

leo Electric Heavy-Duty Forklift by Jing Zhao and Zhenghai Shang Wins Platinum A' Design Award

Zero-Emission Electric Heavy-Duty Forklift Honored for Innovation, Operator Safety, and Sustainable Engineering

COMO, CO, ITALY, August 27, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The A' [Design Award](#) has announced leo, an electric heavy-duty forklift designed by [Jing Zhao and Zhenghai Shang](#), as a Platinum winner in the [Heavy Machinery](#) Design category. The A' Heavy Machinery Design Award is one of the highly respected and well-recognized accolades in the field of heavy machinery design, evaluating entries through a rigorous, blind peer-review process governed by pre-established criteria. This recognition positions leo among works that demonstrate notable advancement in engineering, safety, and sustainability.

The selection underscores the growing importance of electrified, human-centered equipment within global logistics. For Jing Zhao and Zhenghai Shang, the honor reflects a measured response to long-standing operational challenges in port environments.

The award holds relevance well beyond the achievement of its designers, as it signals a meaningful direction for the heavy machinery industry and its stakeholders. As global ports advance toward carbon neutrality, demand grows for equipment that balances ultra-heavy load capacity with endurance, comfort, and reduced emissions. leo addresses these needs directly, aligning with industry movements toward electrification and intelligent operation. Logistics managers, safety engineers, and operators stand to benefit from improved efficiency and reduced operator fatigue. The design illustrates how sustainability and productivity can be pursued together rather than as competing priorities.



A' DESIGN AWARD
& COMPETITION

AWARD WINNING DESIGN
PLATINUM A' DESIGN AWARD 2026

leo

leo redefines heavy logistics by combining zero-emission power with human-centered intelligence. Its fast-charging lithium-ion battery delivers up to ten hours of continuous operation after one hour of charging, achieving forty percent higher energy efficiency than conventional diesel systems. A 180-degree rotating ergonomic seat, AR-assisted 360-degree surround vision, and voice-activated controls create an intuitive digital cockpit, elevating the operator from driver to system conductor. Adaptive counterweights and modular fork configurations enhance load stability, safety, and versatility across applications. Built with recyclable materials and a modular lifecycle design, leo is engineered for ultra-heavy loads up to fifty-five tons while supporting a longer, evolving service life.

This recognition reinforces the design team's commitment to developing scalable, production-ready platforms that integrate heavy-duty engineering with digital intelligence. Research conducted across European and Asian markets indicated improvements of sixty percent in safety and fifty percent in reduced learning time, establishing a foundation for future development. The achievement may inspire continued exploration into electrified material handling, modular architectures, and operator-focused interaction. As a motivation for further innovation, the honor encourages the team to refine sustainable solutions that serve operators and the broader logistics sector.

Team Members

leo was developed by Jing Zhao and Zhenghai Shang, who led the concept and design direction, together with Yingchun Bai, Jie Wang, Lin Zhang, Yang Meng, Hongkai Zhang, Chao Hu, Fei Ye, and Yue Yang, who contributed across engineering, ergonomics, structural validation, and digital systems development. Their cross-disciplinary collaboration supported the integration of zero-emission drivetrain technology, AI-assisted vision, and modular architecture into a cohesive platform.

Interested parties may learn more about the award-winning design, its features, and its designers at the dedicated page provided by the A' Design Award. The page offers further detail on the development process and the innovations behind leo.

<https://competition.adesignaward.com/ada-winner-design.php?ID=181040>

About Heli Forschungs- und Entwicklungszentrum Europe GmbH

Heli R&D Center Europe GmbH, founded in 2024 in Friedberg, Hessen, is Anhui Heli's first overseas research and development hub. It focuses on industrial vehicles, intelligent logistics, and the industrial internet. Heli, established in 1958, ranks among the global top seven in material handling. The center supports the company's continued investment in advanced engineering and international collaboration.

About the Platinum A' Design Award Recognition

The Platinum A' Design Award is the highest distinction granted by the A' Design Awards, recognizing designs that demonstrate notable innovation and meaningful societal contribution.

Within the Heavy Machinery Design category, entries are assessed against criteria including innovation, efficiency and productivity enhancement, operator safety measures, sustainability and eco-friendliness, ease of maintenance, durability, ergonomic considerations, integration of advanced technologies, adaptability to different environments, noise reduction, vibration control, material quality, fuel efficiency, and resilience to extreme conditions. Recipients are acknowledged for combining technical proficiency with practical impact. The designation reflects a commitment to advancing the boundaries of design, science, and technology. It is awarded following a thorough and objective evaluation process.

About A' Design Award

The A' Heavy Machinery Design Award is a respected competition that welcomes a broad range of participants, including designers, design agencies, companies, machinery manufacturers, and established brands within the heavy machinery sector. Entries are evaluated through a blind peer-review process by an expert jury panel comprising design professionals, heavy machinery industry experts, journalists, and academics, who assess submissions against pre-established criteria. Organized across all industries and open to entries from all countries since 2008, now in its 18th year, the A' Design Award operates with a philanthropic mission to recognize and promote superior products and projects that benefit society and help create a better world. By celebrating remarkable achievements on an international stage, the competition fosters a global appreciation for good design and encourages continued innovation. Interested parties may learn more about the A' Design Awards, explore the jury, view past laureates, and submit their own projects at the following url:

<https://heavymachineryawards.com>

Makpal Bayetova

A' DESIGN AWARD & COMPETITION SRL

+39 031 497 2900

[email us here](#)

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