

# Brisbane inspires two-story high art in conceptual 'map' on the wall at GOMA

By Peter McCutcheon  
 Posted Sat at 6:36pm  
 Sat 29 Sep 2018, 6:36pm



PHOTO: Qiu Zhijie with his massive Map of Technology Ethics at GOMA. (ABC News: Peter McCutcheon)

**If every map has its legend, this one will surely be remembered as a one-of-a-kind rendition of Brisbane that looks little or nothing like the city that inspired it.**

Brisbane might be the inspiration for the latest major work by internationally acclaimed artist Qiu Zhijie, but it's hard to see much topography here that is recognisable.

A deliberate move on the part of the artist.

Qiu's Map of Technology Ethics — an enormous ink drawing on a wall of Brisbane's Gallery of Modern Art (GOMA) — combines Chinese calligraphy with the map-making traditions of 17th and 18th century explorers.

Speaking to the ABC shortly after finishing the mammoth project, Qiu said he came with the idea while

gazing across the Brisbane River and the Kurilpa Bridge from this apartment in the CBD.

"Many Chinese people imagine Australia to be an ecological paradise," he said.

"People talk about nature and the beautiful golden coastline, it's a type of stereotype.

"But Brisbane is also a very high-tech city, a very well-organised city — you can see technology in every corner, it's not just a natural paradise.

"If anything can link those two things together, it's this Map of Technology Ethics."



PHOTO: The Kurilpa Bridge and the river beneath it helped inspire Qiu's Map of Technology Ethics. (Daisy Rajasingham: User submitted)

The Beijing-based artist said he deliberately modelled his work on the maps of early Chinese and European maritime explorers.

"I spent quite a lot of time doing research into the age of discovery, and what interested me was all the mistakes in the map," he said.

"People didn't cover the whole world, so somewhere they just write 'here be dragons', then 'unknown southern continent', and of course that's here."

The giant drawing is the latest in a series of maps Qiu has created since 2012.

### **'I plan to map the world'**

Running the length of a 38-metre wall, and reaching 18 metres in height, it's the largest map the Chinese artist has ever produced, and took five days to complete on the wall at GOMA.

"Anyone can work that fast — you just always go forward — don't stop, don't stop," he said.

Qiu said he likes to start with a plan, but admitted his ideas often changed while he was working.

"Mapping is a good way for me to unify my different identities as a painter, as a calligrapher, as a curator as a writer, because mapping is to set in place the relationship between different concepts," he said.



PHOTO: Qiu's map is one of a series he has been creating since 2012. (ABC News: Peter McCutcheon)

Previous maps have included Map of Utopia (2012) and Map of Art and China after 1989: Theater of the World (2017) a five panel ink-on-paper drawing on display at New York's Guggenheim Museum.

"I plan to map the world," he told a US television program last year.

"It's a lifelong job because any detail you pick up, you can dream it and it becomes a real map."

Qiu Zhijie's Map of Technology Ethics is one of the highlights of the 9th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Arts, on show at the Queensland Art Gallery and the GOMA from November 24 to April 28.

*Appeared in ABC news on September 30, 2018*