Wenwen Zhu

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Wenwen Zhu is a Chicago-based **animator** and **illustrator** whose practice blends surrealism, wabi-sabi philosophy, and quiet storytelling. Working across 3D animation and drawing, she creates emotionally resonant images that invite contemplation through subtle gestures, atmospheric compositions, and metaphoric detail. **Her practice explores the delicate relationship between the individual, society, and the natural world through a visual language rooted in ambiguity, restraint, and poetic metaphor.** Embracing imperfection and open-endedness, her work foregrounds mood and intuition over exposition, crafting immersive worlds where meaning emerges gradually, rather than being directly stated.

Education

Master of Fine Arts, Film, Video, New Media & Animation

School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL
August 2021 - Dec 2024

Bachelor of Fine Arts, Illustration

School of Visual Arts, New York, NY,
August 2017 - May 2021

Key Skills

- *Maya: Modeling/ Rigging/3D Animation/Mocap*
- *Sound Software: Logic Pro*
- *Unity: 3D game*
- *Adobe Substance 3D Painter*
- *Adobe Premiere*
- *After Effects: Motion Graphic*
- *Adobe Suite*
- *Printing: Etching/Silkscreen*

Professional Experience

Independent Animation Director
August 2022 – Jan 2025

- *Directed and produced a 12-minute 3D animated short film, overseeing all stages from concept development to final post-production. Techniques included scriptwriting, character animation, and motion capture. Official selection at Annecy 2025 and Zagreb 2025.*

Freelance Design
Illustrator & Graphic Designer
August 2017 - Present

Clients:
- *Circle Q LLC. Pattern, pattern design. circleqessentials.com*
- *Daifuku Ramen, Branding design. daifukuchicago.com*
- *JOOJUO OFFICAL, Branding design. Online Shop*
- *Cosme, editorial illustration, 2021 09/2022 09*
- *Fiverr, editorial illustration. Support Asian Communities*
- *Shyly Sheep, Branding design.*

Art Teacher & Artist Assistant
School of the Art Institute of Chicago
August 2022 - Present

- *In motion design AE course and 3D advanced class, assisted teachers with instruction andprovide technology demos and support students.*
- *In Unity class, provided coding and technology supports.*

Awards and Honors

Screening:

2025 Curated Screening: Pollen: Video Spells, LEIMAY at CAVE (White Studio, 58 Grand St., Brooklyn)
2025 Oak Cliff Film Festival, Animated Short, TX, US.
2025 USA Film Festival, U.S. and International Short Films - Experimental. TX, US.
2025 Annecy International Animation Film Festival, France.
2025 Animanifest Zagreb, Croatia.
2024 Innovative Film Festival West Hollywood, West Hollywood, CA, US.
2024 Black Owl Film Festival, Bodrum, MuglaTurkey.
2024 Belgrade International Film Festival, Tuckwood Cineplex, Serbia.
2024 Canada China International Film Festival, Montréal, Québec, Canada.
2024 The Dreamers Film Festival, in Dumbo, Brooklyn, US.
2024 Asian Independent Film Festival, Indian Council For Cultural Relations, India.
2024 4theatre selection. Online Screening.
2024 Bestlov Film Festival. Online Screening.
2023 Imagina AniFest, official selection, Queens Library, New York NY, US.
2023 Snow Leopard Film Festival (WLIFF), Stockholm, Sweden.
2023 Silver Wings International Film Festival. West Bengal.
2023 The Best Short, ICE CINEFEST. Cincinnati, OH, US.
2023 Chicago International Indie Film Festival, Chicago IL, US.
2023 Short Stop International Film Festival, Iasi, Romania.

Awards:

2025 Hermes Creative Awards, Gold Winner — Print Media | Design: Branded Graphics Suite, USA
2025 MUSE Creative Awards, Gold Winner — Corporate Identity: Brand Identity, USA
2025 MUSE Creative Awards, Silver Winner — Corporate Identity: Print Collateral (NEW), USA
2025 American Illustration 44 CHOSEN Winner, New York, US.
2024 Asian Independent Film Festival, Experimental Film winner. Indian Council For Cultural Relations, India.
2024 The Dreamers Film Festival, Experimental Film winner, in Dumbo, Brooklyn, US.
2024 International Gold Awards, Experimental Film winner, New York, US.
2024 Milan Gold Awards, Experimental Film winner, Milan, Italy.
2024 New York Movie Awards, Experimental Film winner, New York, US.
2024 London Movie Awards, London, UK.
2024 Snow Leopard Film Festival (WLIFF) Best Experimental Film Quarter-Finalist. Stockholm, Sweden.
2024 8 & Halfilm Experimental Film Awards winner, Rome.
2023 Silver Wings International Film Festival, Women's Films winner. West Bengal.
2023 The Best Short, ICE CINEFEST. Cincinnati, OH, US.

Exhibitions:

2025 "Blue Utopia," Solo Exhibition, Blue Art Gallery, Hefei, China (Sep 20–Nov 4, 2025)
2025 "Spider," Official Selection, "Exquisite Corpse," Millennium Film Workshop, Brooklyn, New York
2025 "Quantum Intimacies," Official Selection, Millennium Film Workshop, Brooklyn, New York
2025 "Silent Interference," Official Selection, Turtle Chamber Projects, Taoyuan, Taiwan
2025 "The Doll Kiln," Official Selection, A.rt Experience Video Art Night, Dallas, Texas
2025 The Flow, Think-1 Museum, Little Big Secrets, Shanghai, China.
2023 The Flow, Youth Art Exhibition, Hefei, China.
2021 "SVA Solidarity" exhibition, SVA Gallery, New York.
2021 World Illustration Awards/Long list.
2020 Jack Endewelt Memorial Award, School of Visual Arts, New York.
2020 "Man-Made Monsters" exhibition, SVA Chelsea Gallery, New York.
2020 "Mid-Autumn" exhibition, ISO Gallery, New York.

Interviews

- *2025 Upcoming: https://design.museaward.com/winner-interview.php?page=14*
- *2025 Upcoming: https://www.digitalartsblog.com/*
- *2025 “Blue Utopia Explores the Secret of Blue,” Feature, Hefei Evening News, Hefei, China.*
- *2025 Visualatelier8 Interview*
- *2024 London Movie Rewards Interview*
- *2024 International Gold Awards New York*
- *2024 SAIC EXTV INTERVIEW.*
- *2021 Itsnicethat: Wenwen Zhu on the poetic and meditative parts of illustration*
- *2021 NY1:SVA art exhibition support Asian and Asian-American communities at school*