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New Zealand jade carver wins gold in China

Tai Poutini Polytechnic Tutor Ric Moor has won a prestigious gold award at the international Suzhou Exhibition in China.

Ric was invited to be one of 800 artists to exhibit at the jade carving competition this year, from around 3000 Chinese and international applicants. He joined a five-strong New Zealand contingent, within a group of 10 internationals, at the week-long exhibition this month – the first multi-national exhibition of jade works in China. The gold award is a recognition of a high standard of work and was only awarded to a small number of entrants at this year's exhibition.

"I was pleased just to be asked to attend the exhibition this year; the gold award has made it all the more special. The award recognises a high standard of work, on par with the Chinese "master" carvers, and was presented to around 25 carvers. I spent time watching some of their masters work while I was there, learning the techniques they use to train apprentices, and I can say I am truly honoured to receive the award."

Three of the other Kiwis attending the show received gold awards and two received silver, recognising the high calibre of carvers here in New Zealand, Ric says.

"It is a major acknowledgement and it is really great for Tai Poutini Polytechnic as well. I attended meetings with carving association and government heads while I was there and have been invited back to exhibitions next year. Already, there is talk about an exchange programme between the polytechnic and China, and one of the Chinese master carvers has indicated a desire to come out here for a week.

The piece recognised with gold at the exhibition was one of four Ric took with him to China. It is called "Life Fold" and represents the cycle of life that extends through the family from grandparent, to parent to child.

"It's been an intense month – I was still finishing the final piece on the day I flew out of New Zealand and the exhibition was intense. It is great to come away with this result and I'm looking forward the new opportunities that come out of the experience."

About the Suzhou exhibition

Suzhou is a centre of jade carving in China, with more than 30,000 people involved in the local industry. The annual exhibition in Suzhou is one of three main shows in China each year. Last year there were more than 3000 submissions, about 800 of which were chosen for the exhibition. The Suzhou Arts and Crafts Association is keen to promote the art of jade carving throughout the world. It is also aware that fresh ideas are needed to reinvigorate the craft of jade carving in China.

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