

GENE ZHAI

ARTIST CURRICULUM VITAE



about Gene

My name is Gene Zhai (翟进), based in Guangzhou, China.
I am an artist living with **osteogenesis imperfecta** (a rare genetic condition) and a **wheelchair user**.

Since 2018, I have been involved in the establishment and ongoing practice of the *Mistakable Symbiotic Dance Troupe* in Guangzhou, serving as a core member of the collective initiated and artistically directed by Hong Kong-based artist Yuenjie MARU.

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- 2016–2017: Began engaging with inclusive art practices and improvisational dance.
 - 2018: Co-founded *Mistakable Symbiotic Dance Troupe* in Guangzhou as a founding member.
 - 2018–present: Led and participated in artistic facilitation and theatre performances in Guangzhou, Beijing, Macau, Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Hangzhou.
 - 2018: Entry-level trainee in Playback Theatre (*One-Person-One-Story*) with Kapok Theatre Troupe.
 - 2019: Symbiotic Dance – 30-hour intensive workshop, “I Can” Collaboration Camp, organised by the Beijing Porcelain Doll Care Association, led by Yuenjie MARU, Beijing.
 - 2025: Resident artist, British Council 2×2 Arts Residency – China–UK Disabled Artists Creative Exchange Programme.
 - 2025: Participant, Free & Connected Dance – Training of Trainers (TOT) Workshop, led by Apple Chan.
 - 2025: Facilitator of 2×2 Sharing & Exchange Session and inclusive arts workshops, Shining with Art: Inclusive Art Festival.

Performance Experience

Group Performance Experience



**The City
2019**



**Shoulder Hug. Dance.
Hug Shoulder
2023**



**Performance at Hetai Centre
2025**

- 2018, Founding production of Mistakable Symbiotic Dance Troupe (hereafter referred to as MSDT) -《距...离》 (Distance...) - Guangzhou
- 2019, Beijing Youth Theatre Festival -《城》 (The City) - MSDT, Beijing
- 2022, Theatre production -《搭膊头·dance·二位环抱》 (Shoulder Hug.Dance.Hug Shoulder) - EDGP & MSDT, Guangzhou
- 2023, Todos Fest! Inclusive Arts Festival -《定风波》 (Against the Wind) - MSDT & Comuna de Pedra, Macau
- 2023, 1st Hong Kong International Inclusive Dance Festival -《定风波》 (Against the Wind) - MSDT, Hong Kong
- 2023, Shanghai "No Boundary" Contemporary Youth Dance Platform -《搭膊头·dance·二位环抱》 (Shoulder Hug.Dance.Hug Shoulder) - EDGP & MSDT, Shanghai
- 2025, Dance performance at Hetai Centre, Shunde, Foshan -choreography by Swiss artist Teresa Rotemberg, supported by the Pro Helvetia, produced by EDGP

Representative Works



**Companion
2018**

2018 · Solo

Theatre work 《伙伴》 (Companion)

The wheelchair is personified as a performing partner, engaging in a shared dance.

The work traces A Jin's journey from life without a wheelchair, to acquiring one, and eventually becoming integrated with it, expressing a sustained longing for freedom and agency.



**Embodied Barriers
2023**

2023 • Duet

Theatre work 《障·魂》 (Embodied Barriers)

A Jin and a visually impaired partner exchange a wheelchair and a white cane during the performance, temporarily inhabiting each other's disability-related tools.

Through this embodied role exchange, the work invites reflection on disability, perception, and identity.



**A Common Thread
2025**

2025 • Four-person ensemble

Residency Sharing [A Common Thread]

An inclusive dance work developed through a six-month China-UK 2x2 residency programme (British Council / Unlimited).

The piece was generated by four disabled artists from China and the UK, using thread-based rehearsal structures to explore connection, tension, and collective movement-making.

Artistic Characteristics

- Draws on personal bodily characteristics to construct a highly recognisable stage language through precise rhythmic control, spatial articulation, and tool-based interaction.
- Develops dance works through sustained research into disability-related life conditions and structural constraints, including the body, physical structures, and spatial environments. This line of inquiry has led to the initiation of the Romain Rolland Project, a long-term research-driven artistic programme.
- Brings extensive experience in cross-group co-creation, collaborating with people of different abilities and from diverse communities.
- Skilled in collectively developing improvisational dance and theatre works that articulate and communicate the principles of inclusive art practice.

Collaborating Institutions

International Institutions

British Council
Goethe Institut Shanghai
Unlimited
The Work Room
BY ART MATTERS

Non-profit Organisations

Illness Challenge Foundation
Wilber Foundation
Shanghai Peas Sir
Guangzhou Tree of Life Disabilities
Innovation Center
Comuna de Pedra
Body On & On

Artistic Groups & Communities

EDGP
Mistakable Symbiotic Dance Troupe
Guangzhou Contact Improvisation
Flow Community
Free & Connected Dance Community
Beijing BJCI

Initiated Projects

Romain Rolland Project

A dance-based artistic research project developed from lived disability experiences.

The project explores constraint as method—including bodily, structural, and spatial constraints—as generative tools for choreographic research and artistic inquiry.

Mistakable Symbiotic Dance Troupe · Symbiotic Dance Facilitator Programme

A training programme designed to cultivate a new generation of symbiotic dance facilitators, equipping participants to lead symbiotic dance workshops and use dance as a means to foster social inclusion and diversity through embodied practice.

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*Self-portrait
of Gene*