

# Art Keeps Lighting up Yangpu's Nights

By Tang Shunjia

"Keep your palm steady, relax your shoulders..." As night falls at the Yangpu Cultural and Arts Center, Mohamed, an international student at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, follows the guidance of martial arts master Wang Zhuqing, a recognized inheritor of China's intangible cultural heritage, as he learns Mianquan, a traditional boxing style. This September, the Yangpu branch of Shanghai Citizens' Night School opened its 2025 autumn term, offering 53 courses across 25 teaching sites in the district.

Home to a dense cluster of universities, Yangpu also hosts nearly one-third of Shanghai's international students. The question has been how to bring Chinese traditional culture into their everyday lives. Mianquan conveys martial wisdom, while Dunhuang mural line-drawing techniques pass on classical aesthetics. This year, Yangpu launched the city's first "customized classes for international students," complete with translators and volunteers to ensure nothing is lost in translation.

Mohamed had practiced tai chi before, but trying Mianquan at the night school was a first. "Chinese culture is really profound," he said with excitement.

For German student Moritz, the program has already become a familiar part of life. Last semester he studied traditional Chinese painting;

this semester he joined the Dunhuang mural course. To him, the scratch of brush on paper and the mysterious, delicate "baoxiang flowers" he paints are glimpses of China's "gentle side of history." As he put it, "Chinese traditional culture is fascinating—art created a thousand years ago still feels alive today."

"We hope these tailored courses give international students an immersive experience of China's traditional culture," said a representative of the Yangpu Cultural and Arts Center.

Beyond the special classes for international students, this fall semester also offers a wide range of courses in heritage, the arts, sports, and lifestyle aesthetics. Many have extended into commercial centers and community hubs, bringing art closer to everyday life.

One new site this year is Bailian Riverside Shopping Center, where young professionals and retirees gather around the same table for a crochet class, following the teacher's guidance stitch by stitch. At the Yuanju Youth venue in Wujiaochang, the beginner tea-tasting class is filled with the fragrance of freshly brewed leaves. "I used to work all day and then travel far for classes at night, so I'd get home really late. Now I can take tea classes right in the mall near my home and be back early—it's so much more relaxing," said local resident Ms. Zhang.

For office workers, an evening art class has become a welcome remedy for stress. Ms. Li, who works in Changyang Valley, enrolled



in a flower-arranging course at the Yangpu District Library's Pingliang branch, just a short walk from her office. "It's convenient after work, and it meets my artistic interests while helping me unwind," she said.

Some venues have leaned on their specialties. Shanghai Publishing and Printing College, for example, now offers online Japanese lessons so people can study a foreign language from home. Other teaching sites, such as Duoyun Bookstore's Fudan School of

Management branch and Hudong Workers' Cultural Palace, are running courses in Chinese landscape painting, vocal music, animal sketching, and jazz dance, catering to a wide variety of interests.

Since its launch, the Yangpu branch of Citizens' Night School has stayed true to its mission of inclusivity and public service, weaving art education into daily life. This fall semester is expected to reach more than 12,300 participants.

"Our courses are designed to

preserve traditional skills while also fitting modern lifestyles," a staff member at the center explained. "From hair design and crochet to Japanese lessons, we try to stay close to what young people actually enjoy and what's trending." Over the next three months, Citizens' Night School will continue to brighten Yangpu's evenings, creating spaces that connect people with one another—and with culture—while making the idea of balancing work, life, and learning a reality.

# In Yangpu, Moving in with Just a Suitcase Is No Longer a Dream



By Tang Shunjia

Bilibili, Meituan, Douyin—major internet companies have clustered in Yangpu, turning the district into fertile ground for innovation and

entrepreneurship. To attract and retain talent, the government has steadily upgraded its supply of affordable rental housing, ensuring a supportive environment for young professionals and building what it

calls a "talent showcase belt."

The latest addition to Yangpu's "rental housing circle" is Chengzhi Meisu – East Bund Community, the first market-ready project launched by Shanghai Yangpu Urban Construction Investment (Group) Co., Ltd. Located at 567 Hejian Road, the 21,000-square-meter development combines two high-rise rental towers with ground-floor retail, offering 332 one-bedroom apartments.

"This is the kitchen area. The range hood and induction cooktop came with the apartment. I added a rack for my rice cooker and other appliances, so cooking is no problem. We also brought in a large desk, big enough for two people to work side by side," said 29-year-old Zhang Qiu hao as he introduced his new home.

At just under 5,000 yuan a month for a 42-square-meter unit, Zhang and his wife have realized their dream of moving in with nothing more than their suitcases.

He has carefully divided the space into zones for cooking, working, and his wife's vanity. The spacious balcony is his favorite feature. "I even got to keep a pet turtle—finally living my dream of 'turtle freedom,'" he laughed.

The Chengzhi Meisu – East Bund Community sits west of Mingyuefang, north of Longkou Road, east of Shuangyang Road, and south

of Hejian Road. Surrounded mainly by residential neighborhoods, it offers a quiet retreat in the middle of the city, with a strong sense of community life.

Zhang Qiu hao compared several options before deciding on the East Bund Community. For him, the apartment's size, interior finish, amenities and rent all struck a fair balance within the couple's budget. "There are plenty of old, run-down flats nearby that rent for less, but here the furniture and appliances are all new and ready to use," he said, adding that he is very satisfied with their living conditions.

The surrounding area is already well served by daily conveniences: a RT-Mart store is just over 200 meters away, Bailian Riverside Shopping Center is 700 meters away, and Changyang Valley is 500 meters away. Transportation is also easy, with Metro Line 12 and several bus routes nearby. By car, it takes only three minutes to reach the Inner Ring and about ten minutes to the Middle Ring.

"My commute is just 10 minutes by car. On hot days, my wife takes the bus, which takes about 15 minutes. Getting around is no problem at all," Zhang said.

To meet the needs of young residents, the Chengzhi Meisu – East Bund Community offers more than just housing. In addition to

24-hour security, concierge services and on-site maintenance, the complex includes a gym, shared meeting rooms, a multi-purpose hall and study spaces, creating a comfortable and versatile living environment.

"Once you move in, any daily needs—such as maintenance requests—can be handled directly through the property manager, who will coordinate and resolve them promptly," said Jin Yi, deputy manager of operations at Shanghai Yangpu Real Estate Co., Ltd..

The community also includes a 520-square-meter retail area, which will gradually extend services to nearby neighborhoods and is expected to grow into a local commercial hub and social center.

Each unit in the development ranges from 41.76 to 45.79 square meters. Eligible applicants are those legally employed in Shanghai whose families have less than 15 square meters of housing space per person within the designated area. Applications can be submitted through the "Suishenban" app by searching for "I want to rent."

"Our goal is to make sure young people working hard in Shanghai don't have to worry about housing. We want them to feel at home, focus on their work, and have the confidence to pursue their dreams," said Shanghai Yangpu Urban Construction Investment (Group) Co., Ltd..