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I am Who I am

Yifei Kong

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I Am Who I Am

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MFA, Virginia Commonwealth University, 2024
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I Am Who I Am

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University.

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Abstract

I am Who I am

By Yifei Kong, MFA

My thesis research focuses on my cultural background and history as a Chinese woman. I explore the control and restraint of women from ancient times and highlight feminism. Traditional Chinese hair accessories reflect a type of control over women. Unlike traditional Chinese hair accessories, which use a lot of precious metals and precious stones, my work uses recycled aluminum cans. That is an exploration of contemporary jewelry materials and a reflection of women's independent right to choose. With my pieces, women can use their preferred colors without considering their class and identity limitations. Art is an object of aesthetic appreciation and stimulates the audience's questioning of society. My pieces create a dialogue with my audience about the tension between traditional and contemporary values around female status in Chinese society. It is an important means of influencing the world, furthering gender equality, breaking traditional gender stereotypes, and enabling women to receive more respect and recognition. I hope my work can have a healing and empowering effect. They showcase the power and beauty of Chinese women, help them build confidence, and encourage them to pursue their dreams and rights courageously. Through my thesis work, I want to show women's freedom and free myself from these constraints to show female beauty and personality.
**Introduction**

My thesis research is based on my cultural background and history as a Chinese woman. I will explore the control and restraint of women from ancient times and discuss feminism. Traditional Chinese hair accessories reflect a type of control over women.

**History of Ancient Chinese Women**

从历史的变迁来看，中国女性的地位比不是从一开始就是低的。在最开始的原始社会，母系氏族制度下的女性是受尊重的。由于女性具有生育和哺乳的功能，以及一些会做手工活，她们在家庭和氏族中占据了重要的地位。那时候的人们都是只知其母而不知其父，孩子也跟随母亲的姓氏，并由母亲所在的氏族抚养教育。到了奴隶社会，父系氏族制度下的女性变成了附属的。当时人们开始从事农业、畜牧业和手工业，并出现了私有制和国家的概念。在这个时期，由于男性的体能，他们在战争中可以获得更多的财富和权力，因此建立了以男性为中心的父系氏族制度，他们也逐渐取代了女性在家庭和社会中的主导地位。

In early primitive society, women were respected under the matrilineal clan system. Due to their reproductive and breastfeeding functions, as well as some manual labor, women have occupied an important position in the family and clan. At that time, people only knew their mother, not their father. Children followed their mother's surname and were raised and educated by the mother's clan. In the slave society, women under the patrilineal clan system became

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1 History of China women in Chinese language. 
https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1766765105173830284&wfr=spider&for=pc

2 In a slave society, humans are completely commercialized, controlled by their masters, and slaves are the dominant productive class. The fundamental basis of a slave society is that people are divided into masters and slaves.
appendages. At that time, people began to engage in agriculture, animal husbandry, and handicrafts, and the concepts of private ownership and the state emerged. During this period, due to the physical strength of men, they gained more wealth and power in war, establishing a male-centered patrilineal clan system. Men gradually replaced the dominant position of women in the family and society.

来到封建社会后，女性的地位处于一个忽高忽低，漫长而复杂的阶段，主要可以分为两个阶段：先秦至隋唐和宋元明清。在秦朝的婚姻方面，女性可以再嫁，这并不是一件可耻的事情。还有明文规定，如果丈夫与人通奸，妻子可以杀死丈夫，如果丈夫殴妻和妻子殴夫都是同等的处罚。在职业选择和财产权方面，女性可以参与商业，甚至能参与政治，在朝堂上议事。所以是一个男女相对平等的时期。但随着中国进入一个皇帝的统治时代，女性地位开始逐渐下降。在儒家伦理推行后，女性的个人自由和财产权被极大的压抑。从汉朝就已经开始实行。尽管到了唐朝，我们拥有了第一位著名的女皇帝武则天，那时对女性也极为开放包容，男女之间婚前试婚、改嫁、私奔，也是十分自然的事情。然而从宋到明清朝代：裹脚，贞洁牌坊（通常是古时用来表彰一些丈夫去世或长年不改嫁，或自杀殉葬的女性）等则泛滥成灾。在政治上，皇权专制的力量不断加强，直至清朝时达到顶峰。在思想文化上，儒家的伦理纲常一步步束缚人们的思想。在经济上，官有制进一步扩大，民间人们的自由被极大压制。那个时期反对丧偶的妇女改嫁，在明清的律法中是重罪。因此在此期间，贞节牌坊的数量大大增加，残害女性的缠足现象开始出现，无数的女性被逼自尽或被残害。女人只能在家“相夫教子”，“大门不出，二门不迈”成为贤妻良母的“标配”。整个时期，女性地位达到最低，成为男性的私有财产³。清朝的满族女性并不要求缠足，这是因为她们本身是马背上的民

After entering feudal society⁴, the status of women was in a long and complex stage, fluctuating from high to low; this situation can be mainly divided into two stages: Qin to Sui and Tang (221 BCE- 906 CE), to Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing (960- 1912)⁵. In terms of marriage in the Qin Dynasty, it was not shameful for women to remarry. There was also an explicit provision that if a husband engaged in adultery with someone, the wife could kill the husband. If the husband assaulted the wife, the punishment will be the same as if the wife assaulted the husband. Regarding career choices and property rights, women can participate in business and politics and hold court meetings. So, it was a period of relative equality between men and women. However, as China entered an era of main imperial rule (206 BCE), the status of women began to decline gradually. After implementing Confucian ethics⁶ women's personal freedom and property rights were significantly suppressed. It has been implemented since the Han Dynasty. In the Tang Dynasty, we had the first famous female emperor, Wu Zetian (665-705), who was also extremely open and tolerant towards women. It was also natural for men and women to try out, remarry, and elope before marriage. However, foot binding⁷ and chastity memorial archway⁸ were rampant from the Song Dynasty to the Ming and Qing Dynasties. In politics, the power of imperial autocracy continued to strengthen until it peaked during the Qing Dynasty.

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⁴ The three classes in feudal society were the royal class, the aristocratic class, and the peasant class. Feudal society is a hierarchical system, with power held by a few people.


⁶ Confucian ethics pays attention to the structure of interpersonal relationships, especially the core relationships of the family, which provides an idealized model for all other relationships.

⁷ Foot binding used fabric to bind and tighten to change the shape and size of women’s feet when they were young girls. It Started in the 10th century, and was popular in the Song dynasty (960-1279) until the end of Qing dynasty (1644-1912).

⁸ Chastity memorial archways were usually used in ancient times to commend some women whose husbands died or did not remarry for years, or committed suicide to be buried.
In terms of ideology and culture, the ethical principles of Confucianism gradually constrain people's thinking. The official system was further expanded regarding the economy, and the people's freedom was significantly suppressed. Opposing the remarriage of widowed women during that period was considered a severe crime in the laws of the Ming and Qing dynasties. Therefore, the number of Chastity memorial archways increased significantly during this period. The foot-binding phenomenon of maiming women began to appear, and countless women were forced to commit suicide or were maimed. Women could only rely on their husbands to educate their children at home, and being a good wife and mother was a standard choice as they could not leave the front door or step into the second door. Throughout the period, women reached their lowest status and became the private property of men. The Manchu women of the Qing Dynasty did not require foot binding because their culture centered around equestrian skills to support their nomadic lifestyle. Therefore, women needed to be comfortable and skilled with horses, but they still wore high heels, which made their gait stiff. As I am of Han ethnicity, my works mainly discuss the issue of the status of Han women from the Song Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty (960-1912).

**Foot Binding**

缠足又称裹脚，是中国古代一种陋习。是用布将女性双脚紧紧缠裹，使之畸形变小。一般女性从四、五岁起便开始缠足，直到成年骨骼定型后方将布带解开，也有终身缠裹者。原因可能有以下几点，缠足的女子只能走出小步伐，从而显得更加的柔弱，从而来衬托男子的阳刚本质。皇朝贵族开始对缠足所造成的小脚产生喜欢的时候，为了迎合当时男性的畸

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10 Chinese has 56 ethnic groups, the Han ethnic group is the largest population in China, accounting for over 92% of the country's population.
Foot binding, also known as lotus Feet\textsuperscript{11}, was standard in late imperial China. It is to wrap the female feet tightly with cloth, causing them to deform and become smaller. Generally, women start to bind their feet from age four or five until their adult bones are formed and the straps are untied. Some of them wrapped their feet for life. There may be several reasons why women with bound feet can only take small steps, making them appear more delicate and highlighting the masculine nature of men. When the aristocrats of the imperial dynasty began to develop a liking for the tiny feet caused by foot binding, to cater to the male's distorted aesthetic, women at the bottom of society had to undergo foot binding. In Golden Lotus, Colette Fu said, "If you care for your daughter, care not if she suffers in her feet."\textsuperscript{12} This sentence reflects the persecution of women by the feet during that period. A three-inch golden lotus, approximately 3.9 inches, is a standard for praising the beauty of women with tiny feet, and people believe that feet of this size are as beautiful as lotus flowers when walking. In my work \textit{No One Wears It}, it is a small shoe made of copper and plastic mesh, which is the same size as the three-inch golden lotus from that period. The bottom of the heel has a lotus pattern to reflect the growing lotus step


\textsuperscript{12} Golden Lotus, Colette Fu
by step. Inside the shoes are plastic pearls, extended inside to express that no one will wear them again and reflect that painful history.

No One Wears It

Recycle cans, plastic mesh, spray paint, cotton thread, plastic pearls, wig, brass, 2024

Status of Ancient Chinese Women

儒家理学的思想认为女性的角色主要是：女儿、姐妹、妻子、儿媳、母亲、婆婆。因此在所有这些角色中，女性有责任满足与男性关系密切的男性的愿望和需求。年轻时是她们的父亲，结婚时是她们的丈夫，丧偶之后是她们的儿子。并且认为，最大的不孝行为是没有后代传承，所以在后来的几个世纪里，这种对儿子必要性的强调导致许多人对女儿的出生感到失望，重男轻女的事情发生，从而女性的地位更加降低。艺术家Jennifer Ling Datchuk使用瓷器和与传统女性作品相关的材料，例如纺织品和头发，来讨论女性的脆弱性、美丽、气质、身份和个人历史。通过她的作品Later, Longer, Fewer, 2021以一名亚洲女性的视角
Confucian Neo-Conucianism thought women's roles were mainly those of daughter, sister, wife, daughter-in-law, mother, and mother-in-law. Therefore, among all these roles, women were responsible for fulfilling the desires and needs of men who had a close relationship with them. When women were young, the men were their fathers; when women got married, the men were their husbands; after women lost their spouses, the men were their sons. At that time, people believed that the greatest unfilial behavior was the lack of inheritance from future generations. Therefore, in the following centuries, this emphasis on the necessity of sons led to many people feeling disappointed with the birth of daughters, resulting in a preference for sons over daughters and a further decline in the status of women. Artist Jennifer Ling Datchuk uses porcelain and materials related to traditional female works, such as textiles and hair, to discuss women's vulnerability, beauty, temperament, identity, and personal history. Through her works *Later, Longer, Fewer, 2021*, she examines China's one-child policy from the perspective of an Asian woman and the values of men over women. Datchuk explores the social, cultural, and political systems that control women through installations, videos, porcelain, decorations, and

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hair. She explores how mothers have the innocence of their teenage years erased through control and fulfilling expectations; she highlights how women are essentially enslaved within a family.

The 3 Gold series tells the story of Chinese weddings where men need to purchase three gold jewelry pieces and give them as gifts to the women. It has expectations and wishes for a beautiful marriage, but also shows that the woman will belong to the man. A wife must help the husband and take care of the children. Chrysanthemums bloom in autumn, symbolizing high spirits, but yellow and white chrysanthemums are also used for commemoration and mourning. So, I use chrysanthemums in this series. The yellow chrysanthemums express the decline in the status of women after marriage and the loss of themselves in the feudal period. In contrast, the red chrysanthemums express the integrity and nobility of women in the new era. I use chrysanthemums in my works to reflect importance and status and to symbolize that women have their own thoughts. The type of flower and the color show that the current marriage will not stifle their pursuit of self, nor will it hinder them from becoming themselves.
Meaning of Chinese Traditional Hair Pieces

在封建社会，妇女的地位低下，她们的言行举止受到严格的限制和规范。对发型有严格的规定，比如把头发卷起来表示已经成年。发饰也具有象征意义。例如，发夹、头饰、发冠和其他发饰都象征着女性的美德、品质和地位。佩戴这些发饰需要女性具备特定的相应

Later, Longer, Fewer Series

3 Gold
Recycle cans, silver, spray paint, cotton thread, plastic pearls, wig, brass, 2023
美德和品质，否则，这将被视为有辱人格的行为。打扮被认为是女性的私事，不能随意向他人展示。因此，女性在佩戴发饰时需要谨慎，不要过于显眼。发饰也反映了男性的控制力。在封建社会，妇女的婚姻和生活都是由男人主宰的。佩戴发饰也意味着遵循丈夫或父母的意愿。例如，在新婚之夜，新娘需要佩戴丈夫赠送的发饰，以显示归属感和好感。总之，中国传统的发饰体现了对女性的控制。步摇也是传统发饰的重要组成部分，随着女性的走路，轻轻摇摆，配合着下面的流苏配饰，凸显女性的仪态。但是要求女性不可以大幅度行动，要保持端庄和优雅。

In feudal society, women's status was low, and their speech, behavior, and appearance were restricted and regulated. There were strict regulations on hairstyles, such as curling up hair to indicate that one has reached adulthood. Hair accessories also had symbolic significance. For example, hairpins, headdresses, crowns, and other accessories symbolize women's virtues, qualities, and status. Wearing these hair accessories required women to possess specific corresponding virtues and qualities; otherwise, it would be considered demeaning behavior. Dressing up was considered a private matter for women and not freely displayed to others. Therefore, women must be cautious and not appear overly conspicuous when wearing hair accessories. Hair accessories also reflected male control. In feudal society, women's marriage and life were dominated by men. The wearing of hair accessories also meant following the wishes of their husbands or parents. For example, on a wedding night, the bride needed to wear hair accessories given by her husband to show a sense of belonging and favor.

In summary, traditional Chinese hair accessories reflected control over women. Step swaying is also an essential component of conventional hair accessories; as women walk, the gentle swaying, combined with the tassel accessories below, highlights women's demeanor.
However, due to the step-swaying movement, women were required to control their head and body gestures and to maintain dignity and elegance.

**Meaning of Hair**

Yuni Kim Lang is a visual artist from South Korea. Her sculpture, photography and wearable art use hair to explore themes such as weight, quality and accumulation. In *Comfort Hair*, she used this medium to explore her identity as a South Korean, Chinese and American woman. She manipulates textiles to create sculptures, where these sculptures signify *_VERTICAL*; these are traditional high status women’s hair adornments. People believe that the larger, heavier, and more beautiful their hair is, the more beautiful they are. In ancient China, women wear hairpieces that require daily maintenance; women also wear hairpieces for cultural or social events, they are made of human hair, animal hair, fiber or cloth. These accessories are made in different styles and are set with different materials. Ling Chun is a ceramic artist. She incorporates hair into her work, to display culture and stories. Hair is both race, identity and culture. She does not regard her work as a deformation of hair, but as a curiosity that she feels by removing her hair. Hair is also a part of my research. In ancient China, hair is an important symbol of identity and social status. Hair is a symbol of femininity and beauty. Due to feudal male chauvinism, traditional ethics and women’s贞操. Women need to follow the strict hair regulations to reflect their marital status, virtuousness and moral standards. In ancient China, Confucianism believed that hair is a gift from parents, it should be treated with the greatest respect. For men and women, hair was considered to be an important virtue. In my work, I used false hair to create. One aspect of the ancient customs is that women have to wear false hair when dressed in elaborate attire, and I used false hair in my work. I wore hair that I could not naturally wear in China. It expresses modern women’s self-determination, freedom and liberation.
Yuni Kim Lang is a visual artist from Michigan whose sculptures, photos, and wearable art explore themes such as cultural identity by using hair to reflect weight, quality, and accumulation. In *Comfort Hair*, she uses this medium to explore her Korean, Chinese, and American identities. She manipulates textiles to create sculptures, which refer to the hair clips worn by traditional high-ranking women in South Korea. People believe that the larger and heavier they are, the more beautiful they are. In ancient Chinese hair accessories, wigs were often used, usually made from human hair and sometimes animal hair, plant fibers, or fabrics. They were made into different hair extension styles to decorate different hairstyles and match different hair accessories. Similarly, Ling Chun is a ceramic artist who incorporates hair to showcase culture and stories. Hair itself is closely related to race, identity, and culture. She sees the hair in her work as a deformation of the glaze and is also curious about peeling off the hair.

Inspired by my artistic interests, hair is also a part of my current research. In ancient China, hair had crucial symbolic significance and social status for women. Hair was considered a symbol of women's beauty and charm. Due to the feudal practice of prioritizing men over women, the constraints of traditional moral principles, and the emphasis on female chastity, hairstyles became a means of limiting women's identity and regulating their behavior. Women needed to follow strict hairstyle regulations to reflect their marital status, purity, and moral qualities. The Confucian values of ancient China believed that hair was a gift from parents and should be respected to the greatest extent. Haircutting was considered a severe violation of filial piety for both men and women and should only be done in exceptional circumstances. In my work, I use a wig for creation.

On the one hand, it reflects that ancient women also wore wigs when wearing cumbersome hair accessories, but the wigs I used were light. On the other hand, I use hair colors that could never have naturally appeared on Chinese people to express women's autonomy and freedom of choice. Additionally, hair is fixed in my work, replacing the traditional swaying part of hair accessories, allowing wearers to walk without caution. My adornment showcases modern women's ability to break free from control, run, and move freely.
Materials of Hair Pieces

Although women had a relatively low status in ancient China, many women in history also attempted to challenge the constraints of traditional culture and fight for their rights. With my thesis work, I am rewriting the history of male dominance through a female perspective. The existence of these traditional female images, such as headdresses, was more to please men's visual perception and sexual needs. Women were submissive to male authority in a readily accepted way, lacking opportunities for autonomy and development. They had no chance or the
power to propose their suggestions and ideas. Headwear was the most visually identifiable item in China, which is why I am focusing on hairpieces.

My work is different from traditional Chinese hair accessories. Traditional Chinese hair accessories use precious metals and stones, such as gold, pearls, gemstones, and feathers. Women of different social statuses could also use a strict hierarchy of materials. Eunseok Han is a Korean jewelry artist who uses disposable items from daily life for artistic creation. Generally speaking, diamonds, gold, and silver are all good jewelry materials. However, disposable cans and plastic are considered unsuitable for making jewelry. Han believes we can use non-precious materials, even discarded ones, to create beautiful jewelry. My work reuses recycled aluminum cans. The cans come in different colors, giving me various choices for my creations. In addition, due to the material of the cans, I can cut and reform them well to create different flowers. In my works, I manipulate cans to compare precious metals, plastic pearls, and beads to compare rare
natural pearls and gemstones. This is an exploration of contemporary jewelry materials and a reflection of women's independent right to choose. It is no longer men who identify the use of precious metals and jewelry as showcasing the royal family, class, status, and identity. Soda cans are also lightweight, reducing a significant amount of weight and demonstrating the removal of constraints or oppression.

**Colors of Hair Pieces**

色彩也是Ling Chun作品的重要组成部分。她说她对口红的色彩非常着迷。她相信，她选择涂在嘴唇上的颜色会影响她说话的内容。所以色彩有力量，可以表达情感。我也相信色彩是有力量的，通过色彩可以直接表达我们内心的想法。颜色也是我工作的一部分，也是反映阶级和控制的一个重要因素。因为不同罐头的外包装提供了不同的颜色选择和组合，五颜六色的罐子可以通过颜色来反映每个女人的不同。在*See Me in a Crown*中，我才用了代表四季的花朵，并且选择的彩虹的颜色去创作。黄色是只有皇室可以使用的颜色，但是我也可以运用在我的作品里。从而体现一年四季，无论何时，无论什么颜色，女性都可以展现真正的自己。女性可以在不考虑阶级和身份限制的情况下使用自己喜欢的颜色。

Color is also a significant part of Ling Chun’s work. She said she is very fascinated by the color of lipstick. She believes that the color she chooses to apply to her lips will affect what she says. So, colors have power and can express emotions. I also believe that color has power and can directly express our inner thoughts through color.

Color is also a part of my work and an essential factor in reflecting class and control. Because the outer packaging of different cans provides different color choices and combinations, colorful cans can reflect each woman's differences through color. I used flowers representing the four seasons in*See Me in a Crown* and chose rainbow colors. Yellow is a color that can only be
used by the royal family, but I also use it in my works. Thus, reflecting the year's four seasons, women can showcase their true selves regardless of time and color. Women can use their preferred colors without considering their class and identity limitations.

Conclusion

I通过自己的作品创造了观众与艺术作品之间的对话。艺术不仅是一种审美对象，而且激发了观众对社会的质疑。这是影响世界和进一步实现两性平等的重要手段。打破传统的性别规定型观念，使妇女得到更多的尊重和认可。我希望我的作品能够产生治疗和赋权的效果。她展示了中国女性的力量和美丽，帮助她们树立信心，鼓励她们勇敢地追求自己的梦想和权利。我想通过我的论文工作来展示女性的自由，把自己从这些束缚中解放出来，展现女性的美丽和个性。
I create a dialogue between the audience and the artwork through my work. Art is an object of aesthetic appreciation and stimulates the audience's questioning of society. That is an important means of influencing the world and bringing about further gender equality, breaking traditional gender stereotypes, and enabling women to receive more respect and recognition. I hope my works can have a healing and empowering effect. They showcase the power and beauty of Chinese women, help them build confidence, and encourage them to pursue their dreams and rights courageously. Through my thesis work, I want to show women's freedom and free myself from these constraints to show female beauty and personality.
Poem: You are a Woman/ 你是一个女人

你是一个女人，
你要是静，少说话，
你要优雅，要端庄，
你要贤惠，听话，
在你三岁的时候要裹脚，保持三寸，因为你要满足男性的喜好。
你不需要有文化，只要学会女德就好，
你的衣着形式有严格的要求，
你不可以随便改变的发型，不可以剪掉你的头发，
发饰是一种控制，掌控你的一言一行，让你更端庄，更淑女，
你需要用昂贵的金属，宝石去体现你的地位和重要性。
家就是你的一切，
你不需要事业，不需要工作，
你不能自由选择我的爱人，
一切你要做的就是要听从父母和丈夫，传宗接代。
你是一个附属品，
不能有自己的思想，
结婚之后你没有自己的名字。
You are a woman

You are a woman,
You need to be quiet and speak less,
You need to be elegant and dignified,
You need to be virtuous and obedient,
When you are three years old, you should bind your feet and maintain three inches to satisfy male preferences.
You don't need to have an education. Just learn female virtues,
Your clothing style has strict requirements,
You can't change your hairstyle casually, you can't cut off your hair,
Hair accessories are a form of control that restricts your every movement and action, making you more dignified and elegant,
You must use precious metals and gemstones to reflect your status and importance.
Home is everything to you,
You don't need a career, you don't need a job,
You cannot freely choose my lover,
All you have to do is obey your parents and husband and pass on the family line.
You are an accessory,
You cannot have your thoughts,
After getting married, you don't have your name.
Poem: I am a Woman/ 我是一个女人

我是一个女人，
我可以吵闹，多说话，
我可以不修边幅，跑跑跳跳，
我可以不做饭，不听话，
在我三岁的时候，我可以穿着运动鞋，直到脚长到38码。
我可以去学校，接受教育，拥有文化，永无止境的学习新的知识，
我可以穿着各种各样的衣服，
我可以随便改变的发型，剪掉我的头发，
发饰是一种装饰，为了凸显我的美丽，让我更自信，更耀眼，
我不需要昂贵的金属和宝石，体现我的特别。
我自己是我的一切，
我可以有事业，可以去上班，
我可以自由恋爱，
一切我需要做的就是听从自己的内心，无所畏惧。
我是独立的个体，
我有自己的思想，
我拥有我自己的名字。
I am a woman

I am a woman,
I can be naughty, talk more,
I can be unkempt, running and jumping,
I can skip cooking and be lively,
When I was three, I could wear sports shoes until my feet grew to size 7.
I can go to school, study, have an education, and endlessly learn new knowledge,
I can wear all kinds of clothes,
I can change my hairstyle freely, cut off my hair,
Hair accessories are a form of decoration that highlights my beauty, makes me more confident, and shines more brightly,
I don't need precious metals and gemstones to showcase my uniqueness.
I am everything to myself,
I can have a career and go to work,
I can freely fall in love and marry the person that I love,
All I need to do is listen to my heart and be fearless.
I am an independent individual,
I have my thoughts,
I have my name.
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Yifei Kong was born on October 26th, 1995, in Beijing, China. She is a jeweler, metalsmith, and enamelist. She received her BFA in Metal from the State University of New York at New Paltz, NY, in 2022. Her work is based on Chinese women. She explores and discusses the Chinese woman's history, status, identity, and beauty, with her personal experiences. Yifei is an active member of the non-profit organization Ethical Metalsmiths. Recent exhibitions include the *Radical Jewelry Makeover: Artist Project Pop-Up Exhibition* (Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, VA), *Designing in Jewellery* (JCC Contemporary Jewellery Center, Shanghai), and *Dream Machine Exhibition* (New York City Jewelry Week, Pratt Institute Steuben Gallery, New York City, NY). She was a juror for the EM Student Committee at Ethical Metalsmiths, So Fresh + So Clean 2023.