

Outstanding *Jiading women* share their unique stories



Women are diverse and multifaceted. They can be gentle and meticulous, or carefree and easygoing; they can be delicate and adorable, or resilient and fearless; they can be free-spirited and romantic, or bold and independent. Unconstrained by definitions, women lead lives that are rich and varied, each writing a unique story of their own. Following International Women's Day in March, Shanghai Daily has curated stories highlighting remarkable women in Jiading, celebrating their invaluable contributions.



Fan Dongmei (center) poses for a photo with her students, showcasing their needlework after class. — Photos by Chen Haojun and Lu Jinhui

Keen inheritor stitches up the future for Jiangnan Boudoir Embroidery

JIANGNAN Boudoir Embroidery, a traditional form of silk embroidery that combines literati painting, calligraphy and needlework, has been practiced in Jiading District and the surrounding areas since the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties.

Usually created by women in their private sitting rooms, it was included in the 12th batch of Jiading's representative intangible cultural heritage items in March 2023.

Fan Dongmei, an inheritor of the Jiangnan Boudoir Embroidery, has spent over a decade delving into historical materials and refining embroidery techniques to ensure the art form's enduring vitality in Jiading.

Having learned embroidery from her mother since childhood, Fan was able to produce a variety of embroidery pieces suitable for everyday use without much effort at a young age. As she grew up, the unique charm and Eastern aesthetic of Jiangnan Boudoir Embroidery continued to captivate her, setting her on the path of heritage preservation.

With an emphasis on the fusion of poetry, literature, painting and seal engraving, Jiangnan Boudoir Embroidery features elegant themes, delicate threads and dexterous stitching techniques, resulting in artworks that surpass traditional paintings in brilliance



Fan is apprenticed to embroidery master Qian Jufeng.

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and liveliness.

In comparison to traditional Su Embroidery, it demands not only mastery of traditional stitching techniques, but also a deep

understanding of painting principles. With the support of her husband Huang Yi, a university scholar, Fan apprenticed under embroidery master Qian Jufeng while at the same time studying traditional Chinese painting and calligraphy with Jiading painter Wang Yuanchang.

“To capture the essence of the original paintings, I meticulously divide silk threads based on the artwork's light and shadow variations,” Fan said. “This process demands extreme focus and patience. A refined Boudoir Embroidery piece requires silk threads with hundreds of hues and could take months to complete, with larger pieces requiring even more time.”

As she continues to explore and innovate embroidery techniques to create more vivid and detailed artistic effects, she infuses the art with a sense of perpetual renewal.

Fan's Jiangnan Boudoir Embroidery pieces have been displayed in numerous professional exhibitions and selected for international tours abroad showcasing traditional Chinese art, including a display at the Slovak National Museum.

“Jiangnan Boudoir Embroidery is not something that was confined to the private sitting rooms of ladies in ancient days. It embodies the aesthetics, wisdom and inner beauty sought after by women in the modern era,” Fan said.

Retiree inspires younger followers on social media platforms

HOW do you imagine life after retirement? Many people may think of taking care of their grandchildren at home or worrying about household chores, but 61-year-old Pu Yunxia gives an interestingly different answer.

Pu is adept at making short videos about her colorful life, including playing musical instruments, singing and dancing. She has shared these videos that convey an enthusiasm for life on Douyin, the Chinese version of TikTok.

Pu lives in Malu Town. In spite of her age, she is still young at heart. She likes to laugh, learn and try new things. She is also a popular grassroots influencer known as “Kevin's Grandma” on Douyin, with more than 28,000 followers and over 290,000 likes.

“I love trying new things,” Pu said. “Even though I'm getting old, I want to live a wonderful life.”

Pu's affinity with short-video platforms dates back to 2019 when she posted her first video on the Internet



Pu Yunxia (front), also known as “Kevin's Grandma” on Douyin, enjoys a dancing class.

out of curiosity. Her videos document the detailed moments of her daily life. As time went by, what she didn't expect was that her videos would gain such popularity among netizens.

The number of likes and followers for Pu continue to increase. More and more netizens left her messages, saying “I will always support you” and “Kevin's Grandma is full of positive energy.”

Encouraged by her fans, Pu now shares her life on Douyin almost every week and often

encourages young people to face difficulties in life. On Pu's homepage on Douyin, one can see nearly 1,000 short videos of her singing, dancing, playing musical instruments and performing voluntary work. These videos record her daily learning experiences and dance collection.

“I want to pass on positive energy to more people through short videos,” Pu said. “Regardless of age, people should keep learning and exploring, and always have

curiosity and enthusiasm for life. Even if you retire, you can still do what you like.”

For her active participation in various voluntary work, Pu has been awarded as an excellent volunteer of Shanghai and Jiading District's “March 8th Red Banner Holder,” a top honor for females.

In her daily life, Pu has made her casual kindness a subconscious habit. In her words, “Whenever I see someone in need of help, I want to help.”

Pu is registered as a body donor. She has also been assisting the Red Cross Society of Malu Town in providing services such as physical examinations for other body donors.

Loving life and being passionate about everything is Pu's life creed.

She enrolled in courses at a senior university to learn how to build with Lego bricks, play *hulusi* (a kind of Chinese flute) and organize fashion teams. She has also sung, danced and performed Yueju Opera excerpts on the stage.



Pu models the charms of qipao at a fashion show. — Photos by Huang Yi

“I love trying new things. Even though I'm getting old, I want to live a wonderful life.”

Tech company founder develops surface treatment solutions

IN the manufacturing industry with its high work intensity, there are only a small proportion of female entrepreneurs. However, Du Ling, founder of Sophis Intelligent Technology, has led her team to win multiple industry honors.

Professional Industry 4.0 innovative robotic surface treatment solutions are Du and her team's answer to workers on the job site, which not only allow companies to save on consumable costs, but also help workers stay away from dust and noise.

“I am always curious about the world, and not satisfied with a stable and affluent life,” said Du, who is always looking for entrepreneurial opportunities.

In 2018, Du visited hundreds of factories and found that workers had to wear protective masks for long periods of time at work sites full of dust and noise.

Years of business sense made her realize that the replacement of human beings by robots is an



Du has carved out a niche for herself as head of a tech company.

“In the process of enterprise growth, women's gender advantages will be fully displayed.”



Du Ling (center) discusses her company's smart solutions with customers during a meeting. — Photos by Zhou Yanjie

inexorable trend.

She then founded Sophis Intelligent Technology, drawing on the technical advantages of European brands' surface treatment solutions and leading her team to take the road of independent research and development to achieve innovation and upgrade in manufacturing.

Her team has developed

innovative robotic surface treatment solutions to help companies handle a variety of complex surfaces, with each set of equipment replacing four or five workers.

“Science and technology liberate human beings, enabling them to engage in more meaningful pursuits,” Du said.

While it is true that male technicians often dominate the

manufacturing industry, Du believes that female entrepreneurs are a unique identity of a company.

“In the process of enterprise growth, women's gender advantages will be fully displayed,” she said.

The unique delicacy and resilience of women give Du the ease to face customers and help her promote innovative technologies to the market. Under her leadership, Sophis has established long-term and stable business ties with many well-known enterprises at home and abroad, such as China Aerospace Science and Technology Corp, XCMG (one of China's top heavy machinery manufacturers) and State Grid, and has been highly recognized by the industry.

“We will continue to invest in R&D to export products globally. By expanding their application across a broader spectrum of fields, we aim to bolster the advancement of intelligent manufacturing in China,” Du said.