; cited 31 times; winner of the 2016 Zhuangshi Annual Excellent Paper Award.

Xiang, Fan. "Masaru Katsumie: A Pioneer of Japan's Modern Design Movement." *Zhuangshi*, no. 12, 2015, pp. 24–28. <https://doi.org/10.16272/j.cnki.cn11-1392/j.2015.12.006>. Peking University Core Journal; cited 10 times.

Xiang, Fan, and Shuxia Dong. "Data Visualization Designing for Discovery in Multiple-Parameter Studies: A Collaboration Between Designers and Scientists." *Proceedings of the 4th International Congress on Image and Signal Processing*, vol. 2, IEEE, 2011, pp. 615–619. Indexed in EI Compendex and Scopus.

Xiang, Fan. "The Milestones and Development of Information Visualization Design." *Fine Arts Guide*, no. 3, September 2011, pp. 41–44.

### BOOK

- Xiang, Fan. *Wayfinding Signage System Design*. Jiangxi Fine Arts Publishing House, 2009. Approximately 400 citations.

## Selected Lectures, Talks, and Online Courses

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**Homemade Lens** | Guest Lecture | Sichuan Fine Arts Institute | Chongqing, China | 2024

**My Practice in Data Visualization** | Guest Lecture | MA Data Visualisation, London College of Communication, University of the Arts London | Online | November 2022

**My Practice in Visualization Design** | Invited Speaker | *Alternative Collections and Digital Humanities: Twentieth-Century Chinese Art and Visual Culture*, University of Toronto | Online | July 2022

**Living in the Future of the Past** | Public Talk | Yixi, a TED-style public speaking platform | Online | February 2022

Received more than 100,000 views on WeChat on the day of release, with approximately 27,000 views on Bilibili and 3,700 views on YouTube.

**Information Design and Art** | Six-Part Online Course Series | Yixi | Online | 2022

Developed a six-part course series on pictogram history, visualization theory, dynamic visualization, visualization art, and visualization design practice. The series has received more than 25,000 views since February 2023.

**Big Secrets, Small Datasets** | Public Talk | Yixi, a TED-style public speaking platform | Online | September 2017 | Received more than 100,000 views on WeChat on the day of release, approximately 65,000 views on the Yixi platform, more than 280,000 combined reads across two Observer Network postings, and approximately 16,000 views on YouTube.

**Data as Material for Design** | Invited Lecture | Harvard-Yenching Library Forum, Harvard University | Cambridge, Massachusetts, United States | May 2017

**Designing with Frustration** | Guest Lecture | Kanazawa College of Art | Kanazawa, Japan | 2017

## Selected Visual Design Projects

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Big Playbill

Interactive dual-screen data visualization installation

Capital Library of China, Beijing, China, 2024

Developed an interactive visualization based on historical Beijing Opera tickets and playbills. The installation reveals ensemble structures, performance networks, and relationships among performers, venues, and repertoires.

As If There Were

Site-specific generative mural

Adora Magic City cruise ship, Shanghai, China, 2023

Created a large-scale corridor mural using algorithmically generated circular forms and a color palette inspired by Dunhuang murals. The composition produces shifting visual effects as passengers move through the space.

## Selected Visual Design Projects

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Zhuangshi Journal Cover Series  
Twelve journal covers using text visualization  
Zhuangshi, January–December 2016

Designed a series of twelve academic journal covers using text visualization techniques.

## SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

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Offering Lights  
AI-generated moving-image installation  
Tsinghua University Art Museum, Beijing, China, November 2025  
Created a sequence of AI-generated candlelight images installed along a museum corridor. The work explores remembrance, absence, ritual, and emotional connections across time and space.

Big Playbill  
Interactive dual-screen data visualization installation  
Capital Library of China, Beijing, China, April 2024

AwardPuzzle, Version 5  
Interactive visualization installation  
Tree Art Museum, Beijing, China, October 2024

Ancient Chinese Family Tree, Version 5  
Immersive data visualization installation  
Tree Art Museum, Beijing, China, November 2024

As If There Were  
Site-specific generative mural  
Adora Magic City cruise ship, Shanghai, China, July 2023

Ancient Chinese Family Tree, Version 4  
Interactive dual-screen visualization installation  
Shanghai Library, Shanghai, China, August 2023

FaceType: Crafting Written Impressions of Spoken Expression  
Interactive media installation  
IEEE Visualization Arts Program Gallery, Online, September 2021

Ancient Chinese Family Tree, Version 3  
Data visualization and 3D-printed installation  
5th Art and Science International Exhibition, National Museum of China, Beijing, China, November 2019

Data-Driven Flights of Malevich  
Data-driven moving-image work  
Lishui Photography Festival, Lishui, Zhejiang, China, November 2019

Ancient Chinese Family Tree, Version 2

## **SELECTED EXHIBITIONS**

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Generative animation and 3D-printed installation  
XXII Triennale di Milano, Milan, Italy, March–September 2019

Traces of Taiji  
Motion-tracking video installation  
Third China Design Exhibition, Shenzhen, China, January 2019

Herbarium of Ancient Chinese Family Trees  
Data visualization installation using printed film and light boxes  
IEEE Visualization Arts Program, Berlin, Germany, October 2018

AwardPuzzle  
Interactive visualization installation  
Data Design Exhibition “Data 1, 2, 3,” EDF Gallery, Paris, France, May–September 2018

Time Spiral  
Data visualization artwork  
Arts Program of the First China Visualization Conference

AwardPuzzle: How to Win Art Awards in China  
Interactive visualization project  
Science Magazine Data Stories Competition, 2016

Data Visualization for Tropical Rainforest  
Projection-based data visualization installation  
First China Design Exhibition, Shenzhen, China, December 2012

## **ACADEMIC SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES**

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Reviewer, Art Papers, ACM SIGGRAPH Asia 2025, Hong Kong, 2025

Session Moderator, “Artistic Interpretation of Digital Cultural Heritage,” SIGGRAPH DAC SPARKS, Online, 2025

Art Papers Reviewer, SIGGRAPH Asia 2023, Sydney, Australia, 2023

Member, Art Papers Jury, SIGGRAPH 2021, Vancouver, Canada, 2021

Editorial Board Member, Digital Humanities, Zhonghua Book Company, 2020–Present

Jury Member, Emblem Design Review, Hangzhou Asian Games Organising Committee, Hangzhou, China, 2019

## Research and Collaborative Projects

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01/2013 – 09/2021  
Cambridge,  
Massachusetts  
, United States

### **New Media Action Lab, Massachusetts Institute of Technology** **Project: NGO Map**

Directed the interface design of an interactive visualization map intended to help NGO leaders understand broader sector patterns and learn from one another. Collaborated on a project led by Professor Jing Wang within the Civic Media and Global Studies research context at MIT.

## Selected Media Coverage

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- Inquire Art world with data (数据追问艺术), China Science Daily, Dec 15 2017
- Guangzhou Daily, June 13 2016
- Fast company, China, 2016
- Esquire, China, 2016

## Awards

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- **Best Thesis Supervisor Award** | Shenzhen Graphic Design Association | 2025
- **Best Art Paper Award** | SIGGRAPH 2020
- **Annual Excellent Paper Award** | *Zhuangshi* | 2017
- **Longlisted** | Information Is Beautiful Awards | 2016
- **Outstanding Faculty Award** | Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts | 2013
- **Winning Entry, Sports Pictogram Design Competition** | 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games

## Languages

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Chinese | Native  
English | Fluent  
Japanese | Fluent