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October 2020

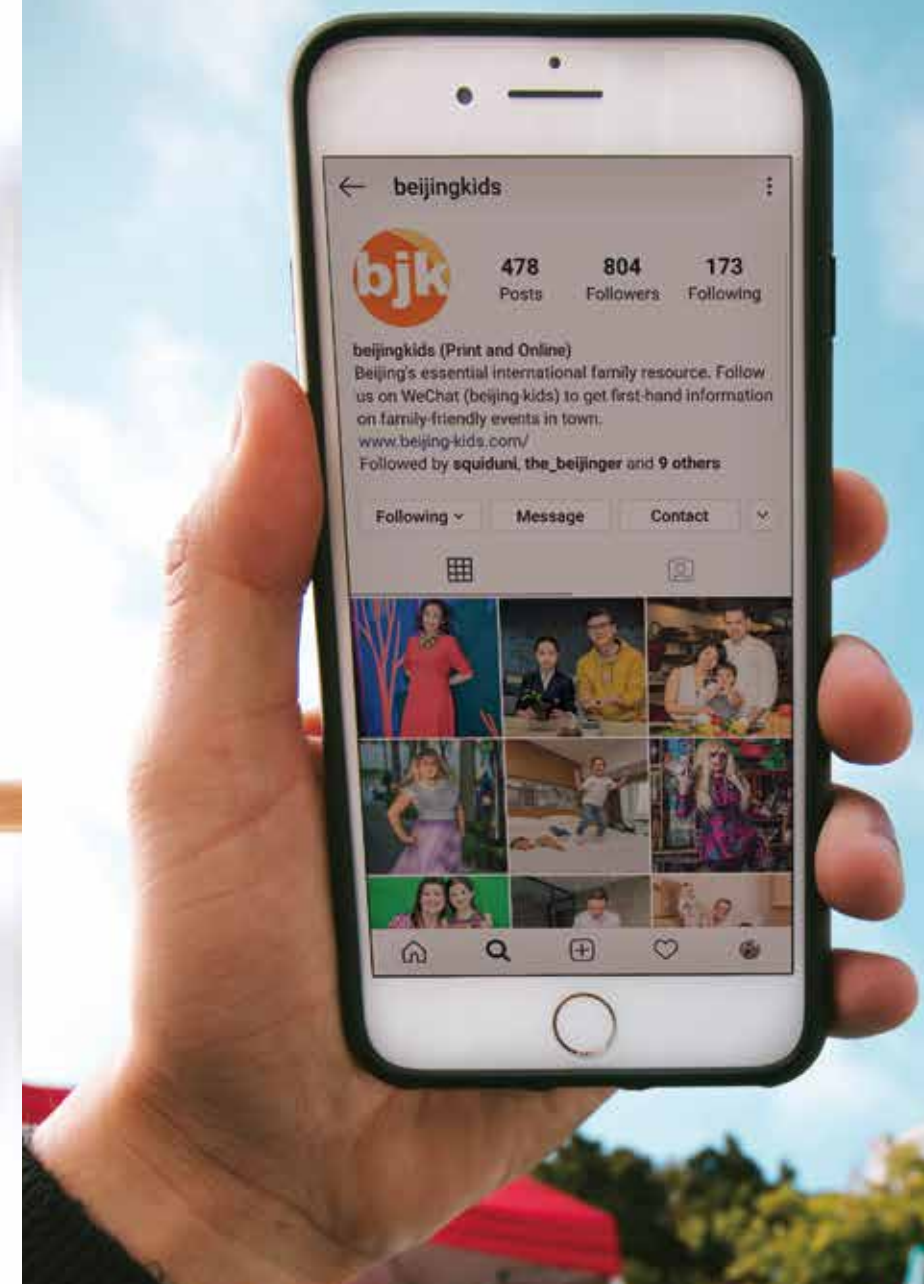
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## WOMEN OF CHINA English Monthly 《中国妇女》英文月刊

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### ON THE COVER:



This month six-year-old Lumi Lee *jetés* across our cover as this little ballerina strikes a pose at Renee International Arts Center.

Photographed by Dave Hansen of Dave's Studio



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
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### Tim Coghlan

Tim first came to China in 2001 and has made Beijing his home for the last 10 years. He specializes in new market development for the world's most iconic consumer brands, previously helping luxury brands enter and expand in China, and now helping a Chinese technology company build their global business. He enjoys outdoor adventures with his two young children, and time permitting, vlogs in Chinese under the moniker of "Kangaroo Daddy".



### Mike Signorelli

Mike Signorelli arrived in Beijing in 1994 as a student and has called China home ever since. He has held several senior management roles over the past 20+ years, including his last corporate job with NBA China. Mike is the founder of Signature Wine, an independent subscription wine club. Contact him at mike@sigwine.com.

### Marianne Daquet

In Beijing for 12 years, Marianne Daquet has always been passionate about art and education. She founded Atelier Art School 6 years ago with the mission to pass on her strong belief that creativity can change the world. She and her French husband have two daughters. You can reach her at Marianne@atelier.cn.com.



### Tara Gillan

Tara is from England, UK, and been in China over 14 years where she is raising third culture, bilingual kids. She has a passion for education in China, and is a life long learner still trying to master Mandarin. In between, work, study and being a mum, you will find her looking for her next adventure!

### Caroline Nath

Caroline Nath moved to Beijing as a teenager after having grown up in the US, Canada, France, and India. She is a filmmaker, radio host, Parent Effectiveness Training teacher, founder of Bonne Nani Jams, and an organic food promoter. She has two multi-ethnic and multi-lingual children. Contact her at kulfidoll@gmail.com.



### Alessandra Azambuja

Alessandra's Beijing adventure began in 2010 when she arrived here with her local Beijinger husband and two children. She is originally from Brazil and has also lived and worked in Argentina and New Zealand. With a passion for working in multicultural environments with international students, Alessandra worked for nearly nine years at The University of Auckland English Language Academy, and is currently at AISB-Hope International in Beijing. You can contact her at azambuja.alessandra@hopeintlschool.org

### Lise Floris

Lise Poulsen Floris is an EU official turned blogger. Since leaving her native Denmark in 1998, she has lived in Italy and Belgium before moving to China with her family. She writes about life in Beijing on her blog [ninemillionbicycles.com](http://ninemillionbicycles.com), aiming to tell "the big story through the small story." Her work has been published in the *South China Morning Post*, *Global Times*, and *Point of View International*.



### Juliet London

After seven years in Beijing, market researcher, branding consultant and writer, mother to two teenagers, Juliet 'Lady' London continues to be fascinated by this ever changing city. British by birth, she has also lived in Australia and other parts of Asia. Her work primarily focuses on education research, leaving less time than she would like to take exercise, walk her dog, and snap up bargains at local markets.

## A NOTE TO OUR READERS

“

I started playing the piano at age five and up until an injury in high school, my plan had always been to pursue a career in piano performance. Growing up as a classical pianist my afternoons and weekends were filled with practices, lessons, and competitions all over Southern California. It wasn't how typical kids spent their free time, but for myself and all those around me with similar dreams, it was our way of life. Now, looking back, even though music isn't the center of my life anymore, I'm grateful to have had the opportunity to grow up with it.

Here in Beijing, we see children of all ages emerging themselves in various forms of artistic expression. Parents from various walks of life can see the importance of encouraging creativity in their children. In this issue of *beijingkids*, we chat with two parents who turned their childhood passion for art into careers (p. 12) and also spoke with parents from different cultural backgrounds on their views of introducing art into their children's lives (p. 32).

Gracing our cover is six-year-old Lumi Lee whose love for art and design has made her one of the youngest illustrators in the world, having been published at just age five and now discovering her love for ballet. Though not every girl dreams of being a prima ballerina, dance does teach us everyday life skills. In this issue,

we spoke with teens about what they love about dancing (p. 40) and how it's helped shape their character.

Then we visited the less conventional forms of artistic expression from using makeup as an art form (p. 14) to the debated question of whether photography is considered "art" (p. 24) to the latest rise of tattoos and body modification. Tattoos have been a long-standing tradition in many cultures around the world, but in China, it's only in recent years that they've become accepted in mainstream, and two parents share the stories behind their unique tattoos (p. 36).

”



Mina Yan



# What's New



## Finally Back to School

Saying "there's never been a back to school like this before" is an understatement. After months of wondering whether the Sep 1 back to school announcement will actually happen or if last-minute changes would halt the plans, we're excited to see schools all across the city welcome back their students after strict distancing measures have been put in place.

## Shake Shack Opens in Beijing

Shake Shack opened its first location right in the middle of Sanlitun Taikoo Li. While some might say that Shake Shack is just a fast-food burger, others swear that it's the best burger they've ever had. You be the judge, but in the first weeks following their grand opening, the line outside of Shake Shack was literally out the door — over an hour's wait to be precise.



## Extra Points for IB

Following the global outcry of students dissatisfied by their International Baccalaureate (IB) score, the company faced criticism over its handling of the testing in the wake of COVID-19 and adjusted the scores. In an official statement issued by IB, the company said "We listened carefully to the concerns raised by some schools, students and their families... Our review and analysis of the detailed information from schools offered invaluable insights, leading the IB to evaluate and recommend grade adjustments, where applicable, that we believe are fair to all students."



## Find The Perfect School for Your Child

With over 80 international schools in attendance, educational forums given by both parents and experts, activities for burgeoning student entrepreneurs, and much more, the Jingkids International School Expo (JISE) 2020 is something you can't miss! Join us this coming Oct 24-25 at Beijing Renaissance Capital Hotel.

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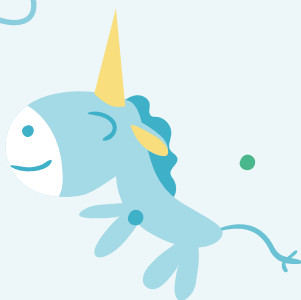
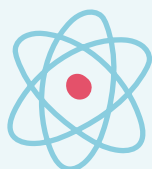


Note that we will only publish  
photos of babies born  
in the last 12 months



**Amelie Mei Hatcher**

American/Canadian. Born May 20  
to Ashley Hatcher and Graham Hatcher  
at Harmonicare Medical



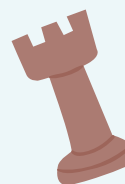
**Archie Zhicheng Wang**

British. Born Aug 22  
to Morag Brown and Wang Peng  
at Beijing United Family Hospital



**Elena Lauren Wang**

British/Chinese. Born Oct 9  
to Michaela Walton and Wang Hao  
at Oasis International Hospital



**Miles Joseph van 't Sant**

Dutch. Born Jan 27  
to Manuel van 't Sant and Annouck van Boekholt  
at Beijing United Family Hospital



**Zoe Blake Ebling**

American/German. Born Aug 21  
to Sarah Lea Pang and Zach Ebling  
at Oasis International Hospital





# *A Little Pre-Baby Pampering*

Blissful Spa Day for Mom-To-Be

By Mark Allan Karanja



This year, with all its uncertainty, has been an absolute blast for us at the *beijingkids* team. At the beginning of the year, we learned that our Chief Manager Mina Yan was expecting a baby. The last couple of months have since been what we at *beijingkids* have fondly termed the 'team pregnancy'. That's code for lovingly blaming all of our guilty snacking choices, bouts of insomnia, and unexpected weight gain on this same team pregnancy. Luckily, none of us in this collective effort have had to deal with much in the way of morning sickness or the dreaded mood swings attributed to pregnancy. The team member who is doing most of the work in this team project is still the one who contends with the physical discomfort of a third-trimester pregnancy.

So we decided to send Yan and her bestie Leila Sun for a relaxing evening at Bodhi Sense. Their newly refurbished Liangmaqiao location is complete with state of the art air filtration and purification systems, intimate, spacious massage rooms, and effusive staff, all creating a wonderful setting for Yan and Sun's R&R.

Pregnancy isn't easy. Add to that the stress of running a magazine, preparing your home for the new baby, and all the uncertainties that go with becoming a new mom, and you're left

with a jumbled mess of a brain. To counteract this, Yan got the prenatal massage. This massage is mostly recommended for women in their second and third trimester of pregnancy. All precautions during such a session are taken to ensure both mommy and baby are safe. It is also important to consult a doctor before getting such a massage to ensure no harm comes to the expectant mother and baby.

Ordinarily, oils used for prenatal massages aren't mixed with essential oils since some are known to have adverse effects on pregnant women. Instead, the massage therapist used jojoba oil which is the only plant-based oil closest to our body's own naturally produced sebum. It improves the appearance of stretch marks, working better in some cases than retinol, research has found. It's certainly a good choice for expectant mothers looking to minimize the inevitable stretch marks from pregnancy.

Yan's massage was done in one of the luxurious refurbished massage suites at Bodhi Sense Liangmaqiao, by a delightful and experienced Thai massage therapist who wore a mask throughout the entire session. To maximize comfort for Yan and her burgeoning baby bump, the massage therapist used a special pillow designed to cradle the belly,

while allowing Yan to comfortably lie on her side for the massage. The therapist gently massaged Yan's belly, back, arms, legs, and neck, being sure to avoid the meridians as described in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). TCM highly discourages pregnancy massages, based on the idea that if certain meridians are pressed, then they might send the expectant mother into premature labor.

However, prenatal massages have a variety of benefits that extend from mom to baby. These range from:

1. Reducing the back pain that is especially common in the third trimester.
2. Reducing the pressure and pain found in joints during pregnancy.
3. Improving circulation throughout the body, which in turn boosts energy.
4. Reducing edema, or swelling.
5. Reducing muscle tension and headaches.
6. Reducing stress and anxiety.
7. Improving oxygenation of soft tissues and muscles.
8. Improving sleep quality, which every mom needs throughout the pregnancy.

Bestie Sun, on the other hand, enjoyed the full and rather acrobatic experience of a Thai

massage. To some of us, a Thai massage is a tourist experience to be had in Thailand on a whim. But Thai massage has a long-standing history and tradition, tracing its origins to as far back as 2,500 years ago. It is believed to have been invented by Javaka Kumar Bhaccha (Shivago Kompara), who was a friend to the Buddha endowed with a vast knowledge of medicine.

Traditional Thai massage, unlike other popular massage techniques, is a dry massage. No oil is used to work through the knots in the muscles, but rather a combination of yoga-like stretches with the use of pressure, tension, and motion or vibration movements. It is believed that a combination of these movements and pressure exerted by the use of palms, thumbs, fingers, forearms, elbows, and even feet, increases blood circulation and improves the flow of energy through the body's energy channels or meridians. Also, unlike other massages that work the body from the core or torso out to the extremities, Thai massage starts from the arms and the legs and works into the torso, and then back out to the arms and legs. This can be a less

intrusive massage for some, as the recipient of the massage remains fully dressed at all times. It might also be a good alternative to those who prefer no direct contact with the massage therapist.

And after 90 minutes of stretching, cracking, contorting, and pulling, Sun was free to enjoy the numerous benefits which come along with the Thai massage, including:

1. An almost immediate lowering of stress.
2. Increased blood circulation.
3. An improved range of motion.
4. A boost of energy.
5. A reduction of headaches and other bodily aches and pains.

After their separate massages, both the ladies were able to kick back and have a lovely girls' evening as they received the final installment of luxurious pampering — foot massages — while they enjoyed soothing lemon water, a healthy snack, and catching up on gossip. If you are wondering what to get your pregnant bestie, then a girl's spa day might be just what the doctor ordered.



### Bodhi Sense at Liangmaqiao

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### Pregnancy Skincare Tips

Now, if you aren't into dropping big Taobao bucks on any number of stretch mark oils out there, you might consider making your stretch mark cream, following this simple recipe.

#### Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup virgin organic coconut oil
- 1/4 cup raw cocoa butter
- 1 tsp. vitamin E oil
- 2 tsp. rosehip oil
- 2 tbs. almond oil
- 20 drops of geranium, lavender, and/or frankincense essential oil

#### Directions:

1. Melt your coconut oil and cocoa butter.
2. Pour into a glass container.
3. Let cool until it's skin temperature.
4. Add in your other oils and blend with an immersion blender.
5. Seal the lid and store in a cool, dark place.
6. Apply 2-3 times per day directly on stretch marks.

All these ingredients are easily available on Taobao so do not be afraid to try this simple recipe.



# A FAMILY THAT ROCKS TOGETHER

The Miller/Nizam Family  
Share Their Favorite Tunes

By Mina Yan

## Brishti

I play the guitar. I've been playing since I was six years old and I'm hoping to perform at "Rock in the Park" which is a music festival at my school, later this year if all goes well. I like listening to rock music and like sharing music with my friends in other countries around the world. I'm trying to get into different types of genres that way. Sometimes we stream music together, regardless of our different time-zones, and that made the COVID-19 lockdown a lot less lonely and much more fun.

## Tanya

I like any music that I find fun to sing along to – mainly I'd say I am drawn to strong female vocalists who experiment with different styles. I'm currently listening to Sara Bareilles quite a bit. Beijing has been a great place for me to participate in singing groups and bands – I currently sing with Stevie Mac and the Mac Daddies and am loving every moment. Sometimes as a parent, I have found my children come to as many of my performances as I go to theirs. I love seeing them in the audience and I hope it shows them that you're never too old to get out and try new things.



**T**he Miller/Nizam family has lived all around the world. Dad Brendan is Australian and Mom Tanya is from the UK and Bangladesh. As international school educators, the family has lived in eight countries and their two kids Brishti (age 16) and Zain (age 14) have lived in six. Although the kids have a nomadic lifestyle in a way, the family is happy to be spending their high school years in Beijing and consider themselves lucky to have been in Beijing throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Brendan is the High School Head of Science and Tanya is the TOK Coordinator at the Western Academy of Beijing (WAB), where Brishti and Zain attend.

### **Brendan**

Seeing my wife and children being musical, I thought I'd better do something! During the COVID-19 lockdown, I decided to start learning to play the bass guitar – never too old to learn something! I like rock and heavy metal. I like bands like Alice in Chains and Sound Garden, Fear Factory, and Tool, to name a few. I never had the opportunity to learn an instrument as a child, so I'm really pleased to see my own children play. For my birthday each year, the family 'surprises' me with a different song that they perform together and it's probably the best part of the day for me.

### **Zain**

I like rock music. I don't have a specific band that I listen to all the time – I listen to songs from many, but my favorite is probably Green Day. I've played the piano and guitar in the past but my main interest is the drums. I think I'll stick to this now as drums have a unique feel to them and it feels good for me. For me, I don't have any plans to be part of a band – playing the drums by myself is fun already and I have my own drum kit in the basement of our house.



# Like Mother, Like Daughter? Like Father, Like Son?

Artist Parents Share Their Thoughts

By Feifei Xu and Mina Yan

Every parenting book says that a child's first teachers are their parents. As babies, we learn social cues from our parents and their behaviors are the first social interactions that we pick up on and will keep for the rest of our lives. Everything that our parents do on a daily basis is observed and learned.



American author Ursula Le Guin once said "The creative adult is the child who survived." So what's it like to grow up in a family where creativity and art remain a part of adult life? We sat down with two families where art still remains a large part of the parents' lives.

Meet Marianne Daquet, former director of Atelier Art School who originally came to Beijing on holiday and fell in love with the city where she and her daughters now call home. "In my family creativity was encouraged, and it naturally guided me to an art school where I studied for five years. I wanted my voice to be heard. I was educated with free speech encouraged, a strong cultural background, and openness on every kind of art, literature, cinema," Daquet tells *beijingkids*.

Now a mom of three, Daquet's kids explore their creative side at Atelier. With a mom who shares a similar passion for art and creativity, the Daquet household is never short of art supplies and the girls take full advantage of that! "At home, they have full access to art supplies and even cooking, sewing or whatever supplies," says Daquet. "They have everything that kids need to make their own creations."

Like in every parenting book ever written, Daquet says that her kids mimic her behavior. This artistic mom has never tried to cultivate a love for art in her children but "it's part of our lives. They see me drawing, they draw, write, one of them is a great chef! The idea is giving them all the possibilities of making and guiding them if they



need it." Guiding — not teaching. That seems to be the key here. "Art education leads to self-confidence, autonomy, and creativity. Creativity is not an explosion of abstraction — it is an ability to react differently to things. It is powerful not just for artists but for anyone: lawyers, doctors, parents! Art must be taught with guidance and space for experimentation," Daquet explains.

According to Daquet, kids as young as four or five can be given the chance to start art classes. Before that, they can play with materials, colors, shapes, or any other supplies they can get their hands on to nurture their creativity. While a career in art is still up in the air, Daquet says "I wish for them to do what they want, whatever they desire, whatever makes them happy every day. This is the only thing. Art or not."

Meet Ma Ke, a professional artist originally from Shandong and a dad of two boys aged six and eight. Ma fell in love with art at a young age. "When I was around seven or eight years old, I remember watching the neighbor's kid draw. I raced home to find a pencil and paper. I had a single thought in my mind: 'I bet I could draw better than he can!'" It seems like this was just yesterday. From then on, art has always been part of my life," Ma tells us. And true to thought, his passion for art and creativity never stopped, and he was accepted to the Central Academy of Fine Arts in 2000.

Ma draws on inspiration all around him to create his works. "I think the root of all growth is love. First, it's your parents' love. Then it's your curiosity for the world. Every time I see something I like, I'm always inspired to make something just as good."

So with a professional artist for a dad, does that mean Ma's boys will follow suit? Not necessarily. "I don't make my children take art classes outside. If they really want to go, I won't stop them. If they want to learn about art history, I can teach them all I know. But I think the best teacher is a great work of art," Ma tells *beijingkids*. "Sometimes I bring them to my studio to play and draw. The older son sometimes likes to copy my paintings. They both hate going to museums. Maybe it's not time yet."

Similar to Daquet's parenting beliefs, cultivating an artistic interest in children lies in supporting them rather than teaching them. "You can teach yourself how to make art. What other people teach you can sometimes get in the way of your own creativity. Art needs freedom. Free spirits need to grow naturally. Therefore there is no 'proper way,'" says Ma.







# Hooked On The Look

## How Beijing's Teens Use Makeup as a Form of Artistic Expression

By Mark Allan Karanja

Scrolling through social media platforms these days, you are struck by the volume of makeup tutorials available, done by what appears to be young men and women. It is, however, difficult to place their ages. One might assume they are all in their late teens or early to mid-twenties. It comes as a great shock to some to learn that some of these makeup savants are as young as ten! Thanks to makeup, now teens and tweens can easily pass for young adults, and it is safe to say this evolution from playing with GI Joe trucks and Barbie dolls to professional makeup artists or MUAs for short, is jarring for many. For parents and child care professionals, the fear is founded in the belief that the use of makeup at such an early age will foster a 'neurosis of glamor,' which might in turn catapult these children into feelings of insecurity, lack of self-confidence, and ultimately, an obsession with attaining impossible physical perfection.

But is this fear of the worst-case scenario entirely founded? Is it true that children and teens experiment with makeup due to feelings of inadequacy and peer pressure? A few facts might put things in perspective.

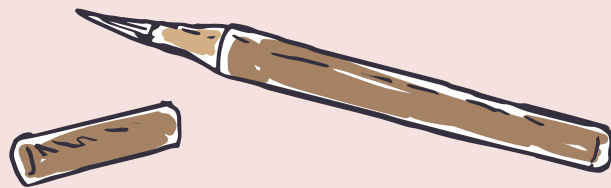
According to a study done by the Marketing Intelligence Agency, Mintel found that about 80% of children between nine to 11 years old in the US use some form of beauty or personal grooming product. Additionally, over half of all 12 to 14-year-olds use eyeliner, eyebrow pencils, eye shadow, and mascara; an additional 45% of this same group use foundation or concealer products. The research found equal amounts of cosmetic use in boys as they did in girls. Even though this same research is yet to be replicated in China or most other Asian countries, we would assume these findings would still hold, especially given the drive for perfection in the region, with countries like South Korea leading the world in cosmetic surgery among teens and young adults.

We wanted to find out what it's like for Beijing's teens, what



their relationship with makeup and the world of cosmetics is like. And is it that big a deal to wear makeup these days? Is it just an avenue of self-expression or simply a part of a self-care routine akin to putting on sunscreen before leaving the house? In a world where makeup artists such as James Charles shot to global fame in his mid-teens thanks to YouTube, would it be right to say that makeup is now as much of an art as it is a means to a simple aesthetic end?

Talking to Beijing's teens, we got a mixed bag of responses,



Cheryl Li

ing the sentiments of those against the early use of makeup by teenagers. Huang chooses to see makeup as a costume one puts on and takes off at appropriate occasions. Unlike her peers, she waited until she was 14 years old to start wearing makeup. On her frequency of using makeup, Huang explains it's "about three times a week. When I'm out with my friends or at a party. It makes us look better and gets us respect in some ways. Especially at parties, it fits the occasion." Huang's parents are not entirely on board with her use of makeup, however comparatively limited it might be, citing negative effects on her skin.

Of the teens we sampled, there were a few points of consensus. Kids under the age of ten are way too young to wear makeup. The teens also expressed an awareness of the possible harmful effects of makeup on both their physical and mental states. And as much as we might all fear social media's vast influence on impressionable teenagers, the ubiquitous nature of makeup use at present might mean it won't hold as much fascination for the younger generations as it has for previous generations. As these teens are vocal, expressive, experimental, and active on social media, so too is the use of makeup a way to express themselves, which they are happy to use, but do not feel under any danger of being permanently "hooked on the look."

from influencer culture as a driving force in their decision to wear makeup to it being a personal decision not taken too seriously. For Paris Lau, the image of perfect celebrities went a long way in her wearing makeup. Revealing she started wearing makeup at the tender age of 12, Lau adds "Yes, because all the influencers wear it, sometimes I compare myself with them." Lau grew up watching her mother wearing makeup, but she insists that her mother's makeup technique is more on the natural side. Lau prefers the more transformational effects of applying makeup, as she explains: "I think it's good because you can enhance your features without completely changing your face and you can always take makeup off." Lau now wears makeup daily and admits it boosts her self-confidence, and she does so with the support of her parents, on the condition that she is not too heavy-handed with her application.

For Cheryl Li, makeup is no more than a tool of expression. "It's an art. It allows people to bring out the best of themselves, and lets them express themselves in the way they want," explains Li, but she is also quick to add, "Some people do get obsessed with makeup and feel like they are not good enough without makeup." Unlike Lau, Li started using makeup at age 12 out of pure curiosity, and once she started she just kept doing it. Her parents, though supportive, had some concerns. As Li explains, "My dad is worried about my skin. He said if I don't clean my face properly, it can damage my skin!"

Haiwen Huang's concerns vary slightly from her peers'. "It somehow makes me look too mature," Huang laments, echo-



Haiwen Huang







# *Good Food and Honest Conversations*

A Romantic Waterfront Meal at Hulu by TRB

By TianTian Xu





Date nights are hard enough for couples with kids. Add a pandemic and they're nearly impossible. After six months of being stuck at home with the kids, my parents couldn't wait for school to reopen so they can go on a real date, just the two of them, so I was thrilled to introduce them to the hottest new restaurant in Shunyi.

Beijing isn't known for its waterfront dining experiences, so imagine my parents' surprise when they entered the former Fella's across from the Western Academy of Beijing (WAB) and discovered an open-air dining area overlooking a lake. With its white walls, woven lounge chairs, and tropical plants, this new Hulu by TRB felt like the perfect spot for a staycation date, day or night.

When indoor dining struggled during the lockdown, Hulu first took over the Fella's kitchen to fill the demand for takeout in the Shunyi area. But business was so good they decided to keep the space, opening a whole new branch of their popular Sanlitun restaurant. This was good news for those seeking the same casual fine dining charm with the added advantage of an al fresco waterfront view.

Just like the welcome drinks at a faraway resort, my parents were greeted with champagne flutes and fruity liquid sunsets – perfect for date night selfies. The appetizers, tiny avocado stuffed tomatoes (RMB 42) and Iberico ham croquettes (RMB 42), are sparse but flavorful preparation for the bigger courses.

When at Hulu, you must try the sliders: beef (RMB 23), pork (RMB 26), truffle (RMB 30), and spicy (RMB 35)! These miniature burgers are tender explosions of flavor, each one unique and presented with tiny toothpick flags. One bite and you'll want to order more, if not for the other dishes waiting in the wings.

For instance, the sweet potato fries (RMB 58) paired beautifully with the sliders, served in an ice cream cone shaped container and seasoned with an array of spices. They're best served hot and crispy. Even my dad had to admit they tasted better than his homemade ones.

Before they could finish enjoying and snapping #foodpics of the fries, two giant plates of food arrived. An array of beef, tomato, roasted walnuts, quail eggs, carrots, and so much more flowered out from the center of the Chef's Salad (RMB 108), where slices of avocado were intricately arranged in a spiral. The honey mustard dressing comes in mini skillet, but you almost don't want to pour it for fear of dimming the vibrant colors of the salad.

Following the salad was the main event, the Mixed Meat Platter (RMB 238) with rows and rows of beef tenderloin, chicken leg, pork neck, and sausages. Roasted corn and tomato gave it a rustic appeal, especially laid out on a wooden chopping board with two mini-skillets of sweet and savory sauces.

There's also no forgetting the Boston Lobster Salad (RMB 158). Split down the middle and paired with a mango and orange salsa, the dish looked like a painting. Hulu's lobster was tender and stood perfectly on its own, the fruit bringing out the savory umami flavor, making it taste almost like sashimi.

But of course, a date night meal wouldn't be complete without desserts. My parents tried the Raspberry Smoothie Bowl (RMB 68) and Warm Chocolate (RMB 58). The chocolate fondant cake paired gorgeously with its vanilla ice cream. The Raspberry Smoothie Bowl stood at nearly 15 centimeters tall, deliciously tart and sweet with a creamy undertone of yogurt, leaving it more resembling ice cream;



the perfect cherry on top for an ideal staycation date.

My parents were married in Shanghai 17 years ago, and have moved many times between China and the US, but when they talk about their life together, they mainly reminisce about the old days in Shanghai where they met: including long romantic leisurely walks in the French Concession every night after dinner. They especially miss those memories now that we can't travel far.

According to my mom, the secret to long and happy relations is good food and honest conversations. My dad agrees, but for different reasons: he jokes that the easiest way to get mom in a good mood is to give her something good to eat.

And that he did.

### Hulu by TRB

2nd Floor, No. 8, Laiguangying East Road  
(next to WAB)  
来广营东路8号2楼(京西学校)  
Ph: 6512 5701







# *Socially Distanced Birthday Cakes*

Honestly Speaking,  
This Should Have Been a Thing Long Ago

By Mina Yan

During the midst of the COVID-19 outbreak, my husband celebrated his 43rd birthday. While Beijing has already lifted its heavy restrictions on the number of diners allowed at each table, I still had lingering concerns when it came to the highlight of the evening – the birthday cake. More specifically, blowing out the candles on his birthday cake.

If this year has taught us anything, it's that masks are an essential part of staying safe in public and how far our droplets of saliva travel when we exhale. So with that bit of information newly drilled into our brains, the idea of serving up a piece of cake to his closest friends after the love of my life has sprayed his saliva all across the surface just doesn't sit well with me anymore.

Thankfully, a new trend is on the rise: socially distanced birthday cakes. Catching on with bakeries and germ conscious foodies alike, a socially distanced birthday cake is basically a regular birthday cake that comes with a cute little cupcake on the side. Instead of blowing out the candle on the big birthday cake, you put the candle on your cupcake and blow it out there instead; keeping the rest of

the cake germ-free.

But did it really need to take a global pandemic for us to realize that birthday cakes weren't the most sanitary thing to eat all these years? As Beijing mom Alessia Chizzoniti can testify, blowing out candles can be a messy affair. "On my daughter's last birthday she blew on the candles while her mouth was full of crunched popcorn. Everyone went from cheerful to disgusted in a nanosecond."

I'm very particular when it comes to cakes. Not only does it need to be beautiful, it needs to be unique, taste great and not put me in a sugar coma after just a few bites. When it comes time to celebrate, I tend to call up théATRE Tea for one of their light and fluffy cakes that are low in sugar, with hints of subtle fruit and tea scents, and beautiful without being layered with fondant and tacky decorations.

For those who want to make their next social distanced birthday cake at home, Chef Lily Zhang from théATRE Tea shared the recipe for her birthday cake, a recipe that makes both a delicious cake for all to share as well as a cupcake just for the birthday boy or girl.

### INGREDIENTS

- 125g sugar
- 170g plain flour
- 5g baking powder
- 12g cocoa powder
- 170g butter

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat your oven to 180°C. Grease and flour a 6-inch cake tin and cupcake tin.
2. Bring the butter to room temperature to soften.
3. In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter with the sugar until creamy.
4. Sift the flour, cocoa powder, and baking powder in a mixing bowl and mix.
5. Slowly combine the dry ingredients and the butter mixture and mix well.
6. To make the cupcake, transfer about 50g of the cake batter into a piping bag and squeeze out into the cupcake pan.
7. Transfer the rest of the batter into the cake tin.
8. Bake the cake for 25 minutes, and the cupcake for about 18 minutes. The cakes are done when it springs back to the touch.
9. When the cakes are ready, let cool to room temperature before you decorate.

### PRO TIPS:

Don't rush perfection. Let your cupcake fully cool down before you start decoration. Otherwise, you will be left with a melted sugary mess.

Consider making a smaller main cake and more than one cupcake. You never know if you'll need a backup when it comes time to decorate, and to be honest, a party can never have too many cupcakes anyway.

### théATRE CAKE 茶聚场

No. E101 WFC East Tower, 1 East 3rd Ring Road 东三环中路1号环球金融中心东楼一层E101号  
Ph: 6501 5381





# *Bye Bye Birdie*

Turning Kuaidi Boxes Into  
A Beautiful Birdhouse

By Mina Yan

## *What You'll Need*

- Cardboard boxes
- X-acto knife or a large pair of scissors
- Cutting mat (or thick cardboard if you do not own a cutting mat)
- Ruler
- Dark marker or pencil
- Glue
- One 30 - 32 cm long pencil or stick, bird seed and other recycled items you want to use to decorate the birdhouse





Online shopping is so convenient, but after a while all those cardboard delivery boxes start to pile up. In this month's Maker's Corner let's upcycle them into a beautiful bird house that will invite some new feathered friends to your balcony in no time. You just need a few everyday household materials and a bit of patience to do this fun afternoon activity for the whole family.

To show us how to turn ordinary cardboard boxes into beautiful birdhouses is Isabella Cao, a grade 7 student at AISB-Hope International and Secondary Art Teacher Tammy Sapp.



#### Step 1:

Cut out the pieces of cardboard into the following sizes:

- One 19 x 19cm square. This will be the bottom of the birdhouse.
- Two 18 x 20cm rectangles. These will be for the roof. Draw 2cm tabs on the right side of each rectangle. This is where the glue will go later.
- Two 18 x 22cm rectangles. These will be the right and left walls. Draw one 2cm tab on each side of both rectangles. Draw a 3cm circle using a bottle cap, in the middle of the right and left side panels.
- Two 18 x 27cm rectangles. Draw an 18 x 18cm square within the rectangle. Mark the middle of the rectangle at 9cm and draw a vertical line following the 9cm mark from the bottom of the rectangle to the top making a 27cm long line. Draw a line from the top of the line to the corner of the 18 x 18cm square to make rooftop peaks. This will be the front and back sides of the birdhouse.



#### Step 2:

Draw an 8 x 10cm rectangle about 4cm up from the bottom of the front of the birdhouse and cut a small hole under the triangle. The hole will be for the long stick to go through. Then cut an identical hole on the back side of the birdhouse in the same place.



#### Step 3:

Using the X-acto knife and metal ruler, cut out all the walls, bottom and roof. Make sure to ask for help from a parent if you have never used an X-acto knife or just use scissors if the corrugated cardboard is not too thick. When using an X-acto knife, lay the cardboard onto a mat board or another thick piece of cardboard so you don't end up cutting into the table top.



#### Step 4:

Glue all the wall pieces together.

- Apply glue to the tab of the left wall and press it to the inside area to the front wall. Allow to dry, then repeat for the right side.
- After the glue has set, attach the bottom to the main feeder and allow to dry.
- Finally, glue the roof tabs together and allow to dry. Finish by gluing the roof to the top of the bird feeder.



#### Step 5:

Insert the stick into the small holes located under the rectangle and push it through the back.



#### Step 6:

Punch two small holes through the top of the roofs tabs and add string so that you can hang the bird feeder. Decorate the bird feeder using other recycled objects. Add bird feed to the bottom of the birdhouse and find the perfect branch to hang it on.



# One Brushstroke at a Time

Feeling Free in the World of Chinese Painting

By Olivia Li





The sun peers through tinted windows, as the melody of birds chirping stirs you awake. No, this is not Snow White, it's a scene from a Chinese painting. Atop this misty mountain lies your small cabin, endless streams, fairy waterfalls, blooming petals, and sky-tall trees. The moss-covered rocks shimmer under the sun's glow. Overflowing streams of purity exist only for attainable peace. I used to live through that world, every weekend. For the past five years, I took Chinese painting classes every week, immersing myself in the world of water and paint.

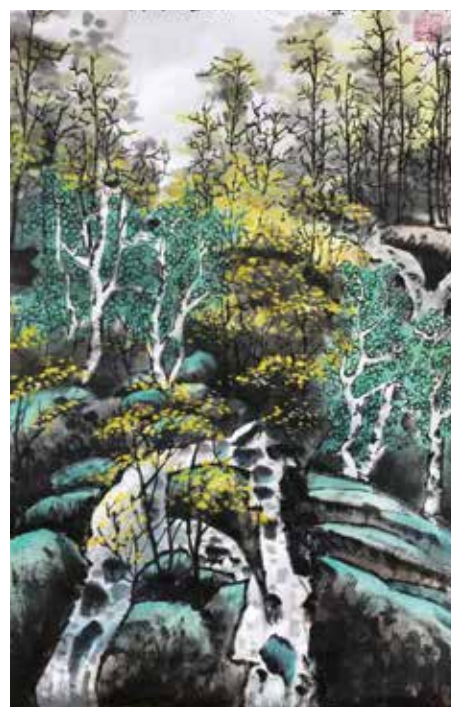
Chinese painting has various forms and types and is also closely tied in with Chinese calligraphy. When it comes to types of art, it is split into *gōngbǐ* (工笔) and *xiěyì* (写意). *Gongbi* paintings tend to be highly detailed and meticulous, often with long, smooth lines of flowers or birds. *Xieyi*, on the other hand, is much more abstract. Instead of going through every line and color, the painting will have broader shapes, and certain aspects of objects, such as mountains, will be exaggerated to a recognizable degree. There are two main forms for Chinese painting: *Shānshuǐ* (山水) and *Huāniǎo huà* (花鸟画). *Shanshui* paintings mainly involve drawing landscape sceneries. They will usually always contain mountains, trees, and a form of water. More advanced paintings also have misty clouds, giant waterfalls, villages, and one or two people. On the other hand, *Huāniǎo huà* focuses on animals and flora. Paintings of a specific flower will sometimes be accompanied by a cute bird or two, and it's much more zoomed in on the main focus than landscape *Shanshui*. While it is still up to debate, I consider *Rénwù* (人物) as part of *Huāniǎo*. *Renwu* paintings mainly portray humans often in dynamic poses. They will be accompanied by decorations such as small animals or flora, and thus is considered as a part of *Huāniǎo* by some people. They can also stand alone as a new category because of the many characters to explore.

I initially approached Chinese painting as a

kind of project to complete. My good friends had been painting for four years ahead of me, and their products looked amazing, thus compelling me to try it out too. Admittedly, the base level techniques and paintings were rather ugly and boorish, but it was those fundamental skills of how to draw the simple shapes and strokes that allowed me to evolve my art into what it is today.

What's more is that the message behind Chinese painting has inspired me to become more creative, and less hung up on perfection. Although the ideals may vary for Western art depending on the medium, the art form that I liked the most, realism, heavily emphasized having every detail down to touch and recreating the world we inhabit. On the other hand, Chinese painting focuses on understanding the spiritual meaning behind the painting and creating that same energy. I used to be hyper-fixated on making every detail perfect, blindly recreating what my teacher had drawn. Although I thought they looked pretty, I learned that the paintings felt lifeless because I could not understand the bigger concept behind it. It took some time to finally grasp how the twist of a tree could seem free, how a few dabs of water could let clouds float, and how to make a painting that had meaning in it. Soon, I was able to improvise more than before. An accidental drop on the canvas could be changed into some pine thorns. An additional stroke made the painting more vibrant. The small things that once bothered me, and drove me to desperate perfection, became more ways to improve myself.

Chinese painting used to make me feel small and imperfect, like the mistakes I made. However, after I took more time to understand the greater aesthetic behind it, that close link of acceptance of oneself and the natural world, I was able to obtain a better mindset not only when it comes to art, but also life. Some day I would love to travel into one of my paintings, living free, feeling good.





# Is Photography Art?

## Beijing's Hidden Photo Walk Destinations

By Qin Luyao

The invention of the point and click camera and high-quality smartphones reignited this hot topic in the art community: is photography really an art form? As a photographer myself, I believe it's less about what equipment you use and more about why you are taking photos and what you are trying to say.

For some, photographs capture something deeper, to represent an idea that's not immediately obvious. At first glance a photo can appear to mean one thing and then, after time, it becomes much more.

For others, a photo is a form of reportage: a moment in time, frozen forever. These pictures may not be the most beautiful in the conventional sense, but they can say a lot about society and where it

is heading at any moment.

Then there are those who take snaps to show their friends or to record where they have been.

One thing all these have in common is an element of self-expression. You may not have the greatest camera but how you frame a shot will be your choice. It is you unleashing your own creativity whether you realize it or not. It shows others how you view the world.

So, let's face it, maybe that is art, at least to some extent.

Either way, Beijing is a city full of photographic possibilities for enthusiastic amateurs and experienced photographers alike. You just have to have a look around to discover the perfect photo walk.

### *Mocha Art Centre*

A walk around the Aigongchang Cultural Industrial Park offers different shooting possibilities. There are new galleries and workshops under construction and local hipsters are moving in.

The Mocha Art Centre has a unique golden entrance way inside a funky staircase. There are now so many keen young people wanting to take photos here that you have to reserve a spot at least one day in advance in order to go inside and climb the stairs. The outside corridor is also popular with those looking for a trendy, fashion shoot style vibe.

**Address:** No. 27 Dawang Lu West, inside the Aigongchang Cultural Industrial Park

西大望路27号爱工厂科技产业园摩卡集团B座



### *Second Ring Road City Greenway*

There is a thin park hugging the waterway around the southeast corner of the Second Ring Road. Here the opportunities for good shots are probably best in the morning with the sun behind your back, and while it's less known for fun family activities, it's full of retired people who give you a glimpse of the old Beijing lifestyle.

As the path bends around there is also an elevated spot to photograph the Dongbianmen Watch Tower from across the water and you can see trains pulling into and out of Beijing station.

**Address:** 9 Chongwenmen East Street, Dongcheng  
东城区崇文门东大街9号

PHOTOS: QIN LU YAO



## Hua's Restaurant

Human movement is one of the great themes in photography and can be found where you least expect it. Hua's Restaurant is famous for their Peking duck but it's also a great place to people watch. Waiters can be seen carrying dishes across the road in the back hutong to other parts of this multi-section restaurant; kitchen staff are busily preparing food behind large windows. And then, there are the acts!

Every night at around 8:15pm there are a series of traditional Chinese performers on a small stage. Some of the acts have a food element like plate spinning or noodle stretching as well as traditional face changing and "kung fu tea" acts.

Even the building itself has a large Beijing courtyard feel and it is hard to come away from here without a few great pictures. Hua's Restaurant has multiple locations all around the city but the best one for photography is just a short walk from the Beixinqiao Station.

**Address:** No. 5 Dongzhimen Inner Street (150 meters west of Dongzhimen Bridge) 东直门内大街5号(东直门桥往西150米路北)

**Ph:** 8407 9868

## CBD View

The capital's iconic CBD is full of spectacular buildings, but it can actually be hard to find a good spot to capture the scale and beauty of Beijing's business heart. In short, you might have to shoot it from a bit of a distance.

Many photographers go looking for such vantage points at around a two-kilometer radius from Guomao — that way you are not too far away but also not too close.

If you do find a good place to snap the city you can be sure that your friends will be asking from where you took it because everyone with a camera is trying to take an image which represents the gleaming new Beijing.

**Address:** No. 16 Yong'anli East Street, Jian Wai Da Jie, Chaoyang District 朝阳区建外大街永安里东街16号



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广告



# Art is All Around Us

Cool and Creative Places for Family Bonding Time

By XueFei Liu

It's early fall, school's in full swing, but now that you finally got out of the house? It's not too late to pack in family bonding time before summer's gone for good and your kids are bombarded with assignments. So if you want to squeeze a little arts and crafts into your weekends, we've found some fabulous places to go, and best of all? It's all right here, in Beijing.

## 798's Arts-and-Crafts Corner 慢时光手作体验馆

We've all heard of 798 Art District, famous for its galleries and street art. But did you know that it also holds a spectacular place for DIYs? The most popular activity there is oil painting. Don't worry if you're not a big fan of the canvas. You can also weave dream catchers, make keychains, phone cases, and more. With over ten choices of DIY, there's bound to be one right up your alley.

If your kids are fighting over which craft they should make for the afternoon, fear no more. There's a variety of items for each family member! And after you're done, why not go explore the 798 galleries and the art district? Turn this solo activity into an adventure packed day!

**Address:** Next to Qixing Middle Street Ying Gallery in 798 Art District (Southern Area of 798 Art District), 798 艺术区七星中街映画廊旁(798艺术区南门)

**Opening Hours:** Monday to Sunday 10am-6pm

**Approx. Price:** RMB 185/per person

**Ph:** 159 0130 1605

## Leather Making

磐刻 · 鳄鱼皮 · 皮具定制 · DIY手工坊

Have you had your eye on a designer handbag but thought it was missing a bit of pizzazz? Then you'll no doubt fall in love with this place. With different leather patterns and DIY choices, you'll have something cool and unique to add to your accessories. And if your kids think handbags are for grown-ups? Don't fret, with different choices like keychains, wallets, and watch add-ons, your kids will be cutting up leather in no time. With different difficulties of leather making, both your big and little ones can have fun. After you're done, why not head over to China World Mall for a rewarding ice cream cone, knowing that the new handbag on your arm is one-of-a-kind and out-of-this-world?

**Address:** 1720, East Tower, Wangzuo Center, No. 1, Jinghua South Street, Hujialou Street, 呼家楼街道景华南街1号旺座中心东座1720

**Opening Hours:** Monday to Sunday 10am - 9pm

**Approx. Price:** RMB 256/per person

**Ph:** 183 1085 5886

## Opening Oysters Pearl DIY 相蚌汝生珍珠开蚌DIY首饰体验馆

Okay, so maybe quarantine has ruined your plans for going to the beach. But let me tell you a secret, Beijing can be turned into a seaside trip in a second. That is, if you know the ways of doing so. We all know oysters holds pearls and pearls equals the seaside. (Okay, maybe we don't, but let's not break that to the kids yet.)

With this DIY, you get the full experience of opening up an oyster, picking out the pearls, cleansing, and finally jewelry making. Beats the stores any day. Get your kids to pick out their oysters and pluck out the pearls. Better yet, do it with them! Who knows what color you'll find inside? And when all the washing steps are done, get them to choose the pearls and make it into a quirky statement piece. Whatever is made, your child's got a piece of the ocean. And you just saved plane tickets and hotel fees.

**Address:** Room 616, Lisheng Office Building, No.201 Wangfujing Street, 王府井大街201号利生写字楼616室

**Opening Hours:** Monday to Sunday 10am - 8pm

**Approx. Price:** RMB 178/per person

**Ph:** 135 2166 6207

## Enamel Making

### 凝蓝珐琅工作室

Enamel is one of the traditional Chinese handicrafts passed down from our ancestors. I know it sounds intimidating and hard, but what's bonding time without a little challenge? It's also the perfect way to get your teenagers (who'll probably refuse to bond with the little ones or bond at all) to join in the fun. While the older kids can make a difficult design, the younger ones can do something much easier.

Scared that your kids might not get the hang of it? The staff members are there to help, encourage, and give advice to your kids so they'll end up with a piece of jewelry they won't want to take off. Instead of just sitting there and scrolling on your phone, you can also make one. And when everyone's done with their piece of enamel jewelry, snap some pics and head out onto Gulou, where you can award your hard work with some delicious cuisine.

**Address:** No. 28, No. 18, Tofu Chi Hutong, Old Gulou Street (Intersection of Gulou Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine and Anding Police Station), 旧鼓楼大街豆腐池胡同28号院-18号(鼓楼中医院与安定门派出所交接处)

**Opening Hours:** Monday, Wednesday to Sunday 10am - 9pm

**Approx. Price:** RMB 948/per person

**Ph:** 166 0104 3680

## Woodworking

### 大小木作

Don't you just love the smell of wood? Too bad the design lab at school isn't open for the entire family. Guess you'll have to miss out on the fun, right? Wrong, and if your family are all woodwork-aholics, you'll love this place for sure.

With choices such as nutcrackers, spoons, and tiny carousels, you've got a lot of choices. Accompanied by endless sawing, sanding, measuring and painting, your entire family will stay busy. While the little ones might have a blast painting their nutcrackers (and maybe themselves), the bigger ones will be focused on perfecting their ukulele. And if you're scared of your kids getting injured while working with tools, there are always employees watching them, making sure they're safe (but there's no harm in bringing a few band aids just in case). What's more exciting than carpentry? Exploring Qianmen and its Chinese street food after you're done, of course!

**Address:** No. 1, Wutiao, Xiangxiang, Dongcheng District (in the courtyard of Hanting Hotel, Qiandong Road) 北京市东城区长巷五条1号(前门东路汉庭酒店院内)

**Opening Hours:** Tuesday to Sunday 9.30am - 5.30pm

**Approx. Price:** RMB 435/per person

**Ph:** 158 1011 1301

## Pottery & Painting & Pets

### 有间陶&画&宠

Pottery and painting are the two most popular activities when it comes to art. But in a city as big as Beijing, you can hardly find them at the same place.

Don't worry, I've got you! This art studio offers both pottery and painting! No more listening to your kids squabble over which craft to do for the weekend. If that's not enough fun, this store has cats! So if your children get tired painting, they can play with cute little kittens. But if you are afraid or allergic of animals, don't worry, the cats are caged in their little playpen. You can always choose the table furthest away from them. The staff members are there to help and assist your kids, so no worries about confusing steps, tools, and techniques. With two awesome activities, it'll be a busy afternoon for all ages. And best of all, after you're done, you can check out the restaurants in Sanlitun, taking this family bonding afternoon to the next level.

**Address:** Room 5515, 5th Floor, No. 5, Sanlitun SOHO, No. 8 Gongti North Road, 工体北路8号院三里屯SOHO5号商场5层5515室

**Opening Hours:** Monday to Sunday 10am - 7pm

**Approx. Price:** RMB 163/per person

**Ph:** 185 1973 7060



# From Art Attack to Nurturing Creativity

## Shaping Beijing's Next Generation of Artists

By Mark Allan Karanja



It's widely believed that for someone to be a true creative, a legitimate artist, there must be a calling. A calling that can come in different ways, and it is the job of the artist to listen for it lest they miss it. For an artist like Pablo Picasso, it was the simple draw of a pencil as a child which marked the start of his expansive and dynamic artistic legacy. Some people also rather wrongly believe that artistic ability can only be innate: guided and shaped rather than taught. But many established artists and current art students and lovers would beg to differ with that statement. So would Riley Seager, the art teacher at the House of Knowledge International Kindergarten (HoK).

Seager's start in art is as colorful as it is sentimental. "Every British person born in the '90s will remember a TV show called 'Art Attack.'" This was a show dedicated to children to teach them how to make different art projects. It was easy to follow and the presenter was energetic and passionate about art," the UK native offers on her formative experiences with art, adding "I would watch this show religiously and give my mum weekly lists of materials I needed to make the projects. "'Art Attack made me feel like I could accomplish any art project and was the stimulus that ignited my passion for art.'" It was this early foray into an artistic expression that would also provide Seager with a means of entertaining herself, as a child who lived on an isolated farm. Despite claiming she wasn't exactly a child prodigy, she stuck with her passion for art, finding innovative ways to express herself. As Seager puts it, "I was very creative and had great attention to detail. I remember one project I used a large bottle and covered it with aluminum foil and designed it into a rocket ship. After that, I had cut out a small photo of my face and glued it to a hand-drawn astronaut who then suspended inside the rocket via string."

How does one go from a child on a far-flung farm in rural Britain to being a lead teacher with a special focus on art in a Beijing international school? Seager points to her parents' own nurturing of her artistic hopes which ultimately encouraged her to give to Beijing's brightest what her parents gave her. "I love to create and use my art to express myself. However, my creations are never perfect, there are flaws, imperfections, and mistakes. But my parents never pointed out my errors, they appreciated my art and understood that it was a representation of me," recounts Seager, adding, "This is an idea that influenced me to become a teacher. There are no mistakes in children's art, it is an extension of who they are, how they feel, and what they want to communicate. This is an idea that I wanted to teach others, to create a classroom environment where children can create without judgment or negativity."

A teacher whose sole purpose is to be patient and nurturing with her students, however, is just one part of the equation to

success. The next crucial piece is not only a scholarly environment that encourages artistic exploration but also has pedagogical systems and facilities conducive to artistic exploration. According to Seager, HoK ranks highly in this respect. "Artistic subjects have a daily influence at HoK. Our curriculum is Reggio Emilia influenced so there are a lot of opportunities for creation. Inside each classroom, we have an art area where children are free to create during playtime. It has a variety of materials and loose parts," explains Seager. HoK's approach to education lines up with Seager's pedagogical style, the main one being a strong belief in a child having three teachers in his or her life: the child's school teacher, parents, and environment. Seager adds, "I think it is very important for children to learn from the world around them and enable their environment. I heavily encourage children to decorate the school. Last year children decorated our classroom into a jungle. They would bring in leaves, sticks, and flowers to stick to the walls and it was beautiful."

Despite admitting she sometimes feels lonely in Beijing at times, as do all foreigners at some point in time or another, Seager still says she is having a blast here. She also believes the future of creativity is bright, saying "I think the future of art and expression greatly depends on how we support it presently. I hope that artistic expression can become a daily habit for children by implementing and encouraging it in more classrooms and at home. This way children will grow into adults who can express themselves with confidence in a healthy way. Art is always changing, and new mediums are constantly being created. I think the future of art will be diverse, accepting, and exciting if people continue to produce art that challenges us and the way we think."

On what she believes her legacy in Beijing among her students will be, Seager put it simply, "I just hope I can help my students express themselves and have good self-esteem." It is safe to say that a few years from now, as the new crop of Beijing's elite artists takes the world by storm, Seager will be far more than an anecdote about a teacher's artistic origins, and will be remembered with as much fondness and gratitude as she does her "Art Attack" start.

PHOTOS: RILEY SEAGER



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# Let's Get Creative!

Young Students From  
House of Knowledge  
International Kindergarten  
Explore Their Artistic Side

*By Mina Yan*



**Shoma Sen-Jiang Ya (Age 4)**

The student did the colorful African painting on cloth, after learning about Africa.



**Dudu Tang (Age 4)**

"I can make orange color on my own!"



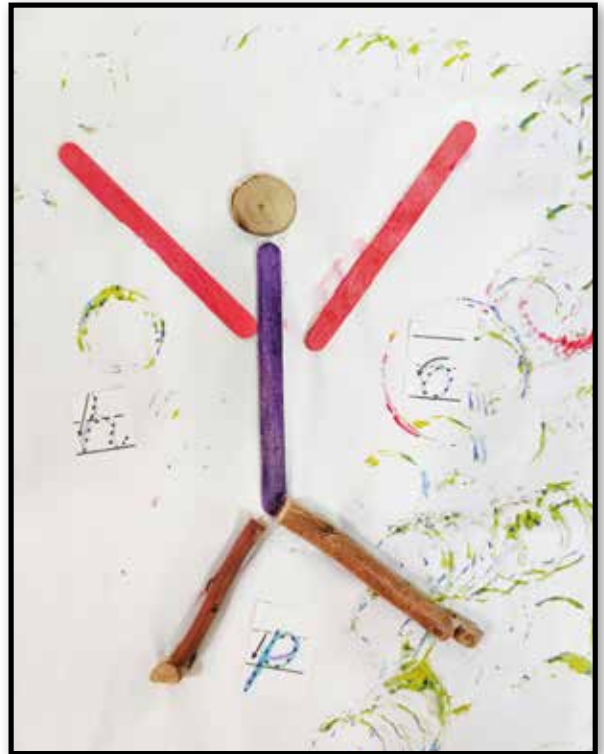
**Akinas Zhang (Age 5)**

The student used paper crafts to present one of the most important traditional holidays at the school – the Saint Martin's Day.



**Xiao Tao (Age 5)**

"I like green, yellow, and orange, and I want to make an Air China airplane with these colors."



**Aiden Zhang (Age 4)**

"I can write my name! And can draw myself using wooden sticks and color pens."



**Thomas Zhang (Age 5)**

"There are so many big white teeth, inside this big and fierce shark!"



**Emma Chai (Age 5)**

"The fish must like making friends a lot. Look! He has swam here for a day trip to make new friends."



**Vincent Tian (Age 5)**

"I dropped the ink, then blew it, then I made a tree for it."



# What's Life Without Art?

Parents From Different Cultural Backgrounds  
Share Their Views on Art

By Pranav Sundararajan, Jolie Wu, Mina Yan



Artist dad Johannes Nielsen is originally from Sweden and has lived in Beijing for over ten years. He spends his days creating art and playing games with his five-year-old daughter Shiloh along with their dog Luna and cat T-Rex.

## Does art play a large part in your life?

Yes, I was born into an artistic home and grew up with paint and clay in the living room. As a teenager I hated art but now it's my passion, my language, my joy... and now it's me bringing clay and paint to the living room and probably sometimes traumatizing my daughter with an overwhelming passion for art.

## Were you encouraged to explore the arts as a child?

Yes, in fact, it was the only thing I was really encouraged to do. Looking back I sometimes wished they had encouraged me to also take other things more seriously, like school. I learned to be a great dreamer but the journey to make my dreams real and pay tax has been a long and crooked journey. It was also that journey that took me to China.

## Do you (or will you) encourage your children to explore the arts in or outside of school?

Yes, but I will also be careful not to overwhelm her or put any expectations on her. Also, in some way, I don't think I know more about art than my daughter. She has shown me how playful it can be. She has in that way helped me to reconnect with something I had lost on the way as an artist, and maybe take it a little too seriously and to focus on the result. This lead me to create a drawing workshop for adults titled Rediscover Drawing.

## Do you think it's important for schools to offer kids a wide variety of arts programs? Why or why not?

I think for some kids it's more important, almost essential. I was a kid like that myself, I did not feel like I fit into the school system, and had difficulties in following directions. But I remember in the art class how I got to shine and find my strength and way of expressing myself in the class. However, for other kids it seems to be less important. I think art should never be something that one is forced to do. I believe creativity is a very delicate and intimate space. A space that needs to be seen

and acknowledged within each of us both by ourselves but also by the people around us. Therefore it needs to be guided and explored within a space without right and wrong, good or bad... and that's very hard to create and facilitate, therefore we should do it. Especially in times like this, I believe as technology gets more advanced, creativity will be more and more valued within all fields. Not only in art but also in business and science.

## Is there a form of art that your child(ren) really enjoys?

Recently acting, dancing, and singing. Often to Disney's "Frozen" where I get the role of a prince or monster and I love it, It's an opportunity for me to play and reconnect with the child within me. I see it as my daughter does.

## Do you think it's important for your child to at least experience every form of art?

Yes, but I also know from my own experience it's not a straight path. You need to go back and forth, up and down a lot... never throw the baby out with the baby water just because there was no magic the first time.

## Would you encourage your child to pursue a career in the arts?

Definitely, but also if she chooses to be a banker, I would encourage that too. I think it all can be creative and an expression of our inner voice.

## Do you think art contributes to a child's mental development?

I know it does, not only because I have seen it in children, I have seen it in my parents, and I have experienced it within myself. Recently I made an exhibition titled "The Quarantine Collection." It's the artwork I created during the time of isolation in my home/studio. These artworks I have created during this time are very special to me because they have helped me find purpose and joy in this strange time. Instead of using words to explain how we feel I believe in the power of manifesting it to a picture, form, or object. We get distance, we can see it, we can touch it, and more importantly, share it with others.

Sometimes when my daughter finds it hard to explain something, I ask if she can draw it for me instead. And I'm always surprised by what comes out.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF JOHANNES NIELSEN

*Dad Fango Huang is an avid photographer and designer, and Mom Grass Chen is an owner of specialty home-stays, who strives to bring beauty into life. She lives by the mantra "You can be slow, but you can't stop." Together, they have two daughters: 14-year-old Martina and nine-year-old Phoena. Martina is gentle and quiet, has tenacity, and strives for perfection. She likes to listen to music and immerse herself in a world of paintings and artwork where she can create stories one stroke at a time. Phoena is lively, energetic, and imaginative. She loves doing handiwork and collecting gemstones.*

### **Does art play a large part in your life?**

Art is all things "beautiful" for us. As a family, yes, we have an innate pursuit of "beauty." Art is not just present in lavish palaces and buildings but rather exists all throughout our daily lives. Beauty is all around us, and as long as we are willing and able, we can explore, discover, experience, and enjoy.

### **Were you encouraged to explore the arts as a child?**

I was born in the 1970s. When I was a child, art materials were often very scarce and hard to purchase. I vividly remember the words my mother often used to say: "Be fortunate that you can at least stay warm in the winter and have enough food to eat. Don't even think about anything else!" so, art was a luxury when I was young, and I wasn't really encouraged to explore the arts.

### **Do you (or will you) encourage your children to explore the arts in or outside of school?**

Most definitely. Whether it be in or out of school, we encourage the children to explore. I remember once in their music class at school, the teachers had asked the children to try to make musical instruments from different arts and crafts objects. They tied a rubber band to a paper box to make a harp. Another one of their assignments was to design and make a dress, so they cut, glued, and sewed out a set of dresses from old curtains. Once also, the two girls had a whim and wanted to paint on one of the walls in our house. After much deliberation, I cleared a wall and let them play freely. I guess you could say I got an abstract art wall for free.



### **Do you think it's important for schools to offer kids a wide variety of arts programs? Why or why not?**

Our school provides Western and Eastern art courses for the children, and there are also various art clubs after class, such as theater, orchestras, choirs, oil paintings, and calligraphy. We put great importance on the art courses provided by the school because they not only improve the children's artistic abilities and their understanding of aesthetics, but they also cultivate the children's teamwork abilities.

### **Is there a form of art that your child(ren) really enjoys?**

Phoena can talk for hours on end, and I found that once you give her writing utensils and a drawing book, she will immediately quiet down. When she was five and a half years old, she made a decision to draw at least one picture every day. Over 500 days later, she's still sticking to her promise and continuing to draw. Many parents are dumbfounded when they find out, and they ask us how we kept Phoena to continue drawing. But it's not us, it's a matter of persistence from Phoena.

Martina likes music, and when we watch the opera, she can be moved to tears. She likes doing choir music and playing the piano. She started learning when she was less than five years old. While she found it boring at times and almost gave up on a few occasions, Martina has truly fallen in love with the piano

and enjoys it. She's been through ups and downs, but as long as you persist, you will eventually experience its beauty.

### **Do you think it's important for your child to at least experience every form of art?**

Absolutely. I think it's important to let the children dabble in various art experiences. On one hand, I hope that the children can find their artistic interests. On the other, I hope they can broaden their artistic perspectives and integrate different forms of art together.

### **Would you encourage your child to pursue a career in the arts?**

If they can turn their artistic interests into a career, I will definitely support it. Of course, if the professional pathways they choose have nothing to do with the arts, I will wholeheartedly support that as well. I believe that the experiences you have in life are never in vain, so their interactions with the arts will definitely stay with them wherever they go.

### **Do you think art contributes to a child's mental development?**

Learning art is not just about developing children's drawing skills, nor is it just about being proficient in making and creating music. Art is a means of spiritual fulfillment for children and is a lens through which we can view the world and understand the dynamics of life. I feel that art is an effective means of encouraging children to understand the world.





# Not “Just Playing”

Your Child's Brain on Creative Arts

*By Julie Wolf*

Most kids today participate in some form of “mommy and me class” prior to a more structured school. For most parents, it’s a rite of passage to spend Saturdays snapping pictures of their child shaking a maraca or covered in finger paint! These are incredible memories shared with grandparents and friends and make great additions to both baby books and Instagram feeds.

It’s also an opportunity. The first five years form your child’s educational blueprint. Everything they learn after that will be retained and utilized or discarded and forgotten based on how their brain is developing right now. Yet every year, without fail, there is at least one parent in my class who will utter in consternation, “But they are just playing!”

This is so much more than just playing! Your toddlers’ brains are a miracle of human evolution and what they are learning in that music or art class may be the most impactful lessons of their lives. So allow me to be your personal Willie Wonka as we tour the magical chocolate factory that is your child’s mind on art and music!

## **Shake Baby Shake**

I personally love music for music’s sake. I believe it is incredibly important for social and cultural understanding and frankly, it’s just

fun! But as an educator, music is absolutely essential. Hundreds of studies have been done that tell us several things about how the human brain responds to music.

Actively interacting with music, not just listening to it but singing, dancing, and/or playing an instrument does something very unique: it lights up the entire brain at the same time. According to an ongoing study from the University of Central Florida, when you sing, dance, or play an instrument you are “improving cognitive and motor skills, spatial-temporal learning and neurogenesis.” In other words, music classes actually help your child create neurons and then allow those neurons to connect, forming neuron networks which are the building blocks for future learning. This is why interactive participation, instead of a teacher simply playing the guitar and singing to the kids, is so important. By playing and singing with us, the kids are building these neuron clusters.

But it goes even deeper than that. At a certain point, usually around age 8-10 years, the brain does a neuron dump. It gets rid of any neurons that have not been used enough to form strong neuron networks. Different genres of music actually help a child’s brain form different neuron networks across multiple brain regions. So, by exposing children to lots of diverse complex music, we are naturally

helping their mind form and strengthen so they hang on to more of these mental building blocks. That is going to help them learn, retain, and access more information later in life.

Don't believe me? I can explain how a bill becomes a law, name all 50 states in alphabetical order, and recite the top six New York Times headlines every year from 1949-1969 but I had a hard time remembering what three things I needed at the grocery store this afternoon...why? Because School House Rock, Ray Charles, and Billy Joel don't write anthems about my need for milk, eggs, and spinach.

The best part about all of this? You can start this learning process as early as six months old! So, crank up the classical music but make sure they are also getting reggae and Celtic and jazz and show tunes... oh, and stick a maraca or a rhythm stick in their hands!

### Now Get Messy

Ok, remember all those neurons we made in music class? They need a place to go! They need neural pathways, and art can help form those! Every time your child has a new tactile experience, like playing with playdough or finger painting, their brain forms a neural pathway. Repetition of that experience makes the pathway stronger and wider. So, if you think of a neuron like a car, the pathway is a road. The more roads you have, the more places the car can go and if more of those roads are concrete six-lane highways instead of dirt paths, your cars can move faster and more efficiently. By letting your child get messy in art you are actually allowing their mind to build a state-of-the-art information superhighway.

Art is also fantastic for fine motor skills and creative problem solving, which is another article's worth of information. But I think my favorite thing about watching young children in art is it gives them a

sense of agency and an opportunity to express themselves.

Our smallest students have opinions but their lack of language at 14 months or two years means all too often they don't get to tell us what those opinions are. And that is frustrating for them. But in art, if they want their duck to be purple or their fish to have seven eyes or their snowman to be a puddle, it's ok! I'm constantly reminding parents it's about the process, not the product. We don't correct a child's art because there is no "correct" way to create it. Can you imagine if someone had told Picasso the nose doesn't go there?!

Once children get a little older, we can also start working on the idea of collaboration and cooperation through art. Large group projects teach children they can work together as a community to make something bigger and better than any one of us could have done alone. That ability to recognize you can be a unique individual within a group that works towards a common goal is a hallmark of successful people all over the world.

### Thus, Concludes the Lesson

I'm not trying to take the fun out of your baby classes. Just the opposite! Both music and art release dopamine in the brain so they make the process of learning pleasurable. Education should be fun and engaging and you should absolutely revel in every moment of this special time with your child. But don't sell these experiences short because they are entertaining. They are vital to your child's health and well-being and are setting them up to love learning for the rest of their lives.

So next time you see your children keeping a steady beat to your Spotify station, or scribbling faces in their pasta sauce at dinner, remind yourself, they are not "just playing", they are building their brains!



PHOTOS: PEXELS





# Just Ink About It

Tattoos as a Tribute to the Past  
and Art Form for the Future

*By TianTian Xu*

Would you ever get a tattoo? The idea of puncturing your skin to create intricate designs has been around for thousands of years and ingrained in the traditions of cultures all around the world. But it hasn't always been as socially acceptable as it is today. In fact, in many cultures, they used to signify gang association and crime.

Today, tattoos are a common sight. It can change the way people view you. It's often more than an aesthetic choice; it's a way to pay tribute to the person you were and express who you are now.

We spoke with two parents in Beijing who are both deep in the world of body art as they share their views, advice, and the stories behind their ink.

### Something to Honor a Period of Your Life

My high school, Western Academy of Beijing (WAB), is known as a place that values self-expression. It's not unusual to see teachers – and even students – proudly displaying their tattoos. But for something so personal and obvious, few of us actually bother to ask questions about them.

English teacher David Jordan didn't get his first tattoo until his mid-thirties. It's a traditional Māori tattoo, called a *moko*, which stretches from his shoulder and down his arm.

"As you can imagine," he says, "as a foreigner and someone of European descent, that can be a little problematic. Some might even call it cultural appropriation."

Until you hear the rest of the story.

In 2010, Jordan was living in Christchurch, New Zealand when the city was hit by a massive earthquake. He remembers the aftershocks that kept going and going and the screams of his students as they rushed to get them to safety. "We as a community were completely debilitated," he tells me.

In the wake of the earthquakes, Jordan attended a major community event where a *Kaumātua* (Māori spiritual leader) introduced them to the concept of "*whānau*." In Māori culture, *whānau* means family, and the larger community of people who make home, home.

"*Whānau* looks after *whānau*," he tells me. We're in this together. It was the idea of *whānau* that helped the city and himself get through the disaster.

That's when he decided to get a *moko*, which tells a story of heritage and commitment. He says "It's an expression of your relationship with your spirit and the people around you, [and your ancestry. It's knowing who you are, and where you came from]." Jordan knew that if he were to get it done, he'd have to do it right.

He was conscious of Māori traditions and had multiple discussions with Māori teachers and students on how to do it and whether or not it'd be okay for him to get one done. When he did, he chose the traditional way. Unlike regular tattoo parlors, the artist doesn't sketch the tattoo out. There's no knowing what the finished piece will look like. The artist listens to your story and inks it directly onto the skin.

His tattoo is a tribute to his family history and the sacrifices they made to allow him to leap into the world. Jordan says it's "a story of what makes me, me."

### A Form of Beauty and Self Expression

Belle Gui is a Beijing tattoo artist and mom to a beautiful little boy. She's among the first generation to embrace the novelty since tattooing became socially acceptable in China.

Despite the growing popularity of tattoos, it's still unusual to see someone display as many as she does, all over her arms and legs, on her neck, and down her back. Gui admits she gets a lot of attention for them, though she likes to think it's because people also consider



them beautiful. She doesn't mind their curiosity and says it's normal for people to stare. She'd stare too, if she saw someone else with tattoos like hers. What bothers her is when people quietly judge her out of the corner of their eyes.

Gui got her first tattoo at 18 with her boyfriend. The tattoo in question is a barcode on the nape of her neck with the words "made in China" below it. At the time, she said, it had seemed cool and patriotic. Even though she admitted to considering a cover up tattoo, she does not regret getting it, she just doesn't consider it as "beautiful" anymore. In the end she kept it, after her boyfriend passed away in an accident, as a way to remember him.

When Gui began her career as a tattoo artist in 2007, her parents were very much against it. But after many explanations and discussions, they are now more supportive. She says that her parents are traditional, but as the years go by, she's beginning to see more and more older people and parents come in for tattoos. As a form of art and self-expression, she believes tattooing will only become more popular.

### Advice to Parents and Young People on Getting Tattoos

With the stigma around tattoos decreasing, more and more young people are getting tattoos themselves. Which sparks the question – at what age is it acceptable to get tattoos? And what would you do if your kid wants them?

Jordan says his son already wants tattoos. Granted, he's only three and marveling at the tales his father tells him about the koi fish jumping to become a dragon on his father's leg.

His best advice is to have an honest conversation with your children and listen to *why* they want the tattoo. It's okay to disagree, and like anything else, the child will grow up and one day decide for themselves. He'd much rather the child understands his point of view and feels listened to.

His worry isn't of young people not being mature enough, but the credibility of the artist. If someone is willing to tattoo underaged kids, what other safety steps would they be willing to skip?

According to Jordan, kids don't get enough credit for their ability to make decisions for themselves. He says the moment a young person is able to think of themselves as their own selves, know what they want to do with their own bodies, and acknowledge the sacrifices they will need to make – such as the pain, time, money, and the possibility of regret – he would consider them ready.

Similarly, Gui says she'll definitely support her son if he grows up to want tattoos. But only if she gets to give him his first one. After that, she'll recommend him tattoo artists based on his personal style and preference. She also discourages getting tattoos before 18, but not for the same reasons as Jordan. A child may not have fully developed their own sense of beauty yet and they should consider all options and learn as much as they can about tattoos first. After all, it's a lifetime commitment.











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# On Pointe

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## Building Character and Commitment Through Dance

*By Dorothy Asideu and Mina Yan*

I'm a firm believer that dancing is inherently in our nature. Babies start moving to the beat before they can even walk properly, and as adults, there's an overwhelming urge to do a little victory dance whenever we find out a piece of good news.

But putting aside the latest social media dance challenge trends for a hot second, how does growing up with traditional dance classes like ballet help you in everyday life? After all, not everyone wants or can become prima ballerinas.

My first experience with ballet was in middle school. I had only focused on music before then and was an introvert all my life, so had the worst case of stage fright. Dancing helped me overcome that. I took ballet, tap, jazz, hip hop, and modern dance; it helped me develop an appreciation for my own body and discover

all the ways I could move that, as odd as it sounds, I wasn't aware of before. Of all the forms of dance classes I took, the one that was most impactful was ballet. I loved the discipline and precision that ballet required, how it made me physically push myself to my limits, and how the elegance and grace of ballet couldn't help but spill into my everyday life.

In Beijing there are tons of hip hop dance studios, but it's great to see that kids still pursue their love for traditional ballet. One of the most popular studios amongst ballerinas is Renee International Arts Center founded by Renee Chan, a dancer since the age of five. At 12, she entered the PLA Arts Academy where the teachers were harsh, but passionate and dedicated to their students. This led to developing her lifelong passion for dance and the launch of her school in 2011.

While it's not difficult to find a dance studio close to your home in Beijing, it seems that Renee International Arts Center's students focus on a different path — a professional one. According to Chan, "In 2014, we adopted the Royal Academy of Dance's (RAD) ballet exam syllabus in our school. The syllabus is built upon a century of research and refinement and as a RAD certified teacher I know what kind of training a teacher must go through before he or she can be certified. In the same year, we started to hire internationally and built a core faculty team of certified teachers." They choreograph shows for their students, host annual showcases where their students have performed everything from last year's "La Fille Mal Gardée," "Alice in Wonderland," "Narnia," "Sleeping Beauty," to "The Nutcracker."

"We also encourage our students to par-

ticipate in international dance competitions. We have participated in the Youth American Grand Prix (YAGP), Asian Grand Prix (AGP), Global Dance Challenge (GDC), and the Hong Kong Challenge Cup.” Chan tells *beijingkids*. “Competitions instill in students to strive for excellence. They also learn modesty and respect, as no one is perfect, and they begin to appreciate the importance of hard work and self-discipline.”

But what if you don’t want to pursue ballet as a career in the future? There are many reasons for falling in love with ballet at a young age. For some it’s beautiful tutus and for others it’s the elegance and grace of professional ballerinas that captivated their young hearts. We chatted with three students from Beijing’s international schools who, coincidentally, are all dance students at Renee International Arts Center.

Trinity Li, a student at Western Academy of Beijing (WAB), has been dancing for eight years. “It helps with your posture and sometimes makes you better at using facial expression and body expression. Dancing also gives you better musical apprehension. It gives you better coordination than an average person and helps you learn movements faster in other dance types and also in sports such as taekwondo and kung fu,” says Li.

Kate Yin, a 16-year-old student at International School of Beijing (ISB), has been dancing since she was just five years old. With over 10 years of dance experience under her belt, this high school student loves everything about dance. “There are so many reasons why I love to dance. First of all, I met some of my closest friends through dance, and since we go to different schools, the only chance I could see them would be having dance classes with them.” Yin explains. “Secondly, since I’ve

been dancing for so long, it has sort of just become a habit of mine. It feels weird not doing it. Going to dance classes could also serve as a temporary relief or escape from homework. And lastly, and most importantly, I feel like I’m a different person when I dance. I would consider myself an introvert, and I used to be really really shy. But when I dance, I don’t know why — I just feel so much more confident. It’s a really magical feeling.” And it seems the sense of friendship and sisterly bond isn’t a unique experience. According to Victoria Fang, a student at Dulwich College Beijing, “The dance community here (as cheesy as it sounds) has really become a second family because we spend so much time together each week. I’ve known the people I dance with longer than most, if not all, of my friends at school. Dancing with them makes dancing worthwhile.”

But what about in other aspects of life? Aside from the obvious physical fitness aspect it also teaches kids discipline. “To keep up the pace of dance classes week in and week out, the children will develop self-discipline. To appreciate the hard work and trust that their teachers invest in them, the children learn re-

spect. Being part of a group activity — such as learning a dance routine for a show or competition — promotes the importance of teamwork,” says Chan. Aside from discipline, it also teaches kids that it’s okay to fail. No one is great at everything their first time. “Children learn to accept their vulnerability; that it is okay not to be able to do everything the first time and that you should feel confident enough to ask for help, either from the teacher or a peer. They also learn to support and help one another, as they all must work together to be successful.” Chan explains. And she’s right. “People in the dance community can

be really critical and straightforward when it comes to your performance and techniques; therefore, dance has certainly taught me to be thick-skinned,” Yin tells us. “The life skills dance instills are invaluable. It teaches discipline, respect, sportsmanship, control, organization, I could go on and on... it’s helped me shape so much of who I am, whether I realize it or not,” adds Fang.

Chan believes that many parents encourage their kids to take dance classes to improve their posture and confidence. Some hope to help their child improve their flexibility and coordination. But the main reason that kids start ballet is genuine interest in this beautiful and classic form of art. For the few who live for the spotlight of center stage, “Passion and commitment go hand-in-hand and they are the key to pursue dance as a career. If you have a passion for dance and want to pursue it as a career, you should commit to it and never let that fire and passion die. Studying dance is hard work. I believe all our students know very well that they not only have to keep coming to class to learn from the teachers, but they also need to take their teachers’ corrections and guidance and keep practicing on their own. It is a passion that fuels the commitment to hard work, that makes it possible and sustainable.” says Chan.



Victoria Fang



Kate Yin



# FUN, DANCE, FITNESS, AND AFROBEATS

One Teen Tests Out the New Jindafit BANA

By Eloise Wester



► Whenever we make a health-related resolution that involves exercise, one of the biggest reasons we don't follow through is that, well, we get bored. But there's one guy in Beijing who's been making fitness fun for grownups since 2005 and recently adapted his workout to include kids.

Founded in Beijing in 2005, D'Jack Tchinda created Jindafit, a High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) workout incorporated into African movements and music. A great way to introduce African music and dance to the Beijing community, it not only educates people, but provides a judgment-free space to have fun, exercise, and relax with fun modern music originating from places all around Africa. With their interesting backstory, ambitious goals, and friendly yet professional instructors, Jindafit is a great program to check out if you want to let go of your worries and enjoy yourself with others.

"I would like to say that there is a difference between African dance and African dance workouts. Jindafit is an African dance workout" Tchinda tells *beijingkids*, "I'm a fitness instruc-

tor, so I create and instruct in Jindafit with the fitness aspect of it in my mind." Jindafit incorporates parts of the body that helps posture and also a HIIT, made to ensure that the training burns fat during and after the workout. The playlists are different every time, based on how advanced the students are, as well as the songs. "I don't just choose music. Music has to speak to me. People sometimes listen to a popular Afrobeats song and think that I have to use it. If the music doesn't speak to me, I don't use it." Tchinda also mentioned that he chooses the songs if he has ideas on how to choreograph them. "Each move that I choreograph has a meaning behind it."

Tchinda began dancing at the young age of five. Being a regular DJ, he had a great experience with music, rhythm, and had also been around fitness his whole life, providing him with the perfect background for creating something like Jindafit, combining all three. The inspiration came when he had walked into a step class, looking for an experience that was different from his normal scene. He walked in with high hopes, hoping for a mentor who could introduce him to step and give him guidance, but came out of the class disappointed. The teacher hadn't given him an ounce of attention. The trainer was only focused on the technical aspect of the class. "I went home that day and thought to myself; there must be something better out there. I want to create something where coaches will care about teaching students, instead of just focusing on themselves." Says Tchinda. And soon enough, Jindafit was created.

Every company faces many difficulties, but the biggest one that Tchinda faced when he started Jindafit is different from others. "Nowadays it's easier because people are more familiar with African dance. But when I first started Jindafit, people wouldn't look at me or take me seriously when I told them that I was teaching African dance fitness. Nobody was interested." But now, as African dance and music become more mainstream, it's become easier for Jindafit to attract more customers. And he's been able to teach a lot in Beijing whether it's in hotels, gyms, or other various spaces, but that was before COVID-19 struck. During COVID-19, he hasn't been able to train

as much. In fact, because of that, Tchinda's goal for Jindafit's development this year is to expand as much as possible in Beijing. He says that he wants to get out of the COVID-19 period with vengeance.

Tchinda's main motivation is to create the kids' program of Jindafit, Jindafit BANA. Tchinda wants to reach everyone and everything with Jindafit. Jindafit and Jindafit BANA are two different programs. Tchinda teamed up with Alessia Chizzoniti who now teaches the Jindafit BANA classes. Before meeting Chizzoniti, Tchinda admits "if a kid freaked out, I wouldn't know what to do!" But Chizzoniti, a mother of three, educator, and doula is the perfect person for the job. Chizzoniti admits that "I went in dreading the class, but when I finished, I thought to myself: why didn't I try this before!" She and Tchinda created Jindafit BANA together, with the goal in mind of introducing African culture to kids from six years old and up!

Jindafit BANA is fun! There were many different stories relating to the different dance moves and beats/music, but I have to admit that I was slightly lost, as this was my first time participating. I still had a great time listening to the catchy afro beats that Chizzoniti played while dancing. The choreography was fun, with moves that were easy to remember (especially with the explanations for movements before we started dancing) and I felt like I got a nice workout without being exhausted. I was fairly surprised about how relaxed and fun the music and dance moves were.

Overall, Jindafit BANA is a great way for kids aged six and up to be more culturally aware while having fun and staying healthy. As a person who doesn't know much about Africa and its culture, I thought this was a great chance to understand it better while having fun.

**Get in touch with Jindafit**

**Email:** [alessia@jindafitness.com](mailto:alessia@jindafitness.com)

**Website:** [www.jindafitness.com](http://www.jindafitness.com)

**WeChat:** [alessia\\_chizzoniti](#)

# SCHOOL NEWS



## YCIS Beijing Celebrated the School's 25th Anniversary

Yew Chung International School of Beijing is slated to host its 25th-anniversary celebrations on Oct 9 in conjunction with the school's Founder's Day. The day is expected to be celebrated with great pomp and color to mark a quarter-century of excellence for students and parents in Beijing and the anticipation of many more years to come.



## AISB- Hope International Welcomes New Director of Admissions

AISB - Hope International welcomes Ms. Sara Bawulski as the new Director of Admissions. Bawulski is originally from the US and has extensive experience in international education and enrollment management. She has lived and worked in the US, Scotland, Lithuania, and China. She enjoys hiking and exploring Beijing with her husband and two daughters.



## Congratulations to Zheng Qian and Zhang Ruoming of Beijing Aidi School on being admitted to Cambridge University

Zheng Qian and Zhang Ruoming from Beijing Aidi School have been officially admitted to Cambridge University. The recognition of their estimated performance by the University of Cambridge examination and Assessment Department confirms the university's affirmation of Aidi's teaching quality and achievements over the years, which gives a strong boost to the teachers and students of Beijing Aidi School to continue to strive for the top universities in the world.



## Harrow Beijing Announces New Head of School

Harrow Beijing (HBJ) is pleased to announce the appointment of Mrs. Rachel Dent as the new Head of School. With 27 years of experience in education, Mrs. Dent joins Harrow Beijing from the renowned Abbey School in Reading, UK, where she served as the Headmistress for six years.



## Western Academy of Beijing Welcomes New Faculty Member

Western Academy of Beijing is pleased to welcome our first Head of Educational Technology, Kevin Crouch. Crouch believes EdTech is the key to achieving learning innovations that challenge learners at the "just right" level and help them succeed. He takes on a role aimed at driving WAB's vision for personalized learning ensuring that all stakeholders have the right tools to make learning effective and impactful.



The Circuit is a chance to check out what's happening in the Beijing community. Want to see your event on these pages?



#### Be a "POWER Learner" with the Learning Frontier

On Sep 11, nearly 80 parents attended a workshop themed on "Building productive learners" held by the member institution of YueCheng Education — the Learning Frontier. Having realized how crucial executive functioning skills are for a student's success, the Learning Frontier specialists have developed a comprehensive program to target these important skills and will be launching the first "POWER Learner" executive functioning group this October.



#### Happy Teachers' Day at Journey Academy (JA)

Sep 10 was Teachers' Day, and on this special day every year, JA prepared flowers and cakes for their fabulous teaching staff, while JA Kids send their handmade greeting cards to their loving teachers. Thank you to all the teachers who have inspired children to grow up confidently in their life journey.





Send an email with the date of your event, a brief description, and high-resolution photos (at least 1MB each) to [magazine@beijing-kids.com](mailto:magazine@beijing-kids.com)



### New Beginnings at the New Campus for Beijing World Youth Academy (BWYA)

At the start of this new term and new year, BWYA is very proud to announce the opening of its new unified campus. With excellent academic, sporting, and extra-curricular facilities, it is sure to be a place where students go from strength to strength, in all their schooling experiences.



### 3e Back to School Celebrations

3e International School celebrated the return of all grades to their Early Years and Elementary campuses, during the week of Sep 7 - 14. All new and returning children were welcomed with anticipation and happiness as excitement and laughter filled 3e's classrooms, corridors, and playgrounds once again.







### Montessori School Beijing (MSB) Kickstarts 2020-2021

MSB is thrilled to welcome back their middle school students on Tuesday, Sep 1 as it kicked off the new school year. Following stringent safety and health protocols the majority of the faculty members have resumed work on campus and online classes also began at the same time for lower grades and those who have not returned to China. MSB is striving to help teachers overseas come back as soon as possible and to provide a fun, engaging, and meaningful start to the academic year even if some of their students are having online classes.



### International School of Beijing Opens Its Doors on Its 40th Year

ISB was overjoyed to welcome all grade levels back on campus in Sep for the 2020-2021 school year – a year like no other that has come before it. The first international school in Beijing recently unveiled stunning new facilities to provide challenging and even more joyful learning and will hold a number of celebratory activities to mark its 40th year!







### All Students Back on BSB Campus!


Students at The British School of Beijing (BSB) Shunyi who are in Beijing have all returned to campus. Everyone is glad to see their classmates and teachers and really enjoy learning together in the classrooms again!



### BES Designing Community Weeks — A New Journey of Growth at Beijing Enlighten School

The start of the new school year after the epidemic is full of special meaning and ritual for every teacher, student and family. From Sep 1 to 11, all teachers and students of Beijing Enlighten School kicked off the new school year with the implementation of the "Designing Community Weeks" series of courses, while opening the new era of this brand-new bilingual school.





**Our favorite place to hang out in Beijing is** Parkview Green because of the amazing art sculptures as well as the restaurants, entertainment, and shops.

**Mom's favorite thing about Beijing is** having the imperial parks and cultural landmarks all around the city, like Beihai Park, the Summer Palace, the Temple of Heaven, and the Forbidden City.

**Mom's favorite restaurant is** the Summer Palace restaurant at China World Hotel.

**Megan's favorite local dish is** *tangyuan* – glutinous rice balls with different flavored fillings.

**Megan, what do you love the most about your mom?** "I love how my mum supports me throughout everything and helps me achieve my goals I set for myself."

**Sylvia, what do you admire the most about Megan?** "I admire how Megan is able to get along with everyone and the way she receives so much love from the people around her."

**Mom's favorite thing to do to unwind and destress is** having mother and daughter massages at Bodhi Therapeutic Retreat.

**The one thing we can't live without is** music. We literally have a speaker in every room ready to blast music every hour of the day.

**Megan's favorite thing about Beijing is** that there's such a wide range of activities so she's never bored. One of her favorite things is going to escape rooms with friends.

**Mom's best memory of Beijing is** growing up in the *hutong* when the typical transport was a bicycle. As a born and raised Beijinger, she loved growing up in such a friendly atmosphere during a simpler time.

**Our favorite thing to do together is** going to watch West End shows whenever they are on tour in Beijing. Megan has always had an interest in the performing arts. Although the COVID-19 has put a stop to that for the moment, we can't wait for them to be back on.

**Our favorite mother-daughter activity is** to attend flower-arranging lessons where we get different types of flowers each time to pot and take home. We also love using the public bicycles to cycle to locations because it's such a great way to exercise on the go.

## Family Favorites!

*Photography by Uni You*

**M**om Sylvia Wei is a true Beijinger who remembers growing up in our beloved city when it was a much quieter and simpler place. After living and working in London for many years, she now looks after her daughter Megan Derret full time and does property investment in her spare time. Megan is currently a Year-10 student at Dulwich College Beijing.



# 中国女性 WOMEN

《中国女性(中文海外版)》是由全国妇联主管、全国妇联网络信息传播中心(中国妇女外文期刊社)主办并出版的国家级女性主流刊物。创刊于2001年,16开本全彩印刷,发行几十个国家和地区以及国内大中小城市。

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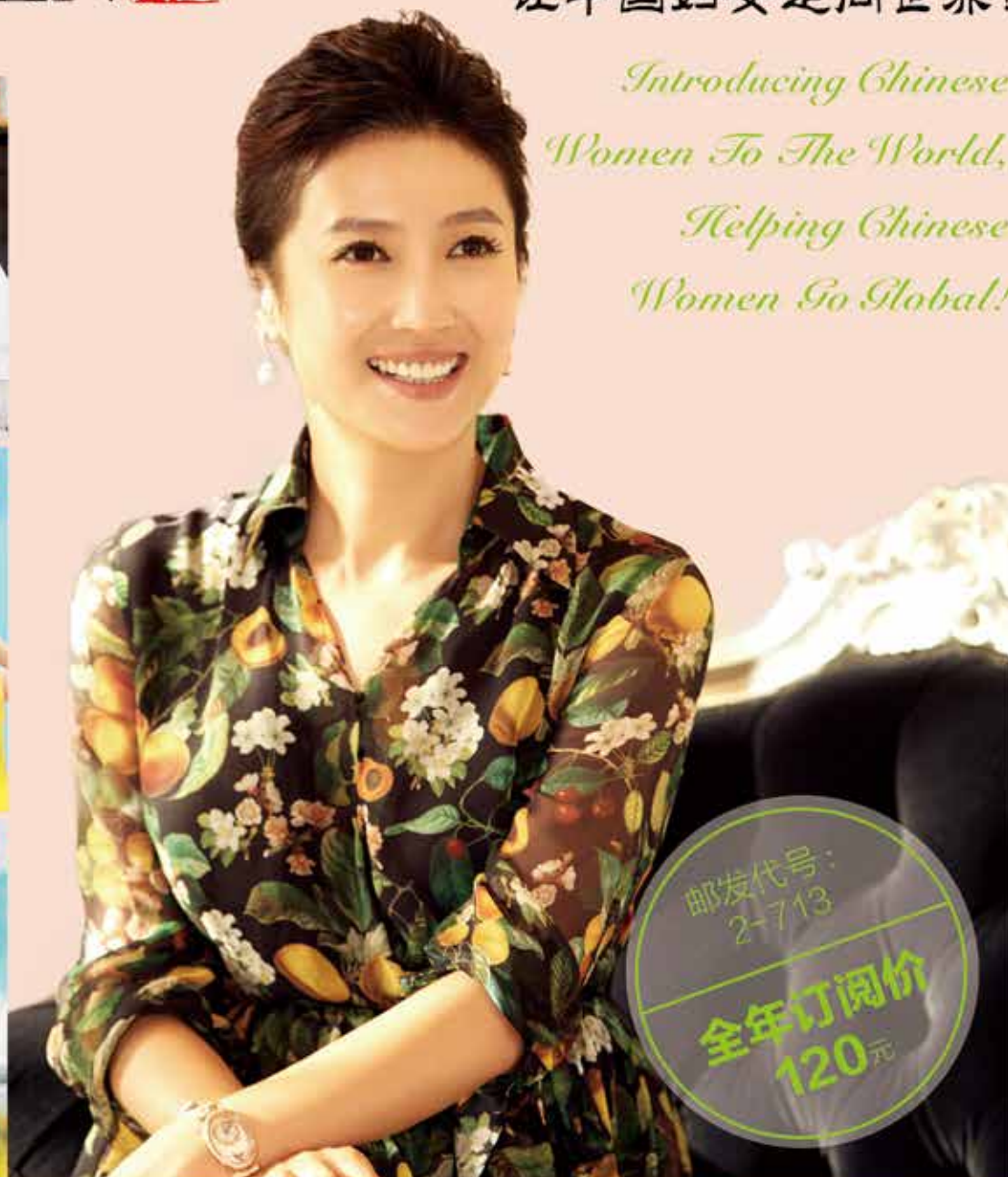
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