

Be Bold, Be brilliant, Be the Change.

Youxuan Wei



Iconic stadium, Iconic selfie stick, and the Iconic smog. -
But that wasn't always how my city had been defined.

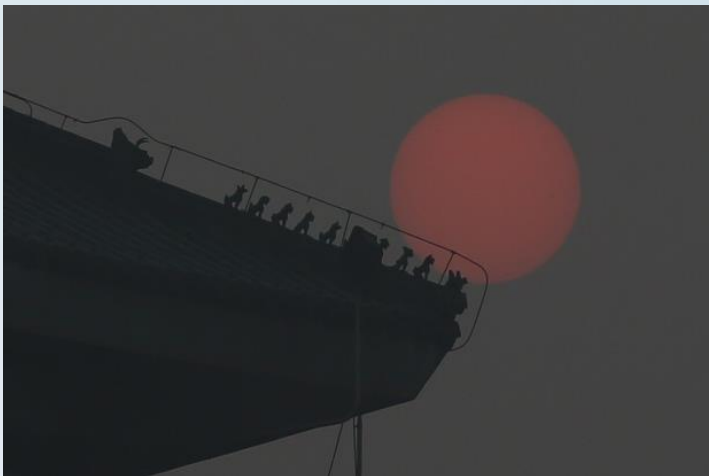
This is Beijing, the home I spent the first 12 years of my life in. Growing up under the walls of the Forbidden city and the rays of sunlight reflecting off of its green ancient tiles, smog was a word I'd never heard of in my younger years.





I remember one winter day in fifth grade, when I woke up to see the morning sky covered with a thick gray. It was the first time that our teacher taught us the word “Mai”, and the first time we spent our recess in the school building, where the weak winter sun couldn’t even shine through the floor-to-ceiling windows.

How sad it is that a city of 5 thousand years came to be defined not for its history, but for its pollution? And how sad it is that its 22 million citizens are denied even the right to a clean air, a clear sky that’s the color of blue?



My grandma does Tai Chi every morning -and now she does it with a mask.

When I went back to visit last year, I scanned the old streets that I knew like the back of my hands -the same street signs, kids walking home with the same uniform of my old school, the same vendors selling the same breakfast on the side...

Just not the same air. And as I watched the mothers pulling masks down their baby’s faces, I thought: I need to save my city.

“What’s the one thing you want to change, fix, and heal more than anything else on the earth?” When I close my eyes, all I can see was a time when we went on a picnic on a clear, autumn day, and flew the kite against the deep blue sky. Days like that are the ones that I want, more than anything else, back for my city and the people who I love.

And now, I know that I can get there.



#1 I WILL CAMPAIGN

Clean air is a right, and smog is something that no one should willingly accept -I know that for those in China, it’s become such a inevitable norm that no one believes they can fight it anymore. From my past 28 days I learned that any movement starts with one person, and I know I want to be that one to stand up, and soon many will follow.

#2 I WILL EDUCATE OTHERS

There are many solutions to air pollution - driving less, cleaner technology, and better ways to produce energy are all of them. This Monday, I hosted the movie night of Time to Choose, where I spoke of all of the solutions we can fight climate change to a auditorium filled with guests, especially many kids. Many went to home with new knowledge they learned -Now I know that in my power, I can change those around me. And together, I will put in our power for a greener future.



#3 I WILL SPREAD THE WORD

From the action of one to the action of many, a cause becomes a movement. I will post on social media, as well as the internet, in both Chinese and English, to remind people that smog is not a norm, it is a problem that we need to join and fight.

#4 I WILL ADVOCATE IN MY OWN CREATIVE WAYS.

I am an artist -I can draw. And I think the magic about art is that It conveys a message more directly, and more powerfully, than any words can do.

On the right are the works by 5 Chinese artists -it takes not just skills, but courage to express ideas in such radical ways to the government in a society like China.

I think that art is my unique way of voicing my own beliefs, and I, too, will try to be just like these artists to be courageous and call the public's attention to this serious issue.

To find more posters:

<http://www.chinafile.com/node/16181>



Photosynthesis bike recycles and purifies the air in its vicinity,



This electrostatic vacuum is able to clean the air by attracting pollution particles.

<https://architizer.com/blog/pollution-solution/>

#5 I WILL FIND INNOCATIVE SOLUTIONS

As the problem is grave, there are also many many solutions out there that I can adopt -aside from the conventional ones, I also found many that I didn't know before!

One is a photosynthesis bike -it recycles and cleanses the air in its vicinity through movement and its lithium battery. The bike is already in the making of its prototype, and may soon be fulling implemented.

The second is a electrostatic air vacuum that attracts pollution particles -it still needs to be implemented on a urban scale, but that's something that I can study and work on!

There are many things that I can do to change -This is what I realized in the past month of PGC. Myself, my family, my friends, and even my community -they have all been, in one way or the other, influenced even just a little by my actions. Though small, that is still **unbelievable to me**, to think that a single presentation on Styrofoam, talk about organic, and action like composting on my part can actually make my friends start using her bottle again, persuade my family to start going to Wholefoods, and make my neighbors buy the fertilizers I made from my compost.

And now, I believe that I can change a city. If you dream it, you can do it. It may be hard, but I know that If I work hard enough, one day there will once again be blue skies above the green tiles of Beijing.

Dream Big.

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