Yi Zhao (Ada)

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Statement

Yi Zhao (Ada) is a first-year PhD student in Computer Science at the University of Colorado Boulder, advised by Professors Ellen Yi-Luen Do and Ryo Suzuki. Her research focuses on integrating physical space with digital information to create interactive learning experiences, such as physical task guidance and STEM simulations, leveraging computer vision, large language models (LLMs), and generative AI.

Education

University of Colorado Boulder **2025-Present**
Ph.D. in Computer Science
Human-Computer Interaction, AR/VR

University of Colorado Boulder **2023-2025**
M.S. in Creative Technology and Design
GPA: 3.95

New York University **2014-2018**
B.S. in Interactive Media Arts, Computer Science
GPA: 3.87/4.0, magna cum laude

Research Experience

ATLAS Institute, Boulder **Aug 2023-Present**

Research Assistant, Advisors: Ellen Yi-Luen Do, Ryo Suzuki

- Investigating the visual guidance in physical task instructions, developed an AR system that generates spatial visual guidance from text instructions. *(Accepted to UIST 2025)*.
- Developed an authoring tool to create AR tutorials by automatically identifying key task steps through speech-action synchronicity analysis. *(Published as a poster at ISMAR 2024)*

NYU Shanghai, Shanghai **Sept 2017-Jun 2018**

Research Assistant, Advisor: Michael Naimark

- Researched on *TeleWindow* project, a system to capture and display telepresence for one-to-one conferencing. The findings were published as a short paper in ISEA 2022.

Publications

Ada Yi Zhao, Suibi Che-Chuan Weng, Ella Grace Finstuen, Haifeng Chen, Lu-An Tang, Kai Ishikawa, and Ellen Yi-Luen Do. The WizARd and Apprentice: An Augmented Reality Expert Capture System. *In Proceedings of 2024 IEEE International Symposium on Mixed and Augmented Reality Adjunct (ISMAR-Adjunct)*. IEEE, 2024.

Michael Naimark, Cameron Ballard, Bruce Luo, David Santiano, Grace Huang, Mateo Juvera Molina, and **Ada Zhao**. "Systems and methods for interpolative three-dimensional imaging within the viewing zone of a display". U.S. Patent 17/604,333, 2024

Professional Experience

Tencent, Shanghai **Jun 2018-May 2023**

Senior Product Manager, Mobile AR Selfie Lenses and Video Editing

- Managed the development, production, and promotion plan, contributing an extra 10% of user-generated content to our short video platform. Monthly campaigns achieve over 10 million user visits.
- Worked closely with AI engineers and designers to develop and apply cutting-edge technology to mobile AR selfie lenses and video editing.

Midnight Commercial, New York **May 2017-Aug 2017**

Research & Development Summer Intern

- Participated in designing and developing client projects including Samsung smart fridge prototype, Cadillac rearview mirror installation, and Patron tequila mobile AR experience. Technical contributions included Hololens, Rasberry Pi and ARKit development.

Awards and Honors

CU Boulder ATLAS Scholarship	2023, 2024
Graduate School Travel Grant $450	2024
Graduate and Professional Student Government Travel Grant $500	2024
Tencent Outstanding Employee (top 5%)	2019, 2020
Tencent Innovation Award	2020, 2021
Best Poster Presentation for Computer Science, Undergraduate Research Symposium	2018
NYU Dean's List	2015-2018

Teaching Experience

CSCI 1300 Intro to Programming	Aug 2025-Present
Object (Physical Computing)	Aug 2024-Dec 2024
Intro to Virtual Reality	Aug 2023-Dec 2023
VR/AR Fundamentals	Sept 2017-May 2018
Interaction Lab	Sept 2015-May 2016

Leadership and Service

HackShanghai, Largest College Hackathon in China, *Co-director* May 2015-Nov 2015

Skills

Unity, Web Dev, Python, Swift, Java
Arduino, Physical Computing, Digital Fabrication
Project Management, UX Design, Data Analysis
Adobe Creative Suite, Microsoft Office Suite