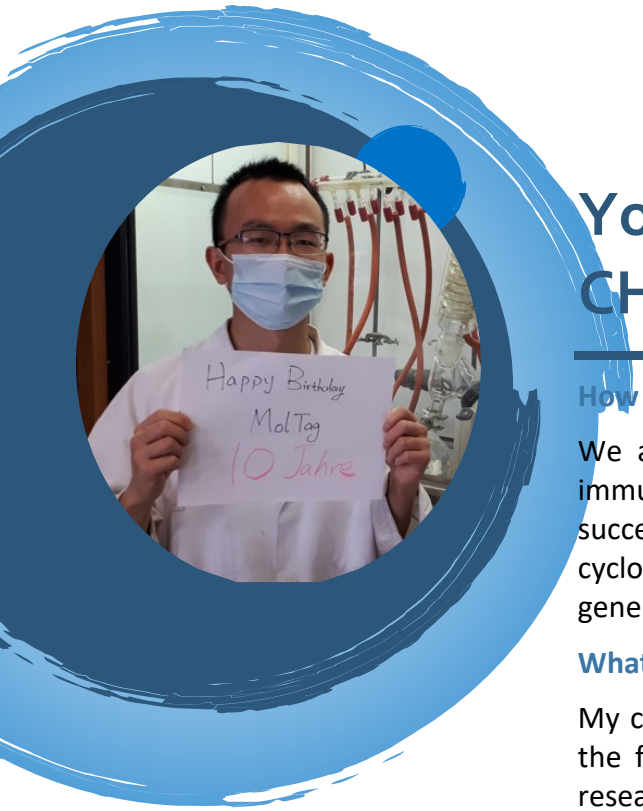

Yong CHEN

Finishing year: 2019

Supervisor: Nuno Maulide, Faculty of Chemistry, University of Vienna

Co-Supervisor: Harald Janovjak, IST Austria

Thesis title: Total Synthesis of Cicutoxin and FR252921 via a Unified Pericyclic Approach.

Current Position and Employer: PostDoc in the lab of Prof. Buno De Geest, Lab for Biopharmaceutical Sciences, University of Ghent, Belgium

MolTag alumni page:
Yong Chen (univie.ac.at)

Social network:
Yong Chen | **LinkedIn**

How would you summarize your thesis results in 3 sentences?

We achieved the most efficient and short total synthesis of an immunosuppressant metabolite FR252921 to date. The key to this success is based on the 4π-electrocyclic ring opening of a cyclobutene moiety. This ring opening reaction can serve as a general strategy for the synthesis of other polyene natural products.

What are you doing now?

My current research topic focuses on the materials engineering in the field of immunotherapy and vaccine development. I like my research a lot as it involves interdisciplinary skills, and most importantly it is quite crucial to help to cure diseases, such as COVID-19.

What was the impact of the MolTag program on your further career?

MolTag is a family harboring people with different backgrounds. The seminars and outreaches organized by MolTag program definitely help me to broaden my horizons. **I myself am a trained organic chemist, but through my PhD study with MolTag program, I developed a strong interest in biology**. Guess what? The more I am involved in the problems of biology now, the more I believe in the power of chemists.

What did you particularly like about the MolTag program?

I am very grateful for the opportunity to do an internship abroad. After my internship in Berlin, **I am determined to do research in the interface of chemistry and biology.**

What is your recommendation for current MolTag PhD students?

I would recommend to **focus on what you are good at,** in the meantime appreciate the developments from other scientific areas.