

XIAO KE × ZI HAN

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# CHINAME

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XIAO KE × ZI HAN  
**2018-2019**





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**CHINAME**

CHINAME is a global project start from 2018, this book contains project introduction and the work-in progress version in Germany, Netherlands and Taipei.

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CHINAME is a contemporary theater project started by Xiaoke x Zihan in 2018. The two artists began to explore personal identity and national identity in their life experiences. In the current world pattern in which right-leaning nationalism gradually emerges, the artist seeks to reflect on the national community from the individual's anxiety. Confusion about personal identity is often talked about in the travel life of the two artists.

For Chinese identity exploration, it is a long and complicated process. Based on different backgrounds, such as sociology, anthropology, history, contemporary international economics and political science, the definition of Chinese is different. The impact of the phenomenon that China is labeled is everywhere in everyday life. For the young generation from mainland China, what is the perception of Chinese? For the young generation of Chinese outside of mainland China, what is their interpretation of the Chinese identity? The two artists tried to find out the commonality of Chinese at different levels of cognition through face-to-face communication. They seem to be doing a stubborn thing, which is bound to activate a series of sensitive switches.



Performance review, TV news made by XIAO KE x ZI HAN.

Is Chinese a community of imagination or is it real?

What is Chinese?

1: Some scholars believe that the nation has existed since the early human history. Other scholars believe that the nation is a product of modernity and is created for the purpose of economic and political interests. It is related to the contemporary context of the national framework and expressly expresses its recognition in relation to domestic or foreign policies. For example, it is a “community of interest” for the recognition of immigration or migration policies.



Posters(on page 3 and 5) for CHINAME Germany and Netherlands version 2018.  
Photo by Zi Han





Lecture presentation review, photo from Taipei Performing Arts Center.

2: As two artists who grew up in mainland China, they believe that they live in a distorted "internal world," and that the relative "outside world" is also another distorted world. Both of these constitute a double-distorted world. Wandering life makes them switch from inside to outside. Is this a step closer to reality? Are the puzzles of "What is Chinese?" always going with them to the end of the journey?

3: The self wants to know oneself. It must be observed by others other than the self. This is no exception for any individual or cultural identity. However, what the self sees is not the true other, but the image of the self, which is a "other" constructed and interpreted by the self.

Who is my "other"? Some people speak with us in common language and have the same skin color but come from different places and live in different contexts. Do they belong to the imaginary community? Or are they completely different? Or is it a real community? Or is it an imaginary other?



Performance review, show the gene test results of Xiao Ke and Zi Han.

Photo by Juergen Staack

Faced with complex Chinese, different regions are interrelated to each other, in order to highlight and alert themselves who are confusing. Is this complex relationship, in addition to maintaining the interests of the region's common people, whether it can also serve as a category for exploring the internal expansion of nationalism?

How do Chinese in different regions explain our respective or common identities when faced with a common other?

4: Rethinking the History of Mankind from the colonial era of the industrial revolution to the post-colonial era, the education of the Chinese nation in the Chinese region has always been strengthened under the strong context of the differences between the East and the West. The subtle impact of nationalism brought about by national consciousness has manifested in different regions and with different characteristics.





Portrait of CHINAME project interviewee, Da Bao, in Guangzhou, China.



Portrait of CHINAME project interviewee\_Kingston, in Penang, Malaysia.



Portrait of CHINAME project interviewee, Zhang Shi Xu, in Düsseldorf, Germany.



Portrait of CHINAME project interviewee\_Szu Ni Wen, in Taipei.  
Photo by Zi Han

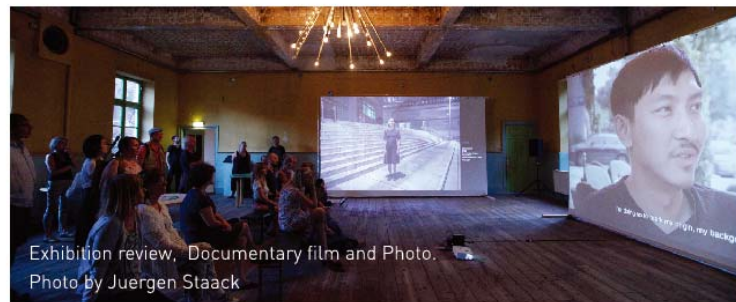


In the post-colonial era of globalization, cultures are blending with each other. This mixed nature makes it difficult for East and West to be separated from each other. However, Chinese people always have a strong desire to distinguish one another. If you imagine a scenario that does not follow the concept of division of state administration and does not distinguish one from the other according to the criteria of the interest community, then how do we explain who we are?

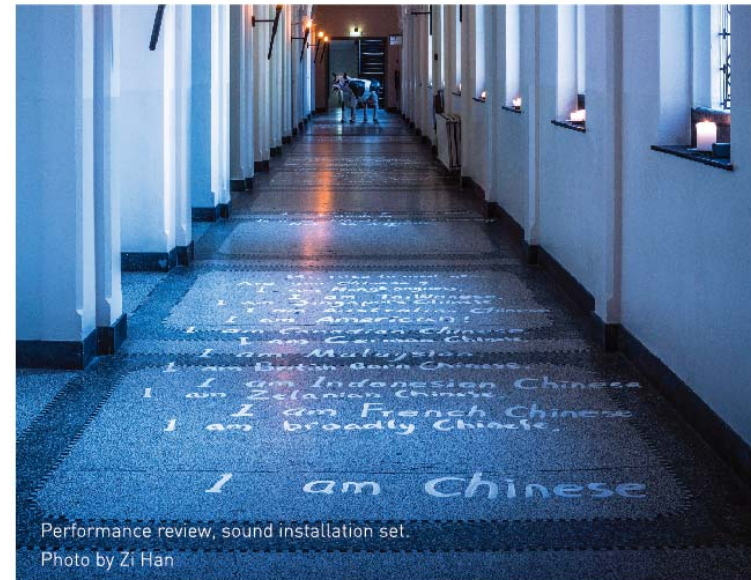
The two artists merged CHINA and NAME to recreate CHINAME. Just as we cannot choose how to come to this world, We can not choose to be given a name, but we are trying to explain who we are.

This art project takes the form of a wandering work and conducts research visits in different regions. And it forms the live performance of different regional versions, and at the same time, it displays the interview documentaries and portraits. It tries to open a temporary contact zone for Chinese identity.

This is a confusing topic, and in the process of exploration, the two artists are constantly confused. If Chinese itself is a synonym for confusion, then their live performance is the expression of confusion and honesty. The introduction of the above tedious work texts confirms this.



Exhibition review, Documentary film and Photo.  
Photo by Juergen Staack



Performance review, sound installation set.  
Photo by Zi Han

Germany and Netherlands 2018 is the first version of CHINAME. The creation is based on TAIFUN Project Residenz Niederrhein.

#### **Co-production\_**

TAIFUN Project, Roepaen Podium (CHINAME in Roepaen version)



**Cooperation\_** Theater im Fluss (Kleve)

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