

# Yang Mei Zhu Xie Street Beijing's Most Artistic Hutong

Text Sun Morong

What comes to mind when people think of Beijing is usually Tiananmen Square, the Great Wall or the Forbidden City. However, if you wish to feel the timeless pulse of real Beijing life, Yang Mei Zhu Xie Street is a place you must explore.

Located southwest of Tiananmen Square, Yang Mei Zhu Xie Street is a typical hutong, or traditional alleyway, as well as a cradle of contemporary Chinese art. It is a perfect mixture of history and modern life.

## Mixing past and present

Unlike the overcrowded Nanluogu Xiang or Wudaoying hutong, Yang Mei Zhu Xie Street is not geared to tourists or Westerners. It preserves the cultural soul of Beijing while featuring avant-garde music studios, art workshops, ancient bookstores, experimental galleries, traditional coffee shops and teahouses.

Wandering the street, one can witness real daily life in Beijing unfold like a hand scroll. You can see locals playing the Chinese street chess game *xiangqi*, getting a haircut outdoors in the traditional way, chatting enthusiastically with each other, or simply basking in the warm sunshine while enjoying a cup of tea.

It is a great place for visitors to spend a leisurely afternoon. Many architects, artists, musicians and craftsmen have come to the street and given it new life, rebuilding it into a lively, artistic district.

## Fascinating history

Yang Mei Zhu Xie Street enjoys a rich history of more than 500 years. Only 496 meters in length, it was home to seven prestigious publishing houses, and many famous writers and musicians in the last years of the Qing Dynasty. In addition, it also boasted Qingyun Ge, one of the most famous department stores and salons in the late Qin Dynasty, where China's brightest intellectuals assembled. Among them were

China's greatest modern writer Lu Xun; prominent political thinker Kang Youwei; reformist Liang Qichao; and even warlord Cai E, all of whom shaped the history of China.



## Ubi Gallery

Established in 2012, Ubi Gallery is a leading center for cultural and artistic exchange for established designers and rising Chinese talents in the field of contemporary jewelry and ceramic design.

Ubi means “where”, and refers to asking questions about moving and arriving. The gallery offers a platform to great designers and artists who, through their work, keep people guessing. It showcases wearable and usable contemporary art for sale, which means visitors can seek out cleverly designed limited-edition jewelry and tableware.

Its founder, Machtelt Schelling,



was the cultural counselor of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in China. Due to her interest in jewelry and contemporary Chinese art, she set up the gallery in 2012.

“Yang Mei Zhu Xie Street is one of the most historic streets in Beijing, which combines both the lifestyle of royal families and of the common people. It is not like 798 Art Zone, Sanlitun or Nanluogu

Xiang, which are too commercial,” Schelling said.

**Opening hours:** 11 a.m.-8 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday  
**Address:** No. 62, Yang Mei Zhu Xie Street, Dashilar, Xicheng District, Beijing  
**Tel:** + 86 10 6301 2382  
**Email:** info@ubigallery.com  
**Web:** www.ubigallery.com

## Cai Ci Fang

Despite its humble appearance, Cai Ci Fang is a mine of gems for people who love traditional Chinese art and porcelain. It showcases a wide selection of jewelry and ornaments made from shards of ancient porcelain. The pieces include bracelets, rings, necklaces, pendants, earrings, cufflinks and decorative objects like jewel cases, lamps, bags and traditional Mandarin gowns.

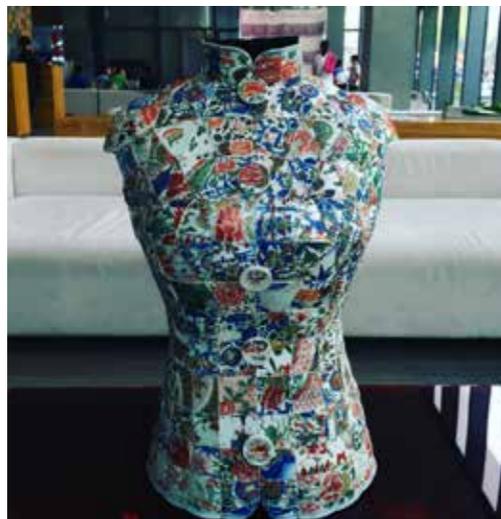
Its founder, Wang Shenxiang, inherited the almost-lost art from his grandparents, who were jewelry craftsmen in the Qing Dynasty. He registered the brand and set up the workshop in 2007. The artisans of his workshop have more than 30 years' experience of assembling small fragments of porcelain into new pieces of jewelry. Cai Ci Fang's clients range from embassies in Beijing to museums across China.

**Opening hours:**

10 a.m.-7:30 p.m.  
Monday-Sunday

**Address:** No.35, Yang Mei Zhu Xie Street, Dashilar, Xicheng District, Beijing

**Tel:** + 86 13167325166



## Ziinlife

Opened in the summer of 2013, Ziinlife has quickly grown into one of China's most representative furniture design brands and is highly recognized both at home and abroad. It won the Golden Pin design award in Taiwan in both 2014 and 2015.

One of its founders, Kiran Zhu, came back to China after graduating from the Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera di Milano in Italy. Out of his wish to make quality furniture accessible and affordable, Zhu founded the brand with his friend Yang Xili.

Even though furniture and ornaments designed by Ziinlife are simple in expression, they are usually multifunctional and therefore fill spaces with wonder and delight. The company hopes to help people discover the hidden beauty in ordinary life through its works.



**Opening hours:**

11 a.m.-8 p.m.  
Monday-Sunday

**Address:** No. 79, Yang Mei Zhu Xie Street, Dashilar, Xicheng District, Beijing

**Tel:** 400-9103076

**Web:** www.ziinlife.com

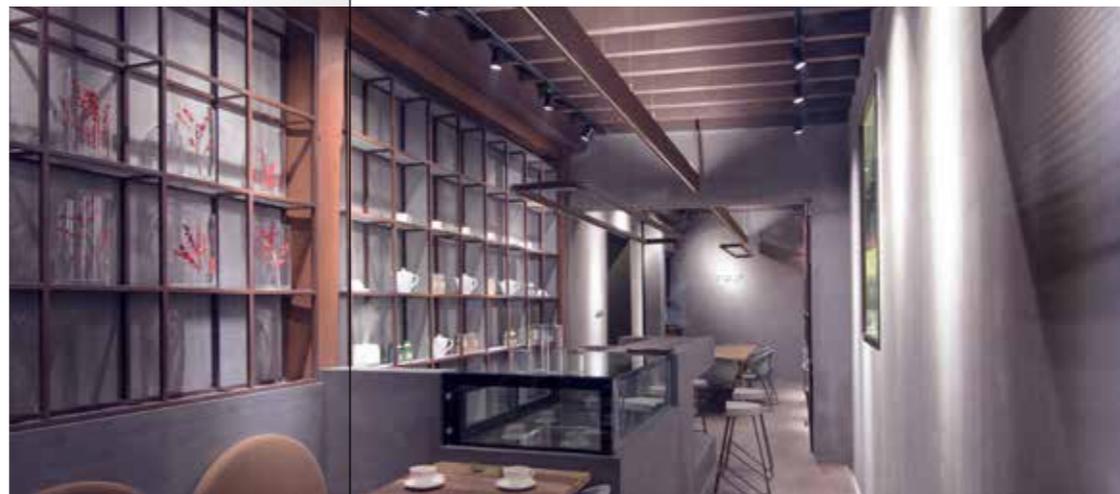


**Opening hours:**

11 a.m.-8:30 p.m. in winter,  
11 a.m.-9 p.m. in summer,  
daily except Tuesday

**Address:** No. 6, Yang Mei Zhu Xie Street, Dashilar, Xicheng District, Beijing

**Tel:** + 86 10 63018732



## YUAN' Mousse & Flower

YUAN' Mousse & Flower is a fashionable teahouse that serves delicate desserts, flowers and offers a display space for talented young designers.

YUAN' Mousse & Flower is located in what used to be a Mahjong house during the Qing Dynasty. Majoring in design, Yuan's owner renovated it into a modern-style teahouse. Inspired by her talented friend who gave up his dream of becoming an artist, she left her career in real estate and opened Yuan, a place for young artists to exchange ideas and display their works.

One of the special dishes of YUAN' Mousse & Flower is its chestnut mousse cake, which is rich yet incredibly light, silky smooth and indescribably delicious.

