

TAR University College In the Limelight

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Lecturer's sculptures to become pride of Chengdu

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CHIN Wan Kee, a senior lecturer at Tunku Abdul Rahman University College's (TAR UC) Faculty of Communication and Creative Industries, has done the country proud when three of his sculptures were chosen to be installed at Jincheng Greenway, an ecological paradigm that is part of a new cosmopolitan city called Tianfu Greenway in Chengdu, China.

The works of the veteran bronze sculptor, named "Eyes on Chengdu", "Soundless Melody" and "Dream Chaser", were initiated when Chin was invited as Malaysia's sole representative by the Foreign and Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the Chengdu Municipal People's Government and Chengdu Municipal Urban and Rural Construction Commission, China, to participate in the 2018 Chengdu International Sister Cities' Sculptures Creation and Exhibition event.

"We visited museums, studios and met local artists. We were also brought to the site and given a briefing of the sculpture project," Chin said.

"Upon returning to Malaysia, I prepared a proposal of four bronze models and submitted it to the Chengdu government. To my delight, three of the four designs were selected as the landmarks."

Inspired by ancient jewellery he saw during a trip to the Jinsha Site Museum, "Eyes on Chengdu" was designed with Tianfu Greenway's potential in mind, portraying it as an up-and-coming city on which the world could truly "see" Chengdu and its future.

"Soundless Melody" follows the ecological paradigm that balances out the relationship between the city's rapid development with the serenity of nature, providing a sense of escapism from the hustles of urban life.

This inspiration comes from music intervals, which created a unison of development and nature.

"Dream Chaser" symbolises China as a progressive country, where dreams can be achieved. With the new technologically-advanced city under development, more opportunities will arise for the people to experience change and modernisation.

With close to three decades of experience, Chin has many accomplishments under his belt.



Chin Wan Kee with his sculpture designs: (From left) Dream Chaser, Eyes on Chengdu and Soundless Melody. (Inset) Chin's 'Harmony and Unity' sculpture that won the National Art Gallery Public Sculpting Art Competition in 2000.

He said his most memorable achievement was winning the National Art Gallery Public Sculpting Art Competition in 2000.

His sculpture, titled "Harmony and Unity", is on permanent display at the gallery in Kuala Lumpur.

Besides that, he has held many sculpting and painting exhibitions. His most recent solo exhibition, themed "Sculpturing is meditative", featured his works from 1997 to 2017.

"Everything I do now goes beyond sculpting. I do it as a form of meditation, which helps me lead a meaningful life."

Chin initially majored in fine art and was introduced to sculpting in 1990, when he furthered his studies in San Francisco, the United States.

"I took up sculpting as an elective when I furthered my studies in the US because, at that time, it was a new media for me. Painting is 2D but sculpting is 3D — it's touchable."

"I like the challenge where I have to consider all aspects of a new creation. Bronze casting was also new to me then and that developed into a passion later on," he said.

At TAR UC, he teaches sculpting as an elective course as well as design fundamentals, which is a core subject for design students.

TAR UC president Professor Dr Lee Sze Wei said he is very proud of Chin's accomplishment, and glad that his works have been recognised at the international stage.

