

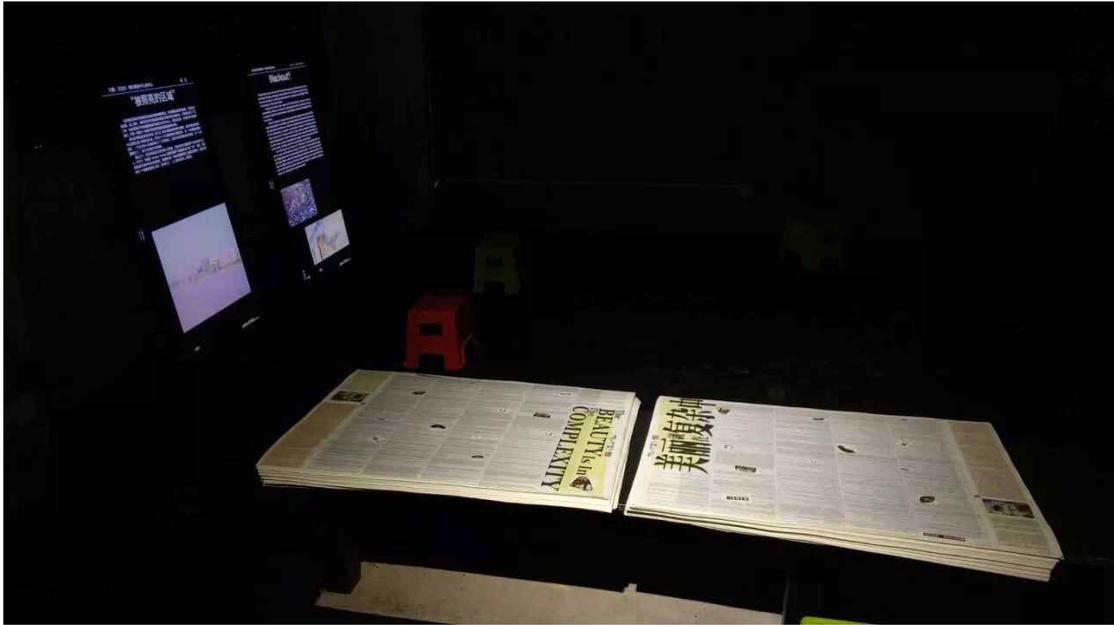
## An Interview on “ChinAfrica” Project with Huang Xiaopeng

Author/Interviewer/Weng Xinxin

Five Hundred Words (Wubaizi) Artist/Curator a narration of the recent practice

Huang Xiaopeng is the member and person in charge of the Guangzhou team of “ChinAfrica” project. Through the project, he wants to draw people’s attention to black people living in Guangzhou, and make them understand them, rather than ignoring this group who live in the same city with us. In the project, artists show the connection between Africa and China using different methods. They had discussions on plans, and the discussion of plans also became one of the works of the project – “Beauty is in the Complex”. The project has been exhibited at the Leipzig Contemporary Art Museum (GFZK Leipzig) this year. This time, Chinafrica participated in the Shenzhen-Hong Kong Bi-City Biennale of Urban/Architecture with the theme of "Blackout", and it has been supported by New Century Art Foundation.

In 2012, when Huangbian Station was established, I mentioned about the situation of the African community in Guangzhou. This is a product of globalization. Nowadays, A large number of blacks lived in the Xiaobei District of Guangzhou, which led to the rapid formation of a black community. In Guangzhou, almost half of middle and small scale enterprises rely on trading with developing countries.



“ChinAfrica” Project at Bi-City Shenzhen Biennale of Urbanism/Architecture, 2017.

Two years ago, in Berlin, a student introduced me to Christian Hanssek, who has involved in a Europe-Africa project. Recently, the relationship between China and Africa has become a new focus, so they want to continue the African project, but replaced Europe with China. Later, Christian and anthropologist Gerda Heck came to Guangzhou, for examination and survey. He talked about the project at Huangbian Station. We have a WeChat group composed of twenty artists engaged in African Project. When this project was first proposed, some young artists would think that black people have nothing to do with us! I hope this project can deepen everyone's understanding of the globalization situation and the black people living in Guangzhou, rather than ignore it. This kind of understanding is necessary if China is to become a part of the international community, and the artist's ideas should transcend secular prejudices.



Pei En'en, *Like Marathon*, 2017, double screen video installation, customized sports shoes, 2'12", 2'03".

"Artists should transcend secular prejudices."

When the project was officially launched, I invited everyone to participate in the WeChat group. However, only two people responded: Lin Aojie and Chen Paian's 3D Group. Later, Luo Xiye and Lu Shan also participated. Lu Shan often draws sketches about the life of black people who lives in Xiaobei, which interestes me a lot. Art forms may not be all field surveys and interviews, sketching can also be a good form of expression. The most important thing is that you have to show genuine interest in it. You are interested in the situation of Africans in Guangzhou, rather than being alluded by the opportunity to take part in the exhibition. When we were discussing the "ChinAfrica" project, Pei En'en was taking part in an exhibition at Times Art Museum. After he went downstairs to participate in our discussion, he decided to become part of this project. After that, he flew from Shanghai to Guangzhou for three or four times at his expenditure. Fang Di, who lives in Shenzhen, was invited by me to participate in this project after I saw the pictures of black lives in New Guinea that he often

posted in the Wechat moments. Fang Di is an outgoing man, he went to the streets of Guangzhou to chat with black people directly. He attracted a large number of black people (in the manner of hiring singers). He also introduced me to different black communities in Guangzhou. So, in total, there are seven people in the Guangzhou team of the "ChinAfrica" project. I have some financial support, so during a meeting, I told the artists that: "since local artists living in Guangzhou do not need to spend a lot of money, so we can give more financial support to Pei En'en living in Shanghai and Fang Di living in Shenzhen to subsidize their transportation and accommodation." We do not divide the fund evenly. This is one of the ways that I like.

During the exhibition, I used a copycat iPhone to loop onsite photos of demonstration from Guangzhou black people three years ago. The police and the black man brushed past each other, creating an illusion in the flickering photos as if they were about to bump into each other. At that time, the internet was full of racism against Africans. We often treat Africa as a developing, poor continent, but as a matter of fact, when I chat with my African friends, I find that their human rights and union awareness are much stronger than the Chinese.

Before the opening ceremony of the Bi-City Shenzhen Biennale of Urbanism/Architecture, our project did not encounter any censor issues. For example, while editing the dialogue of Guangzhou Team, I cut many words, due to limitation of length, and some radical problems had been eliminated. For me, the best way to present the problem is to participate in the exhibition. When the emergency happened that night, our project, like all other works, was suspended and re-examined for three days. The video works have been replayed now, but the texts, which were an important component of the project, were still prohibited from being exhibited. But I don't think we should blame the chair because any chair today may have something wrong. The most interesting thing about this year's Bi-City Shenzhen Biennale of Urbanism/Architecture is a large number of audience and the final minute censorship. As Li Yifan pointed out: "it reaches the essence of the problem, it clearly illustrates an ideology that is distinct from the north... Many works, which seemed unimportant and meaningless in other exhibitions, become powerful and striking in the context of this exhibition."



"ChinAfrica. under construction", Exhibition Photo, 2017, Leipzig Contemporary Art Museum

(GFZK Leipzig) . Photograph: Wenzel Stählin