

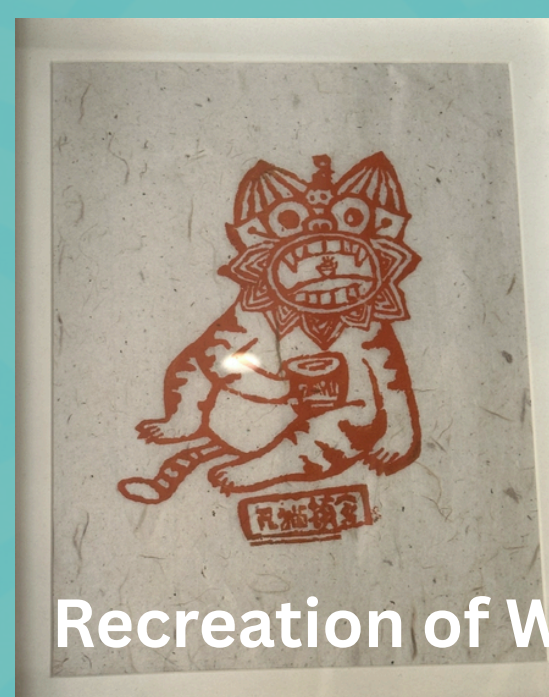
Leadership In Action Project: Preserving and Promoting Wamao in Dali

I was fortunate to join the Dali Wamao Clay Workshop in Dali, province of Yunnan, where artisans continue the tradition of making Wamao.

It is a clay roof guardians believed to protect homes, bring peace and goodwill. This craft carries strong cultural meaning but faces challenges today as fewer young people are willing to learn. The aim of my project was to protect and promote Wamao through practice-based learning and digital storytelling sharing. Over six weeks, I learned Wamao-making techniques at the workshop, interviewed local practitioners, visited museums to collect cultural information, and shared these stories through social media posts to reach wider audiences.

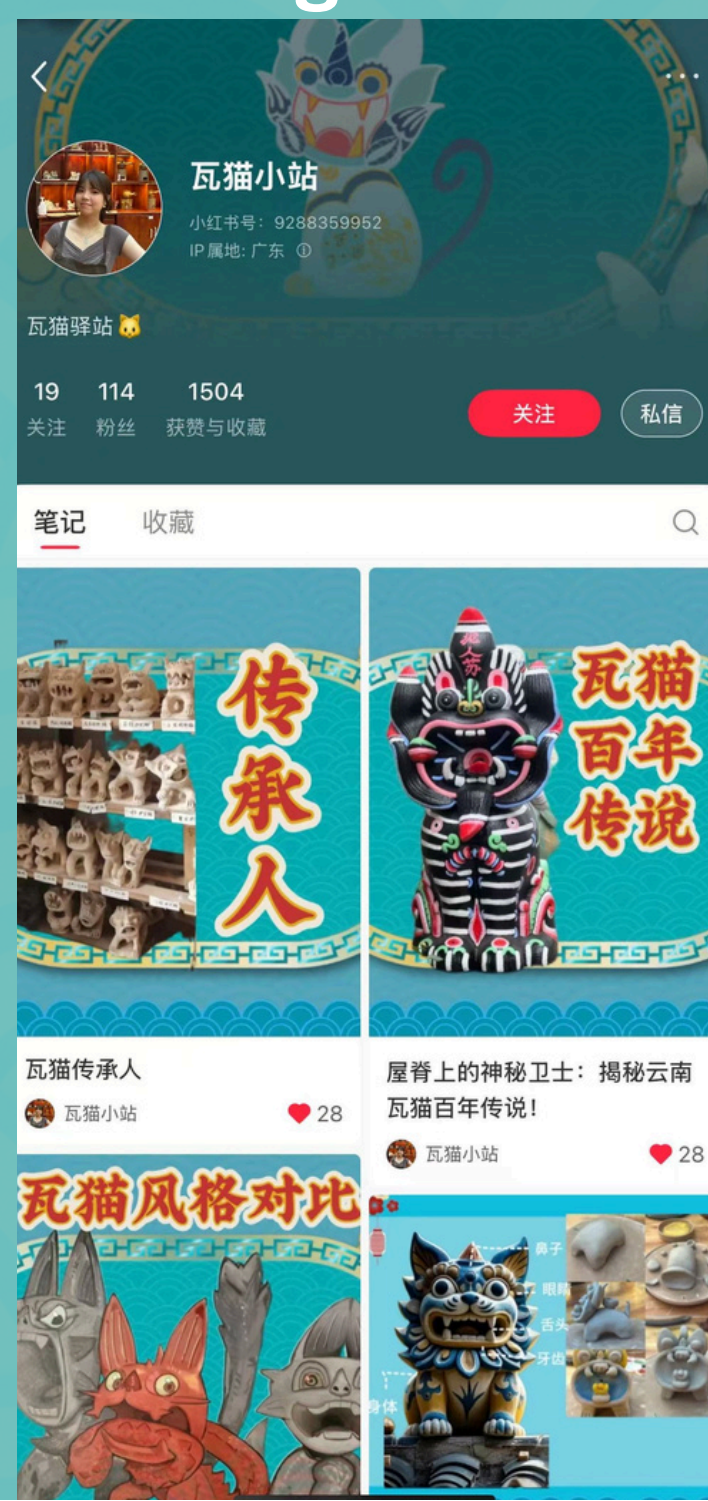
Learning the Craft

I spent six weeks at the Dali Wamao Clay Workshop, learning step by step how to make Wamao from local artisans. From choosing and preparing the clay to shaping, carving, and assembling the details, I was able to complete several Wamao pieces. The process was not always smooth as some of my pieces cracked or collapsed at first, but with guidance I gradually learned to adjust my technique and pay attention to detail. At the end, I also brought the pieces to a local market together with the artisans. Some tourists stopped to ask about Wamao, which gave me the chance to share what I had learned about its history and cultural meaning.



Recreation of Wamao

Sharing on social media



The Local Market



Digital sharing and promotion

Alongside learning the craft, I tried to document and promote Wamao culture through digital platforms. Because right now the reliable online information was limited, I went to local museums to collect historical materials and interviewed two people. A traditional artisan and a young learner experimenting with new forms to understand both traditional views and modern reinterpretations and new opportunities about Wamao's development. Using this material, I created seven posts on social media platform Xiaohongshu covering the craft process, its cultural background, and different stylistic approaches. These posts reached over 5,000 views and received several hundred likes, showing how digital media can help bring attention to a local tradition that is not widely known online.