

Fine. design

A QUT industrial design graduate is spreading goodwill back home in China.

COMBINING a childhood love of drawing, a dream to become an artist and a passion for scientific experiments, Dr Chao Zhao has carved out a remarkable career as an industrial designer. Since graduating from QUT with a PhD in industrial design in 2008, the Chinese-national has returned to his homeland taking up the influential role of deputy head of the Industrial Design Department of Tsinghua University.

It is this cross-cultural educational connection that saw Dr Zhao, pictured inset, receive the inaugural 2009 Australian China Alumni Association's Research and Innovation Award in recognition of the significant contribution he has made in his area of expertise.

Dr Zhao has a decade of experience designing new products ranging from express trains to mobile phones, time recorders, printers, air-conditioners, fingerprint recorders and biotechnology instruments.

"I love every product which I have designed," he said.

"They are like my children - every one has their own particular character.

"My favourite one, I think is the bathroom ceramics design 'Series-elegant'.

"Its concept is inspired by the traditional symbol of Chinese culture – bamboo. This design redefines the concept and feature of bathroom products."

Dr Zhao said when embarking on designing a new product, it was vital to engage in research from the users' perspective.

"I believe that design research and practice should involve not only socio-technical aspects but also socio-cultural dimensions to be the dynamic elements," he said.

"These dynamic factors play an important role to inspire the new design ideas and link the aesthetics and technology together.

"Studying in Australia has enriched my cultural experience. I would like to tell Chinese students who want to study abroad that QUT has a unique university value – it is a university for the real world."

Boasting a wide-scope of product designs has led to Dr Zhao receiving numerous awards throughout his career including four prestigious China Red Star Design Awards.

"I just can't believe that I have been selected for this award. I am shocked and so thankful and appreciate this great honour so much," Dr Zhao said.

- Sandra Hutchinson



雅竹系列卫生洁具设计

清华大学美术学院工业设计系

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