

## Overview

[The Global Health Education and Learning Incubator at Harvard University](#) (GHELI) supports interdisciplinary education about world health through the production, curation, and dissemination of educational public goods. This exemplar work was a final project for “World Health: Challenges and Opportunities,” a General Education course at Harvard College taught by GHELI Faculty Director Sue J. Goldie. For this creative assessment designed with support from GHELI, students systematically analyze a societal health challenge they care about and create a “real world” product intended to influence policy or motivate change.

## Abstract

A digital art piece to challenge viewers to reflect on and change behaviors that contribute to the prevalent issue of second-hand smoke exposure among children in China.

## Artist

Alina Yu (2024)

## Caption

Second-hand smoke (SHS) poses a significant global health challenge, particularly impacting children's health due to their developing bodies and the involuntary nature of their exposure. In China, the world's largest consumer and producer of tobacco, this issue is exacerbated by cultural norms around smoking and high smoking rates among adults. According to a comprehensive study of Chinese households, the prevalence of household SHS was 41.7%. The authors also found the prevalence of SHS exposure was 80% among adolescents aged 12–15, and 72.9% of junior high school students see smoking in homes, indoor and outdoor public places, or public transport. This digital artwork aims to change behaviors around smoking to reduce SHS exposure among children in China.

## Artist Lens

看不见的礼物：二手烟的无声影响 Unseen Gifts: The Silent Impact of Second-Hand Smoke is a provocative digital art piece that juxtaposes traditional Chinese values of filial piety and caring for the young with the unintended harm we inflict on younger generations through second-hand smoke. In China, where the act of giving red envelopes to children during Chinese New Year is deeply embedded in the culture, this piece uses the symbol of a red envelope—which traditionally contains money and blessings—to expose a harsh reality. Instead of prosperity and good fortune, the envelope releases cigarettes and smoke, embodying the dangerous gift of second-hand smoke that many children unwittingly receive from the older generation. The choice of this imagery is deliberate, aimed at creating a contrast from the societal norm where the older generation is expected to protect and nurture the younger. This piece challenges viewers to reflect on and change behaviors that contribute to the prevalent issue of second-hand smoke exposure among children in China, where smoking is widespread.

Artistically, the piece employs a crayon-like brush and scribbly visual elements to strengthen the juxtaposition between child-like innocence and the gravity of the subject matter. The visual style not only captures attention but also enhances the emotional impact, portraying the child in with a child-like and innocent aesthetic, holding an envelope filled with cigarettes—a stark and unsettling contrast. The child stares directly at the viewer, leaving no room for uncertainty as to who bears responsibility for this unseen gift. This direct engagement asks the audience, smoking Chinese adults, to acknowledge their role in perpetuating this harmful cycle and challenges them to take action. Furthermore, the cigarettes obscuring the child's mouth symbolize the silenced voices of children affected by adult choices as a child has no say in their exposure to second-hand smoke. Through this artwork, the message is clear: it is up to the adult viewer to protect children and ensure they are not exposed to the lifelong health detriments of second-hand smoke.

## Media

Digital Illustration

