

"Create an Art Space Offering Trial-and-Error Opportunities"



By Tang Shunjia

After lunch on a weekday, Ms. Xu, a local citizen, went out for a walk, but she "ran into" a MARS LAB near her company. Upon entry into the venue, she fell in love with the work "Hope" at the first sight. As a staff member of a design company, art is Ms. Xu's job and her hobby. Ms. Xu told the reporter that she was immediately attracted by the novel painting style and vibrancy after strolling to the MARS LAB. "This painting seems to be the author's graffiti, but it actually contains infinite vitality. What on earth are those eyes staring at? It's worth thinking about."

In the depths of the scarlet jun-

gle, a tiger was driving a tiger-striped sedan, looking ahead with a searchlight; under the blue undersea world, swarms of jellyfish wander gracefully, emitting bright and colorful light ...

In February this year, MARS LAB opened for visitors on Jinjia Road, a branch of Daxue Road. This is a three-story building with a unique name and trendy appearance. The exterior wall is mainly in cyan blue, with a huge exhibition poster hanging on it. The interior space is not large, but the dome is high and brightly lit. Many works of art representing the power of youth are on display. In the afternoon, the venue welcomes many art lovers.

Different works of art, including planar paintings, small installations,

and even a wall painting occupying half of a ceramic tiled wall, are presented in their unique ways. Different Slogans are seen everywhere, saying "Go where the wind blows", "It's not that I catch fish, it's the fish that catches me", or "I have a triple personality, so forgive me." Those imaginative and creative works of art, which involve the integration of virtuality with reality and combination of the present and the future, provide much food for thought for the viewers.

On February 18, MARS LAB launched its first event, the "Trendy Art and Digital Collectible Experience Program" digital collectible exhibition. With the theme of "Release", 19 artists from all over the country

were invited to create 57 pieces of digital art for the purpose of initiating the dialogue between art and soul.

The exhibition is divided into three floors, bringing together art works of different styles, including healing, cute pets, awesome, futuristic, and girlish.

According to Ms. Xu, the show presented all artistic styles, including punk, girlish and abstract. "It's great fun to look around."

The Graduates Art Fair ("GAF"), founded in 2012, is currently the largest platform for young artists in China. MARS LAB is a trend incubation base, which is a major project of GAF this year. MARS LAB is a platform that provides experimental opportunities for young artists to showcase their practices and encourage them to break the cycle and mingle with various business forms and create cross-over items enabling urban development, including cultural and creative products, trendy toys, foods and fashion brands.

There was a creation with a red body, long rabbit ears. With its face like a computer screen, this creation gives off blue light in a straight line ...

This is "Rabbit Yizai", a virtual IP created by the post-90s young artist Liu Xiaojun. It is also a metaverse brand that is now being incubated by GAF. The Chinese character "Yi" (i.e., "one" in English) originates from the Taoist thought that "all things of the world originate from one life". Rabbit Yizai sometimes meditates with hands laced on its knees, and it sometimes loiters away. This strikes a chord with many young people nowadays.

"A host of young artists represented by Liu Xiaojun are rather confused after their graduation. They

do not know what they should do. We hope that this space can give everyone a chance to try out new ideas. We will provide targeted suggestions to young artists. For instance, their works are more suitable for commercial art display, or cultural derivatives. You may well try your luck in the woodblock painting community. Our intention is to help all young artists to identify their career path and let more people notice their works," said Zhang Xiaoyi, head of the marketing department of Graduates Art Fair Shanghai.

Why did MARS LAB choose Daxue Road this time? Zhang Xiaoyi remarked that this was a natural fit. "We are the Graduates Art Fair, and this road is called Daxue (meaning "university/college" in English). Renowned technology enterprises like Bili Bili also operate here. Youth, vitality, inclusiveness, and mutual development are our shared concepts."

To date, the Graduates Art Fair has been successfully stages 13 times in cities like Guangzhou, Shanghai, Shenzhen and Wuhan.

It is learned that all digital collectibles on exhibition are permanently stored in BSN Wenchang Chain, and each copy is priced at RMB10 and has a unique digital identity authentication.

According to Zhang Xiaoyi, this digital collectible exhibition was just the beginning and the GAF's first greeting to Daxue Road. In the future, they will also participate in activities such as the 20th anniversary of Knowledge and Innovation Community and organize many more creative cultural activities, such as "No Throw-out" Bazaar, to provide a stage for students' artistic creation.

"Family Profiling" Becomes "Occupational Habit"

By Tang Shunjia

Xiao Hou is a junior college undergraduate who is about to graduate and find a job within one year.

"Turn the rudder now and you will see these scenic spots and ruins along the riverside area of Yangpu District. We may click the button below to see the intersection of history and modernity..." In a Party-mass service station in riverside Yangpu, a new volunteer just took up his job. With the help of his instructor, he tried to begin his first public explanation.

This new volunteer was Xiao Hou. According to Xiao Hou, he was a quick-tempered person and if he chose to enter the workplace upon graduation, he would probably find trouble in getting along with other colleagues. He decided to intern before graduate and learn to adapt to the outside world. He worked part-time in a coffee shop, and meanwhile participated in various social services to get more working experience.

At the Party-mass service sta-

tion, he was a temporary tour guide that showed citizens and tourists around certain places. At Yangpu District Library, he is a "temporary librarian" who helped organize books, scan books and conduct the borrowing formalities. "I just want to do more practical things and meet more people so that I could learn about my strengths and weaknesses and work better after graduation," said Xiao Hou.

Those volunteer opportunities were all recommended by the Job-Hunting Help Center at the First Neighborhood Center of Pingliang Road Sub-District, the community where Xiao Hou lives.

At three p.m., Xiao Hou finished his work and returned home. His mother, Wang Li, was cleaning up their house to welcome Ms. Gu's home visit. In fact, Xiaohou's family were all closely related to this job-hunting help center, for the people working at this help center provided a lot of help during the job-hunting process of Xiao Hou's parents. Ms. Gu was one of such helpers.

Ms. Gu, whose real name is Gu Yanying, is a job-hunting consultant in the Job-Hunting Help Center at the First Neighborhood Center of Pingliang Road Sub-district. In 2019, due to a request for help, Ms. Gu met and got to know Wang Li. At that time, Wang Li was a short-tempered, middle-aged woman. At each company where she used to work, Wang Li often quarreled with her colleagues and resigned within a few months. Wang Li has two children, but her salaries were not stable enough to make both ends meet. Her family relationship was rather tense. Therefore, she went to the community's job-hunting help center for help. Gu Yanying finally helped Wang Li out.

"Ms. Gu received me with great warmth. She was nice to me and made me feel as if I were her family member," Wang Li recalled, "whenever I meet some problems at work, they would straighten me out patiently."

Through WeChat messages every night, weekly home visit and being always attentive to recruitment information, Gu Yanying, Wang Li fi-

nally managed to land a job for Wang Li at a property management company in April 2020.

Finding a job for job seekers does not mean "closing the case". On the one hand, Gu Yanying learned through daily chat that Hou Qilei, Wang Li's husband, also had difficulty in finding a job. Ms. Gu decided to let Hou Qilei get a new job. Gu Yanying talked with Hou Qilei to try various jobs including driver, security guard, surveillance camera installer and tried her best to enlighten him on job-hunting.

On the other hand, Wang Li had to work three shifts as a cleaner at the property management company and could not have enough time to take care of her family. Later on, she considered quitting that job. Having learned of Wang Li's idea, Gu Yanying talked with Wang Li many times and helped the latter to change shifts whenever appropriate and keep a balance between work and life.

After receiving a request for help, job-hunting consultants at any job-hunting help center not only provide coaching for the applicant

but also see a bigger picture of their family. This is their "occupational habit". They tend to call this process "family profiling."

In February this year, Hou Qilei found a job as an assembly line worker. In addition, Wang Li had been working at her new post for almost three years. With stable income, Wang Li's family no longer relied on subsistence allowances. With the help of the community's job-hunting help center, the family weathered through the difficult time.

Employment is pivotal to people's well-being. In January of this year, the Shanghai Municipal Human Resources and Social Security Bureau launched a special action to promote employment in the spring of 2023 ahead of schedule.

Job-hunting help centers in Yangpu District continue to serve as a bridge between job seekers and employers. They will play an increasingly important role in alleviating the "dual challenges" of labor use and employment and assisting more and more job seekers to find a job and retain their new job for long.