Innovative designer re-thinks the refrigerator, aims to save energy

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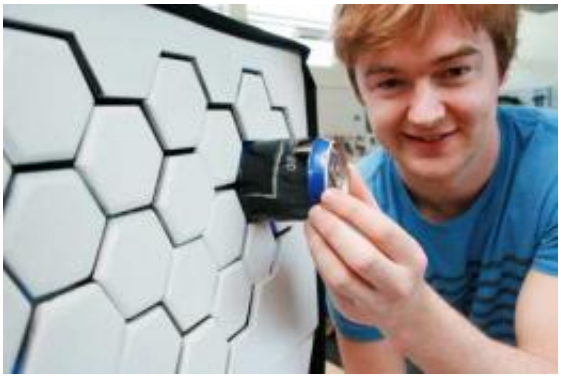

Ben de la Roche with his refrigeration wall design.

Third-year industrial design student Ben de la Roche has been shortlisted for the international Electrolux Design Lab 2012 Award for his design of an open refrigeration wall.

The 21- year-old, from Dunedin, who studies art Massey's College of Creative Arts, is one of ten finalists culled from more than 1300 entries globally. The competition challenges undergraduate and graduate industrial design students to 'present innovative ideas for household appliances of the future.'

Mr de la Roche's design is of a refrigeration wall that holds food and drinks out in the open rather than behind closed doors. It does not refrigerate when it is empty and uses less power when fewer items are

pressed into it.

The wall uses a motor in its back to act like a piston to send vibrations that resonate through the inner chamber to create cold air, Mr de la Roche says.

His design concept is modelled on the children's toy pin art where a boxed surface made of an array of pins slide in and out independently of each other.

In Mr de la Roche's design the horizontal pins that make up the wall are designed so that it can contain both ceramic plates as well as drink cans and bottles.

"It's well suited to the flatting environment as it allows everyone's food to be placed in separate sections of the wall," he says.

As an Electrolux finalist Mr de la Roche has been invited to present his concept design to a panel of judges on October 25 in Milan, Italy The jury panel will consider entries based on intuitive design, innovation, aesthetic qualities and consumer insight, before awarding the first prize of a six-month paid internship at Electrolux global design centre and a cash prize of 5000 Euros (about NZ$7800).

He said he was "more excited than nervous" about getting to present his concept in Italy and long term hoped his short-listing would help kick-start his career in industrial design.

"My passion is science fiction so it would be good to eventually get into concept and movie design."

Provided by Massey University