

Xinxin Li

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RESEARCH PROFILE

Graduate student in the University of Toronto's combined Master of Information and Master of Museum Studies program, with an MFA in Industrial Design. Research interests focus on how visitors interpret cultural information through museum spaces, objects, and sensory encounters, and how accessibility and curatorial choices shape these experiences.

EDUCATION

University of Toronto

2024–2027 (expected)

Master of Information (MI) and Master of Museum Studies (MMSt)

Combined Degree Program, MI concentration: User Experience Design

Faculty of Information, Toronto, ON

Rochester Institute of Technology

2022–2024

Master of Fine Arts (MFA), Industrial Design

College of Art and Design, Rochester, NY

Savannah College of Art and Design

2018–2022

Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA), Industrial Design

School of Design, Savannah, GA

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

MFA Thesis

2023–2024

Pawssenger - Enhance the experience of flying with pets

Rochester Institute of Technology | Advisor: Stan Rickel, Lorraine Justice

- Conducted user interviews, secondary research, and journey mapping to investigate safety, comfort, mobility, and monitoring challenges in long-distance pet air travel.
- Translated research findings into 35+ concepts and conducted ergonomic and spatial simulations using Boeing 777 seating constraints to inform product and aircraft-integration requirements.
- Built and iteratively evaluated physical prototypes, developing a multifunctional expandable carrier system designed around pet welfare, owner experience, and different travel scenarios.

MFA thesis available in RIT Scholar Works: repository.rit.edu/theses/11817

3D Design Assistant

2023–2024

Image Permanence Institute, RIT, Rochester, NY

- Collaborated with museum conservators and researchers to design and produce a 3D-printed study collection for teaching and collections research.
- Designed test models for multiple 3D printing materials, adapting geometry for printability and sectioning into smaller test specimens.
- Coordinated printing across departments and assembled models in different materials into a research sample collection.
- Designed protective packaging tailored to model dimensions to prevent damage during transportation, with handling and storage considerations.

SELECTED ACADEMIC PROJECTS

DH@UofT Website Redesign

2026

UX capstone project, INF2192, University of Toronto

- Contributed to a team study using six user interviews, six card sorting, and thirteen task-based usability tests to examine how users found people and resources on the DH@UofT website.
- Identified problems with homepage navigation, the distinction between Learning and Labs, and searches for people; used findings to inform proposed navigation and content organisation.

Royal Ontario Museum Accessibility Audit and Action Plan

2026

Course project, MSL2306, University of Toronto

- Assessed physical, sensory, and interpretive accessibility at the Royal Ontario Museum, including the Bees exhibition, with attention to wayfinding, lighting, seating information, labels, and interactive controls.
- Documented access barriers alongside tactile models and Braille provision, and developed recommendations for clearer orientation and more accessible exhibition interpretation.

Women's Experiences in Public Fitness Spaces

2025

Research methods course project, INF2169, University of Toronto

- Contributed to a mixed-methods study of barriers to women's participation in public fitness spaces, using semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire (n=10 each).
- Used thematic analysis and descriptive statistics to inform recommendations for equipment access, instructional guidance, and social comfort.

Pop-up Exhibition Project

2025

Minds vs. Machines: Which One Was AI?

Course project, Museums and Cultural Heritage, University of Toronto

- Co-curated a one-week pop-up exhibition exploring AI, authorship, and interpretive authority in museums.
- Designed balanced visual layouts for human-authored and AI-generated content to minimize visual cues that could influence visitors' authorship judgments.

UX Research and Design Project

2024

Time to do

Group course project, Fundamentals of User Experience, University of Toronto

- Conducted user interviews (n=2) and usability testing (n=3) to inform an app concept integrating task management and calendar scheduling.
- Led team ideation and Figma wireframing, translating research findings into prioritised features, user flows, and interface refinements.

TEACHING AND FACILITATION

Facilitator

2024.9-2024.11

Steamoji, Richmond Hill, ON

- Facilitated hands-on STEAM projects in 3D printing, laser cutting, and programming for young learners in a gamified environment.
- Provided individualised guidance to support problem-solving, collaboration, and project completion; maintained workshop equipment and promoted safe tool use.

ADDITIONAL DESIGN EXPERIENCE

Design Assistant

2020–2021

LongYuxuan Tea Boutique, Taiyuan, China

- Redesigned visual branding and promotional materials using Adobe Creative Suite, incorporating client feedback from concept through final refinement.

AWARDS AND HONOURS

IDSA Student Merit Award — GSMA Northeast District Finalist

2024

Muse Design Award — Gold Winner

2023

International Design Award — Bronze in Household Appliances

2023

European Product Design Award — Honorable Mention

2023

RESEARCH METHODS AND SKILLS

Research methods: Semi-structured interviews; qualitative synthesis; affinity diagramming; card sorting; journey mapping; usability testing; accessibility evaluation; content audit.

Design: Storyboarding; wireframing; low- and high-fidelity prototyping; rapid physical prototyping.

Digital tools: Figma; Miro; Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop and InDesign; Rhino; Fusion 360; SolidWorks; KeyShot; Autodesk Netfabb.

Fabrication: 3D printing; CNC machining; woodworking; soft fabrication and sewing.

Languages: Mandarin (native); English (fluent); French (basic); Thai (basic).