

ELIZABETH ULANOVA

First-generation American. Ivy League and Oxbridge alumna. Founder of an ed-tech startup - scaled from idea to global traction. Cross-sector leader in venture operations. Interdisciplinary artist and designer. Multidisciplinary researcher.

EDUCATION

Harvard University Graduate School of Design

August 2021– January 2024 | Cambridge, USA

Master in Landscape Architecture Candidate, M.L.A, Dean's Merit Scholar

- **High Impact Recognitions:** 100% Tuition Harvard Dean's Merit Scholarship (\$183,450) for being ranked at the top of my admissions class.
- **Recognitions:** 3X Harvard Innovation Lab Spark Grants (\$4500), Harvard Graduate School of Design Community Service Fellowship (\$8000), Harvard Joint Center for Studies Summer Fellowship, Harvard Graduate School of Design Travel Grant
- **Independent Study 2:** Fall 2023 Urban Design Research: "Not Just For Kids: An Inquiry Into The Foundations, Benefits, and Design Interventions Of Play Equity For Adults."
- **Independent Study 1:** Fall 2022 Art, Architectural History Research and Visual Artistic Exhibition: "Alchemy: Between The Past and Magic"
- After completing my final independent study during my 3rd year, I pivoted from my architectural studies to found G.I.R.

University of Cambridge

October 2019– November 2020 | Cambridge, UK

Master of Philosophy, M.Phil in Sociology of Media and Culture

- **Master's Thesis:** "The Influence of Social Media on Modern Romantic Relationships"
- **Recognitions:** Geoffrey Twining Egginton Prize, Downing Graduate Conference (Select Research Presenter), Downing College MCR-SCR Seminar (Select Research Presenter), Downing College Twining Egginton Exhibition (Select Exhibitor), Downing College Cedar Tree Exhibition (Select Exhibitor), Seton Cavendish Bequest Grant
- Initiated the first-ever studio art studio at Downing College by pitching to senior college staff—studio still in operation today.

Columbia University in the City of New York

September 2016– May 2019 | New York City, USA

Bachelor of Arts - B.A, Visual Arts, Magna Cum Laude, 3.86/4.00 GPA

- **Senior Thesis:** "Clashings of Art, Culture, and Technology in a Digital Anthropological World"
- **Recognitions:** Honors, Dean's List, Leadership Service Award, Senior Thesis Stipend Award, Commencement 2019 Senior Profile, Junior Marshall, First Gen Student Advisory Board, Orientation Leader, Tuition Scholarship
- I completed 2 independent studies with visual arts department chair, Matthew Buckingham in support of my thesis.

SELECT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AND RESIDENCIES

Founder and Managing Director | Girls In Research (G.I.R.)

April 2024–Present | Cambridge, USA, London, UK, and Remote

G.I.R. is the world's first global, virtual, research and tech incubator for high school girls to create university-level, original, research projects. Scaled to clients in 29 countries in under 6 months, entirely bootstrapped, and grown via direct customer engagement.

- **High Impact Recognition:** University of Cambridge Downing College Young Alumna of the Year Award (25) + Fellow of University of Cambridge, Fellow Commoner of Downing College (25-26)
- Month 1: Pre-seed from Y Combinator alum; 3-figure ARR from students in 7 countries.
- Month 2: 4-figure ARR from students in 13 countries; full tuition enrollments (\$1,800–\$2,400).
- Month 6: 5-figure ARR, enrolled students in 29 countries, applicants from 50+ countries on 5 continents.
- Month 12: Negotiated acquisition offer, led M&A due diligence; G.I.R. scholars win international awards, gold medals, etc
- Built and led all business functions including, GTM strategy, remote team operations, UK/US compliance, CRM systems, financial and payment systems, product development, talent and stakeholder management, and workflow management.
- Evaluated 1200+ student applicants and 100+ global mentors; designed full curriculum for 3 research scholar programs (available in 150+ subjects) in 6 distinct field tracks; 2 app-builder programs; university workshops; and paneled guest talks.
- Produced, executed, and designed 4 global research digital symposiums called "Demo Days", aired live in 20+ time zones.
- Personally mentored students from 9 countries in the social sciences track, arts track, business track, and humanities track.
- **Select Additional Recognitions as CEO:** The Volition Project (Entrepreneur-In-Residence), Harvard I-Lab (Visiting Panelist), Cambridge Innovation Center (Social Incubator Program Acceptee), Columbia Tamer Fund (Semi-Finalist).

Fellow Commoner | University of Cambridge Downing College

October 2025–Present | Cambridge, UK, and Remote

-Named University of Cambridge's Downing College Young Alumni of the Year and elected Fellow Commoner of Downing College for 2025-2026. Mentoring community in social entrepreneurship, education equity, and sustainable impact.

Entrepreneur In Residence | The Volition Project

April 2024–Present | Cambridge, USA, and Remote

-Won Harvard competition to be paired with Volition's CEO. Became the first-ever entrepreneur-in-residence. Applied advanced business frameworks to optimize GIR's revenue model, user acquisition, program expansion, and stakeholder management.

Founder and Lead Operations of Recess (Startup) as Venture Program Fellow | Harvard Innovation Lab

September 2022–April 2024 | Cambridge, USA

-Successfully executed pilot of "Recess Games" in Boston. Led R&D, product design, event coordination, media marketing, and community outreach. Secured 3 Harvard Spark Grants and won pitch competitions. Coordinated partnerships with Boston cultural hubs such as CultureHouse and Industry Lab for live Recess installation game events with players all over Boston.

Artist In Residence | Industry Lab

June 2023–September 2023 | Cambridge, USA

-Invented a way to sculpt biowax utilizing water molecules. Curated a month-long solo exhibition, *Fluid Memory*, which included painting, sculpture, video, and mixed media installation from August 18 to September 15, 2023, attracting a diverse audience of 300+ through the exhibit and receptions. Engaged with the local startup community at IL through artist talks and workshops.

Harvard Joint Center For Housing Studies Fellow & Community Design Intern | CultureHouse

June 2023–September 2023 | Boston, USA

-Selected as a Harvard GSD Community Service Fellow, fully funded through a competitive summer fellowship that supports research-informed design initiatives.

-Data-driven analytics, placemaking, and digital design (Photoshop, Illustrator, Rhino, Final Cut Pro X, and CAD).

Graduate Teaching Assistant | Harvard University Graduate School of Design

August 2022–December 2022 | Cambridge, USA

-Class administration and coordination for Harvard graduate course under Professor Ed Eigen for History of Landscape Architecture I.

Co-Head of U.S Expansion | Project Access International

September 2018–August 2019 | New York, USA, London UK, Vienna, Austria, and Remote

-Launched the USA version of PA by directing strategy, partnerships, product development, tech, and marketing. Co-founded 5 Ivy League campus teams (under 5 months), established a global research task force, and trained staff and students worldwide.

National President Emeritus | National Ivy League Student Council (Ivy Council)

January 2017–May 2019 | New York, USA, and Remote

-President Emeritus ('19), President ('18), Vice President of Technology ('17-18), Columbia Head Delegate ('17), Elected from regional conference director to national president in 1.5 years. Executive management, including 30 officers and 1300 members.

Entrepreneur In Residence and Founder of Penpairs (Startup) | Richi Childhood Cancer Foundation

March 2016–August 2016 | Boston, USA

-Pitched to CEO to become first-ever entrepreneur-in-residence after showing him a demo of PenPairs at Harvard SECON 2016.

-Supported Richi's 15 startups in strategic operations, market research, pitch design, event planning, GTM, and talent sourcing.

NOTABLE RESEARCH PROJECTS

"Ingenuity Ecology" | *April 2024–Present | Systemic Framework | Main Sponsor: Girls In Research and The Volition Project*
Developing a systemic framework that centers overlooked human ingenuity as a vital global resource. Applied through Girls In Research, its first live prototype, featuring multiple global "Demo Days" showcasing diverse research—from beta-cell analysis to stock market volatility and quantum physics—across 20+ time zones, serving as a live proof of concept.

“Recess: An Intervention of Using Live Play To Grow Community, Combat Aging, and Social Isolation For Adults” | September 2022-April 2024 | *Live Public Health Interactive Project* | *Main Sponsor: Harvard Innovation Lab*
Conducted comprehensive market research and competitive analysis of the adult fitness sector. Led the design, coordination, and execution of live pop-up game events in collaboration with strategic community partners. 3X Harvard Spark Grants (\$4500)

“Not Just For Kids: An Inquiry Into The Foundations, Benefits, and Design Interventions Of Play Equity For Adults” | September 2023-December 2023 | *Independent Research Study* | *Harvard University Department of Landscape Architecture*
Advocating play equity as a fundamental adult right, linking design interventions to urban well-being, including an interview with renowned Carve’s founder Elger Blitz.

“PlayScape Renewal: Transforming Rumney Marsh Landfill and Nahant Garbage Dump Into A Public Space For Natural Play” | September 2023-December 2023 | *Core 3 Studio Final* | *Harvard Department of Landscape Architecture*
Designed a landfill master plan for dual sites. Utilized GIS mapping, 3D Rhino modeling, Photoshop and Illustrator rendering, environmental analysis, stakeholder engagement, and regenerative sustainability principles.

“Fluid Memory” | August 2023-September 2023 | *Solo Art Residency Exhibition* | *Main Sponsor: Industry Lab*
Produced a multidisciplinary art exhibition exploring themes of memory, loss, and resilience through acrylic painting, wax sculpture, and video installations. Included opening reception, closing reception, and live 3-month solo public exhibition.

“Project (Re)Generation: A Cemetery For The Future Utilizing Mushroom Burial Suits and Memoric Planting Schemes” | January 2023-May 2023 | *Core 2 Studio Final* | *Harvard Department of Landscape Architecture*
Designed a cemetery master plan integrating biodegradable burial garments inoculated with mycelium. Utilized 3D Rhino modeling, GIS mapping, Illustrator renders, physical models, and environmental systems analysis.

“Alchemy: Between The Past and Magic: Abstracting 20th Century Chinese Art Into A 21st Century Art Collection” | September 2022-December 2022 | *Independent Research Study* | *Harvard University Department of Landscape Architecture*
Reinterpreted Chinese art history concepts through an exhibition of contemporary sculptures, paintings, and poetry, employing an original beeswax sculpting method.

“The Influence Of Social Media On Modern Romantic Relationships” | January 2020-November 2020 | *Master’s Thesis* | *University of Cambridge Department of Sociology*
Literature review analyzing existing empirical studies, including identifying key research gaps in the demographic representation of data samples. Presented at University of Cambridge Downing College Graduate Conference 2020 and University of Cambridge Downing College MCR-SCR Seminar 2020.

“The Privilege of Media Representation: Social Opacity In An Age of #MeToo” | November 2019 | *Field Review Paper* | *University of Cambridge Department of Sociology*
Critically examined how the #MeToo movement exposed persistent inequities in media visibility, voice, and epistemic privilege. Analyzed the structural dynamics of representation to reveal how systems of power obscure and selectively amplify narratives.

“Clashings Of Art, Culture, And Technology In A Digital Anthropological World” | January 2018-December 2018 | *Studio and Film-Based Bachelor’s Thesis* | *Columbia University Department of Visual Arts*
Created a multimedia thesis comprising 3 original films and 3 original kinetic installations exploring sociocultural impacts of futuristic technologies on human behavior. Exhibited at Leroy Neiman Gallery, New York City.

SELECT ARTISTIC EXHIBITIONS, POETIC PERFORMANCE, AND LIVE INSTALLATIONS

Exhibited Visual Artist and Spoken Word Artist in Boston, New York, and England

2024 - "Boston Arts and Culture: Fay Chandler Emerging Art Exhibition", **Boston City Hall Galleries**, November 18 to December 27, 2024. Curator: City Of Boston, Mayor's Office

2024 - "In Celebration Of AAPI Heritage Month", **CultureHouse Union Square**, Somerville, MA, May 8th - June 9th, 2024, Curator: Stephanie Irigoyen

2024 - "Boston Voices", The Napkin Poetry Review + Soho House Boston, **Laisun Keane Gallery**, Boston, MA, April 25th,

2024, Curators: Caroline King and Laisun Keane

2024 - "In Pursuit of Well-Being", Group Art Exhibition, **Industry Lab**, Cambridge, MA, March 29 - April 12, 2024. Curated by Zoe Kurstritz

2024 - "March Outspoken Saturdays" **Boston GBH BPL TV Filming Studio**, New England's First Public Broadcasting Radio and Television - Poetry & Spoken Word. Curator: Amanda Shea

2024 - "Boston Voices", The Napkin Poetry Review , **Abigail Ogilvy Gallery**, Boston, MA, Jan 25th, 2024, Curators: Caroline King and Courtney Jacobovits

2023 - "Swan Song", Sidewalk Video Gallery, **Fountain Street Fine Art**, November 2-29, 2023. Curator: Marie Craig

2023 - "New Language: Contemporary Abstraction", National Juried Exhibition, **Gallery 263**, Cambridge, MA, October 12 -November 4, 2023. Jury and Curator: Daniela Rivera

2023 - "Fluid Memory," Solo Artist Residency Exhibition, **Industry Lab**, Cambridge, MA, August 18 - September 15, 2023. Curator: Justice McDaniel

2023 - Recess Pop Up Game x **Industry Lab**, July 31st 2023, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Curator and Host.

2023 - Recess Pop Up Game x **Culture House**, July 21st 2023, Somerville, Massachusetts. Curator and Host.

2023 - "Harvard Graduate School of Design Studios & Seminars Spring 2023" (Included In Group Exhibit of Students In STU1112), **Druker Design Gallery**, Harvard Graduate School of Design, Cambridge, MA. April 2023.

2022 - "Alchemy: Between the Past and Magic," (Final Presentation of Independent Study For ADV9201), **Gund Hall, Harvard University Graduate School of Design**, Cambridge, MA. December 2022.

2021 - "Design Award 2021 Exhibition" **A + D Architecture and Design Museum**, Los Angeles, California (In Collaboration with Anna Stevens as writer for Steven's "Palka" exhibit).

2020 - "Twining Egginton 2020 Exhibition" **Heong Gallery, Downing College, University of Cambridge**, Cambridge, England (Virtual Exhibit). Jury and Curator: Vicky Ambery Smith

2020 - "Cedar Tree Exhibition" Battcock Lodge, **Downing College, University of Cambridge**, Cambridge, England. Jury and Curator: Vicky Ambery Smith

2018 - "Columbia University Fall 2018 Senior Thesis Presentation", **Leroy Neiman Gallery, Columbia University**, Manhattan, New York. Curator: Nicola Lopez and Serra Bothwell Fels

2018 - "Fall 2018 Visual Arts Department Exhibition" **Prentis Hall, Columbia University**, Manhattan, New York. Curator: Nicola Lopez

2018 -"Spring 2018 Visual Arts Department Exhibition" **Prentis Hall, Columbia University**, Manhattan, New York. Curator: Nicola Lopez

2017 - "Fall 2017 Visual Arts Department Exhibition" **Prentis Hall, Columbia University**, Manhattan, New York. Curator: Nicola Lopez

2017 - "Spring 2017 Visual Arts Department Exhibition" **Prentis Hall, Columbia University**, Manhattan, New York. Curator: Nicola Lopez

SELECT PRESENTATIONS, CONFERENCES, TALKS, AND PRESS

New York, England, Boston, Remote, and Virtual

2025 - Curator and Host, "Girls In Research: Demo Day" **From Transcriptomic Analysis of Dysregulated Beta-Cells to Stock Market Volatility During Natural Disasters**", May 17, 2025, Remotely Live Streamed To Viewers in 20+ Time Zones

2025 - Curator and Host, "Girls In Research: Demo Hour", **A Global Research Symposium: From Corporate Oil Accountability to Emotional Recognition in Education Software**", February 8th, 2025, Remotely Live Streamed To Viewers in 20+ Time Zones

2024 - Curator and Host, "Girls In Research: Demo Day", **A Global Research Symposium: From Multimodal Deep Learning Models to Replicating Lotus Hydrophobicity**", November 9th, 2024, Remotely Live Streamed To Viewers in 20+ Time Zones

2024 -Curator and Host, "Girls In Research: Demo Day", **A Global Research Symposium: From Nutrition Dense Food Powders to The Impacts of Quantum Physics on Morality**, August 11th, 2024, Remotely Live Streamed To Viewers in 20+ Time Zones

2024 - Paneled Discussion, "Women Founders Entrepreneurship Panel for Dana Hall Summer Entrepreneurship Program", **Harvard Innovation Lab**, June 17, 2024, Curator: Peter Gladstone

2024 - Lecture, "Play Equity Beyond Childhood: Designing for Adult Well-Being in Urban Environments", **Design Research Forum**, Harvard Graduate School of Design, April 18, 2024

2023 - Press, "Summer 2023 Fellows", **Harvard University Joint Center For Housing Studies**, May 31, 2023, Author: David Luberof

2023 - Lecture: Artist Show and Tell: Elizabeth Ulanova, **Industry Lab**, Cambridge, Massachusetts, July 13, 2023, Curator: Justice McDaniel

2022 - Final Presentation For Independent Study: "On Zhang DaQian and Alchemy: Between the Past and Magic", Independent Study Exhibition, Gund Hall, **Harvard University Graduate School of Design**, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

2021 - Press, "Notable Alumni, Alumni Notes", **The Owl Magazine, Columbia University**

2020 - Lecture, "The Influence of Social Media on Modern Romantic Relationships", **Downing Graduate Conference, Downing College, University of Cambridge**

2020 - Lecture, "Social Intimacy In An Age of Technology Inspired Culture", **MCR Seminar, Downing College, University of Cambridge**

2019 - Press, "Elizabeth Ulanova Is Where Art Meets Technology Meets Axe Throwing", **The Eye Feature, Columbia Daily Spectator**, Columbia University

ADVISED PROJECTS (SELECT RESEARCH TEACHING AND MENTORING EXPERIENCE)

- 2025, Sophia Osasere, Halifax Canada, "The impact of differential pain bias on teenage mothers, black mothers, and white mothers and the intersectionality of race and age on effective pain management and treatment." Girls In Research Social Science and Natural Sciences Combo Track
- 2025, Shadrika Tarafdar, New Delhi India, "Exploring Gender Bias in the Aerospace industry and to what extent it affects their decision making in projects", Girls In Research Social Science and Natural Sciences Combo Track
- 2025, Yenglik Shonbay, Almaty Kazakstan, "Behavior and Stock Market Volatility During Natural Disasters: A Comparative Study of Japan and Chile", Girls In Research Business and Finance Track
- 2024, Adriana Lazarte, La Paz Bolivia, "Causes and Effects of Second Hand Hearing Loss In Relatives Of The Deaf", Girls In Research Tech and Social Sciences Combo Track
- 2024, Tomiris Kassymova, Astana Kazakstan, "Disabled interactions within the progress of inclusive education in Kazakhstan", Girls In Research Social Sciences Track
- 2024, Kateryna Huba, "Comparing Ukraine and the Baltic States: Pathways to EU Membership and the Impact of Russian Influence", Girls In Research Social Sciences Track
- 2024, Wairimu Karanu, Nairobi Kenya, "Theoretical Physics Provides An Argument Against Materialism", Girls In

Research Social Sciences and Natural Sciences Combo Track

- 2024, Milagros Tacacho, Salta Argentina, “Public Policies and Their Impact on Argentina's Nuclear Energy Sector: A Critical Analysis of Ley de Bases, Girls In Research Social Sciences and Natural Sciences Combo Track

SPECIAL SKILLS

International: Mandarin Chinese (HSK Level 5) | Lived in Asia, Europe, North America, North Africa, Oceania |

Software: Rhino | Grasshopper | Ladybug | Photoshop | Illustrator | Final Cut Pro X ArcGis | AutoCad | Final Cut Pro X | Trello | Monday | Wise | Obsidian | Loom | Whereby | Airtable | Slack | Calendly | Stripe | Strikingly | Revolut | Microsoft Suite

Digital and Physical Fabrication: 3D Printing | LaserCut | Foamcutter | Wax Sculpting | Landscape Model Building|

Fine Arts: Oil Painting | Acrylic Painting | Mixed Media Installation | Plaster Sculpting | Film Cinematography, Editing, Scriptwriting | DSLR Photography |

Business Operations: Strategic Leadership & Operations | Global Talent & Stakeholder Management | Product Development & Go-To-Market Strategy | Customer Relationship Management | Data-Driven Decision Making & Analytics | Project & Workflow Management | Payment Systems & Financial Operations | Process Optimization | Risk Assessment & Mitigation | Business Process Engineering | Market Research & Competitive Analysis | Thought Leadership | KPI & Performance Metrics

Education Workflows: Curriculum Planning | Education & Digital Learning Platforms | Virtual Team Management & Remote Work Pipeline | Project-Based Learning (PBL) | STEAM Program Development | Digital Literacy & Research Skills Education | Student Pipeline Development | Academic Mentorship Models | Educational Equity & Inclusion Strategies | Global Classroom Facilitation | Hybrid & Asynchronous Learning Design | Educational Technology Integration | Learning Management Systems (LMS) Optimization | Assessment & Evaluation Frameworks | Pedagogical Innovation | Talent Development & Capacity Building for Educators | Educational Grant Writing & Program Funding Strategy

Additional: Senior Dog Caregiver, Full Service Bartender