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Expert Insight

Yumei Feng on Human-Centered Innovation, Healthcare Design, and the Synthesis of Emerging Technology and Visual Art

Yumei Feng

Interviewed by Elizaveta Akimova

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Abstract

This interview documents the professional and artistic journey of Yumei Feng, a San Francisco-based product designer, artist, and AI innovator. The text investigates the intersection of cognitive science, digital systems design, and technological solutions for global healthcare and wellbeing. Furthermore, it explores the methodology of translating complex enterprise-scale data into empathetic, user-centric interfaces and highlights the role of international creative exhibitions in advancing technological discourse.

Keywords: Product Design, Cognitive Science, Healthcare Innovation, Artificial Intelligence, Human-Centered Design, UI/UX, International Art Exhibitions, Jury Board.

Yumei Feng is an award-winning product designer, artist, and AI innovator currently based in San Francisco, California. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Cognitive Science with a specialization in Design and Interaction, alongside a minor in Marketing, from the University of California, San Diego (UCSD). Practicing at the forefront of digital strategy, Yumei has designed high-impact systems for major global enterprises through Deloitte, leading product transformations for Johnson & Johnson's healthcare infrastructure and Meta's data privacy management platforms. Her innovations have earned top honors including the Red Dot Design Award, UX Design Award, A' Design Award, Titan Design Awards, Vega Design Awards, and first place at the Microsoft Azure Responsible AI Hackathon. Her work has been exhibited at the 3rd Florence Annual International Art Exhibition, Art Shopping at the Louvre in Paris, and NYCxDESIGN.

1. Cognitive Science and Design Practice

Your academic foundation is in Cognitive Science with a focus on Design and Interaction from UC San Diego. What impact does the academic study of human cognition, memory mapping, and behavioral psychology have on your practical design skills?

My background in Cognitive Science has fundamentally shaped how I approach design. Rather than starting with technology, I start by understanding how people think, make decisions, and behave in different contexts. Studying cognition, memory, attention, and behavioral psychology taught me that every interface introduces a certain cognitive load. Good design is not just about making something visually appealing — it is about making information easier to process and interactions feel intuitive.

This foundation influences my work in two key ways. First, it helps me understand what truly motivates people to use a product. People's decisions are driven not only by logic, but also by emotion, habits, and context. This is especially important in healthcare, where users are often stressed or overwhelmed. Second, it allows me to simplify complex systems into experiences that match how people naturally think. Whether I am designing enterprise AI platforms or healthcare products like Lumi, my goal is always to reduce cognitive burden and help users focus on what matters most.

Figure 1. Lumi. An AI-powered companion for people living with digestive disorders, combining symptom tracking, personalized health insights, and empathetic conversational support.

2. Transforming Enterprise Data into User-Friendly Interfaces

You helped consolidate J&J's sales dashboard from 22 boards to 5, resulting in a dramatic increase in Net Promoter Score from -17 to 76. Which approach do you use to transform big, confusing data structures into user-friendly interfaces?

Whether I am designing enterprise software or consumer products, my process always begins with understanding human needs. In enterprise design, that often means identifying the users' core jobs to be done — what they are trying to accomplish, what decisions they need to make, and what information actually helps them succeed.

When we redesigned Johnson & Johnson's sales dashboard, the challenge was not a lack of data — it was an abundance of it. Rather than jumping straight into interface design, we spent the first several weeks interviewing stakeholders and users to understand which metrics truly influenced their daily work and decision-making. Those insights became the foundation for how we structured the entire product. Instead of displaying everything, we prioritized the most meaningful information, reduced unnecessary complexity, and organized the experience around users' workflows rather than the underlying data structure.

3. Responsible AI and Psychological Well-Being

You won 1st Place at the Microsoft Azure Responsible AI Hackathon. How should new technology like AI be developed responsibly to make people's lives better in terms of psychological well-being?

I believe AI should be designed to reduce stress, empower people, and support better decision-making — not replace human judgment or create additional uncertainty. Especially in healthcare, trust is just as important as intelligence. Winning the Microsoft Azure Responsible AI Hackathon reinforced my belief that responsible AI must be intentionally designed into a product from the very beginning.

For me, there are three core principles. First, safety: AI should operate within clear guardrails, recognize its limitations, and avoid presenting uncertain information as fact. Second, transparency: users should understand where information comes from and why the AI is making a particular recommendation. Third, empathy: technology should acknowledge the emotional experience of the person using it. While designing Lumi, I realized that people living with chronic digestive disorders often needed emotional reassurance just as much as medical information.

Figure 2. Lumi interface showing personalized health insights and empathetic conversational support.

4. Judging Creative and Technical Submissions

You have judged projects from thousands of students at the University of Washington Protothon and are now a member of the Curatone.art Jury Board. How do you assess a submission's craftsmanship and market potential while still appreciating the purely creative concept?

Serving as a judge has taught me that great work is rarely defined by a single dimension. I try to evaluate every submission from three perspectives: the strength of the idea, the quality of its execution, and the impact it has on its intended audience. The creative concept is always where I begin. I ask whether the work communicates

an authentic point of view or offers a fresh perspective. Next, I look at craftsmanship — whether the composition, technical decisions, and attention to detail reinforce the artist's vision. Finally, I consider its broader impact: the emotional resonance, cultural relevance, or ability to spark meaningful conversations.

Figure 3. EasyMed. An AI-assisted medication management platform designed to help older adults safely navigate complex medication regimens.

5. Advocating for the Business Value of Design

You saved 15,000 engineering hours on Meta's internal privacy platform. Do you have any advice for young multidisciplinary designers trying to convince others about the business value of design?

The rise of AI has changed the role of designers, but I do not believe it has diminished our value. If anything, it has shifted our focus from producing interfaces to solving the right problems. Today, anyone can generate a screen with AI. What remains uniquely human is understanding users, identifying opportunities, balancing technical constraints, and making strategic product decisions.

My advice to young multidisciplinary designers is to always frame design as a business investment, not just a creative exercise. When proposing a solution, ask yourself two questions: What user problem does this solve, and why does solving it matter to the business? The strongest design decisions are those that improve both the user experience and measurable business outcomes.

Figure 4. Orby Automation Platform. An enterprise AI automation platform enabling business users to build and manage complex workflows through an intuitive visual interface.

6. International Art Exhibitions and Design Practice

Your projects have been exhibited at the 3rd Florence Annual International Art Exhibition, Art Shopping at the Louvre in Paris, and NYCxDESIGN. How does your experience with international art exhibitions benefit your daily practice as a designer?

International exhibitions have been incredibly valuable because they allow me to share my work with a broader creative community and engage in conversations with artists and designers from different backgrounds. For me, exhibiting is not just about presenting finished work — it is about exchanging ideas, receiving new perspectives, and learning how others approach similar challenges.

Those interactions have had a meaningful impact on my own practice. They encourage me to stay curious, experiment with new ideas, and approach problems with a more open and creative mindset. Whether I am creating a digital artwork or designing an AI-powered healthcare product, I am constantly drawing inspiration from the people and conversations I have encountered through these international exhibitions.

Editorial & Review Credits

Editor-in-Chief & Interviewer: Elizaveta Akimova

Featured Expert: Yumei Feng

Peer Review Board:

Xinyue Hope Shen

Award-winning, Cornell-trained landscape architect and design critic with global project experience at SWA Group. Recognized by the National ASLA, IDA, and MUSE Design Awards, and a guest lecturer and critic at UNLV and the University of Houston.

"Yumei Feng's work demonstrates how human-centered design can translate complex healthcare and AI systems into experiences that feel intuitive, trustworthy, and emotionally supportive. Her projects,

including Lumi and EasyMed, show a thoughtful balance between cognitive science, responsible technology, and visual craftsmanship, offering a strong model for how design can improve both usability and wellbeing."

Yanwen Hang

Distinguished brand designer, visual strategist, and SAIC alumna currently spearheading global design initiatives for HashiCorp (an IBM company). Winner of multiple Type Directors Club (TDC) Certificates of Typographic Excellence and MUSE Creative Awards Platinum honors.

"This interview provides a clear look into the intersection of cognitive science and digital product design, showing how complex data can be structured into intuitive, user-centered interfaces. Feng's perspective highlights the practical side of responsible AI, illustrating how safety, transparency, and user empathy can be integrated into foundational design principles rather than treated as secondary features."

Olga Bondarenko

Award-winning designer and photographer (CAPIC, APA), Graphic Design degree (KSADA), Juno Awards photography team, and experienced art curator.

"It is always tough to balance on the intersection of artistic freedom and business needs. Yumei is a great example of someone trying to navigate the digitally uncertain times with an unbiased perspective. I believe the article can be relevant for any creative looking to get more professionally established while trying to marry their and their client's ideas."

This article has undergone an editorial review process by members of the Curatone.art Editorial Board.

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Research Context & Expert References

This interview is a foundational part of Curatone.art's ongoing research project: "The Impact of Contemporary Art and Design on Global Social Structures." Our research explores how artistic practices and digital systems design evolve into vital tools for social progress, technological ethics, and community wellbeing.

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