Wenhao ZHU

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RESEARCH INTERESTS

Human–AI interaction, embodied AI and social robots, immersive (XR) systems, technology for well-being

EDUCATION

Computational Media and Arts Thrust | HKUST (Guangzhou) *Guangzhou, China*
Master of Fine Arts in Computational Arts *Sept 2026–Present*

- Current courses: Human-Centric Design for Embodied AI; Social Robots.

School of Design | Jiangnan University *Wuxi, China*
Bachelor of Arts *Sept 2020–Jun 2024*

- Majored in Product Design
- Comprehensive Third-Class Scholarship (Top 12%, University Level, 2021-2022)
- Relevant Courses: Interaction Design Basics, User Research and Product Definition, Design Psychology, Ergonomics, Digital Morphology Research, Interdisciplinary Design Practice

RESEARCH & PROJECTS

Who's in Control? | Handoff Cues in Human-to-AI Robot Control *Research Proposal*
Course Project, Human-Centric Design for Embodied AI *Fall 2026*

- With two classmates, proposed a study of how a handoff cue (a pause, a blue-to-amber status light and a spoken notice) changes collaborators' checking behavior and performance trust when a remote operator hands an embodied agent over to AI.
- Designed a five-phase VR study (cue vs. no cue, a planted AI error, then interviews and thematic analysis) and made a 2:54 storyboard video generated in code, citing 12 papers. The study has not been run yet.

Beyond a Single Body | Multi-Embodiment Companion Robot *Prototype Stage*
Course Project, Social Robots *Fall 2026*

- With a team of five, designing a companion that moves between a desktop wheeled robot for work and an expressive robot for rest, sharing its name, voice, habits and consented memory so it still feels like the same partner.
- Responsible for interaction design and the desktop robot's behavior in the work scenario. The team's research-through-design plan pairs formative interviews and enactments (8 adults) with a two-visit evaluation (16 participants).

AI 爱 | Design Research on Emotional Help-Seeking *Needs Analysis*
Independent Research *2025–Present*

- Asks why people under emotional stress often fail to reach the right help. Interviewed six groups along the help-seeking path, from people seeking help and their families to counselors and psychiatrists, after consulting a psychology professor on question safety and ethics.
- Mapped the help-seeking path and identified mismatch (comfort without the right support) as a barrier alongside stigma and scarcity; started early form and hardware explorations for a desktop device.

Lifeweaver | Immersive Earthquake-Preparedness Product Service System *Good Grade*
Graduation Project (Thesis) *Nov 2023–Jun 2024*

- Surveyed 112 teachers and students and interviewed 5 in depth, finding that fear in the moment, not only a lack of skills, keeps people from acting.
- Built an interactive earthquake-drill level in Unreal Engine 5 (Blueprints, MetaHuman, Chaos physics) with over ten functional systems, including narration, props and weather.
- Designed a physical terminal with sensory feedback; modeled and simulated its six motion axes in SolidWorks, then 3D-printed and tested them.
- Ran 20+ user tests in a high-pressure simulated setting and iterated on the design, such as making interaction cues easier to spot.

Soulmusic | An AI-driven Music Interaction App Based on AR *National 2nd Prize*
Competition Project *Mar 2022–Sep 2022*

- Led a team in the 2022 Mobile Application Innovation Contest (Zhejiang University & Apple), placing in the top 1% of 2,287 teams; contributed 70% of the work across design, development and liaison with Apple.
- Designed the UX/UI and developed the app in Xcode with SwiftUI, using CoreML and MusicKit.

EXPERIENCE

Product Designer | Chengdu Advanced Power Semiconductor Co., Ltd. *Chengdu, China*
Internship *Jan 2024–Mar 2024*

- Benchmarked 20+ competing discrete devices and redesigned packaging with AutoCAD, SolidWorks/Ansys finite element analysis and Moldflow simulation, improving material use by 10% and heat dissipation by 8%.

Product Designer | Mingzhi Energy Technology Co., Ltd. *Wuxi, China*
Internship *Jun 2023–Jul 2023*

- Led a team refining a micro wind-power concept into three prototypes and presented the findings to senior management.

AWARDS & HONORS

- **Excellent Work Award**, China Stationery Design Competition, China Industrial Design Association *May 2023*
- **National Second Prize**, Mobile Application Innovation Contest, Zhejiang University & Apple *Sep 2022*
- **First Prize (East China Region)**, Mobile Application Innovation Contest, Zhejiang University & Apple *Aug 2022*
- **National Second Prize**, Freshippo Creative Design Competition, Alibaba & UI China *Nov 2021*

SKILLS & INTERESTS

- **Language Skills:** Chinese (native), English (C1; IELTS: 7.0).
- **Prototyping & Development:** Unreal Engine 5 (Blueprints), Swift/SwiftUI, Arduino/C++, SolidWorks, Rhino, Grasshopper; web prototyping with AI coding tools (Next.js, Supabase, LLM APIs), e.g. the LLM chat agent on my portfolio site.
- **Design Tools:** Figma, KeyShot, AutoCAD, Photoshop, After Effects.
- **Research Methods:** Questionnaires, in-depth interviews, user testing, personas, journey mapping, study design.
- **Interests:** Exploring new music genres, creative photography, technology exploration, and online gaming.