



Born in Kuching, Malaysia

Lives and works in Tāmaki  
Makaurau Auckland, New  
Zealand

Bachelor of Visual Arts,  
Auckland University of  
Technology, 2020

Certificate in Applied  
Technology (Carpentry),  
Unitec, 2016

Gavin Chai's practice draws upon a rich history of cultural heritage and painting techniques and to represent contemporary experiences.

Chai's current works focus' on interior spaces and makes reference to the traditions of Dutch & Danish painting from the 17th – 19th Century. His influences are a blend of historical, as well the personal and present, making allusions to classical & biblical themes with timeless allegories.

Chai's hauntingly vivid works with their humble subject matter – set within waiting rooms and unassuming domestic environments – turn our attention to the intimacy of the ordinary and sometimes ethereal quality of the 'every day'. With his use of shallow space, high contrast lighting and the theatrical arrangements of objects – Chai infuses his 'seemingly' mundane subject matter with sense of growing intensity or subdued drama. His awareness of traditional painting techniques and employment of figurative realism, provides an understated elegance to his empty rooms which command our careful attention as they grapple with timeless themes.

## EDUCATION

2020 Bachelor of Visual Arts, Auckland University of Technology

2016 Certificate in Applied Technology (Carpentry) 2016, Unitec

## SELECTED AWARDS

2021 Supreme Award, Cleveland National Art Awards, Otago Art Society, Dunedin, NZ.

2021 Excellence in Painting Award, Cleveland National Art Awards, Otago Art Society, Dunedin, NZ.

2021 Youth Award, Cleveland National Art Awards, Otago Art Society, Dunedin, NZ.

2020 Premier Award (joined) winner, Hibiscus and Bays Art Awards, Estuary Arts Centre, Orewa, NZ.

2020 Outstanding Visual Art Student Award, AD20 Graduation Exhibition, Auckland University of Technology, NZ.

2020 TSB Community Trust & Opunake Framing Studio Highly Commended Award, Taranaki National Arts Award 2020, Sandfords Events Centre, Opunake, NZ.

2020 Main Prize (20 -25), National Youth Art Award 2020, Artspost Gallery, Hamilton, NZ.

2020 Best Under \$1000, Craig Aspiring Art Prize, Wanaka, NZ.

2019 Highly Commended Award Kumeu Arts Award, Kumeu Arts Centre, Auckland, NZ.

2019 Darfield Dental Award Darfield Artweek, Selwyn, NZ.

2019 Blue Award (Arts and Culture - Painting) Auckland University of Technology

2019 Centago Mining Merit Award Arts Gold Award, Central Stories Museum, Alexandra, NZ.

2019 21 & Under Artist Award Hibiscus and Bays Arts Award, Mairangi Bay Arts Centre, Auckland, NZ.

2019 2nd Place Miniature Category, Franklin Arts Festival, Auckland, NZ.

2019 2nd Place Small Works Category, Royal Easter Show Art Competition, Auckland, NZ.

2019 3rd Place Abstract Category, Royal Easter Show Art Competition, Auckland, NZ.

2019 First Prize "Purely Pastels" National Art Exhibition, Percy Thompson Art Gallery, Stratford, NZ.

2019 Best Under \$1000, Craig Aspiring Art Prize, Wanaka, NZ.

2018 Highly Commended Award Kumeu Arts Award, Kumeu Arts Centre, Auckland, NZ.

2018 Merit Award Hibiscus and Bays Art Awards, Estuary Arts Centre, Auckland, NZ.

2018 Blue Award (Arts and Culture - Painting) Auckland University of Technology

2018 Merit Award Darfield Artweek, Selwyn, NZ.

2018 2nd Prize Greater Auckland Art Awards, Auckland, NZ.

2018 First Prize "Purely Pastels" National Art Exhibition, Aigantighe Art Gallery, Timaru, NZ.

2018 Finalist Adam Portraiture Award, Wellington, NZ.

2018 Finalist NZ Painting and Printmaking Award, Hamilton, NZ.

2017 2nd Prize Kumeu Arts Award, Kumeu Arts Centre, Auckland, NZ.

2017 Winsor & Newton Merit Award Impression Art Award, Nelson

2017 1st Prize Winner Waitakere Trust Art Award, Auckland, NZ.

2017 3rd Place "Inspiration" category, Royal Easter Show Art Competition, Auckland, NZ.

2017 3rd Place Professional Oil/Acrylic category, Royal Easter Show Art Competition, Auckland NZ.

2017 Meritorious Selection International Richeson75 Still Life & Floral competition

2017 Emerging Artist Winner Art Muse Contest

2017 Emerging Artist Finalist Art Muse Contest

2016 People's Choice Award Clifton Art Prize, Auckland NZ.

2016 3rd Place - Alpine Energy Arts Award, Geraldine Arts And Plants Festival, NZ

2016 Merit Prize People&Portrait, Rotary Art Show, Paraparaumu, NZ

2016 Runner up Impression 41 Max Arts Award, Nelson NZ.

2016 3rd Place Miniature category, Franklin Arts Festival, Auckland

2016 1st Place Small Works Category, Royal Easter Show Art Competition, Auckland, NZ.

2016 1st Place Professional Oil/Acrylic category, Royal Easter Show Art Competition, Auckland NZ.

2016 Finalist+Tour National Adam Portraiture Award, Wellington, NZ.

2015 3rd place 13-18yrs category, Waitakere Trust Art Award, Auckland, NZ.

2015 2nd place Oil category, Franklin Arts Festival, Auckland, NZ.

2015 1st Place "Pushing The Boundaries" category, Royal Easter Show Art Competition, Auckland, NZ.

2015 Merit Award Professional Oil/Acrylic category, Royal Easter Show Art Competition, Auckland, NZ.

2015 Competition, Auckland, NZ.

2014 Emerging Artist Award Hibiscus and Bays Art Award, Auckland,

2014 1st Place Student category, Franklin Art Festival, Auckland, NZ.

2014 Finalist "Seascape, Rivers& Lakes" Art Prize Challenge, Australian Artist Magazine.

2014 KG Fraser Award(Best in Show) Royal Easter Show Art Competition, Auckland, NZ.

2014 Royal Agricultural Society Medal (Most successful artist in show)  
Royal Easter Show Art Competition.

2014 2nd Place Open Oil/Acrylic category, Royal Easter Show Art  
Competition, Auckland, NZ.

2014 2nd Place New Artist category, Royal Easter Show Art  
Competition, Auckland, NZ.

2014 1st Place Open Youth category, Royal Easter Show Art  
Competition, Auckland, NZ.

2014 Merit Award Dry Art category, Royal Easter Show Art  
Competition, Auckland, NZ.

2014 Finalist+Tour National Adam Portraiture Award, Wellington, NZ.

2014 2nd+3rd Places Rotoart Student Art Contest, Hamilton, NZ.

### **SOLO EXHIBITIONS**

2019 Light of Experience: people to objects (17 June - 06 July 2019),  
Kumeu arts centre, NZ.

2018 Life as a Builder Exhibition (17 July - 08 August 2018), Franklin  
Arts Centre Community Gallery, NZ.

2015 New Works (04 - 24 May), Estuary Arts Centre, Auckland, NZ.

### **SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

2022 IDYLL Page Galleries Wellington

2021 Gavin Chai & David Shennan, Föenander Galleries, Auckland

2019 Adam Portraiture Award Touring Exhibition (17 April - 18 June  
2019), Ashburton art gallery, NZ.

2019 Character Study: the figure in action and inaction (09 March - 14  
April 2019), Arts in Oxford, Oxford, NZ.

2019 Accept each word spoken with love (04 - 20 February 2019),  
Northart, Auckland, NZ.

2019 Adam Portraiture Award Touring Exhibition (19 December 2018 -  
January 2019), Millenium Art Gallery, Blenheim, NZ.

2018 "Blue and White" Exhibition (06 August - 26 August), Northart,  
Auckland, NZ.

2018 Adam Portraiture Award Touring Exhibition (July 3 - August 19),  
Pah Homestead, Auckland, NZ.

2018 Adam Portraiture Award Exhibition (01 March - 27 May), NZ  
Portrait Gallery, Wellington, NZ.

2018 NZ Painting and Printmaking Award Exhibition, Hamilton, NZ.

2017 The Adam Portraiture Award Touring Exhibition (16th June - 30th July), Aigantighe Art Gallery Timaru, NZ.

2017 "Purely Pastels" National Art Exhibition(24th March - 30th April), Wallace Gallery Morrinsville, NZ.

2017 The Adam Portraiture Award Touring Exhibition (10th February - 4th March), City Gallery Invercargill, NZ.

2016 Clifton Art Prize Finalist Exhibition(12th October - 09th December), Clifton Venue Auckland CBD, NZ.

2016 The Adam Portraiture Award Touring Exhibition (19th December 2016 - 29th January 2017), Millennium Public Art Gallery Blenheim, NZ.

2016 The Adam Portraiture Award Touring Exhibition (16th September - 9th October) , Percy Thompson Gallery Stratford, NZ.

2016 The Adam Portraiture Award Touring Exhibition (22nd June - 21st August), The Pah Homestead Auckland, NZ.

2016 The Adam Portraiture Award Exhibition (25th February - 29th May), New Zealand Portrait Gallery Wellington, NZ.

2016 Hibiscus and Bays Art Awards Exhibition (28th October - 11th December), Estuary Arts Centre Orewa, NZ.

2016 BBYC Annual Art Exhibition (1st November - 6th November), Bucklands Beach Yacht Club, Half Moon Bay Auckland, NZ.

2015 BBYC Annual Art Exhibition (4th November - 8th November), Bucklands Beach Yacht Club, Half Moon Bay Auckland, NZ.

2015 The Adam Portraiture Award Touring Exhibition (1st April - 22nd June) , Hasting City Art Gallery, Hasting, NZ.

2015 The Adam Portraiture Award Touring Exhibition (1st February - 22 March), Millennium Public Art Gallery Blenheim, NZ.

2014 Clifton Art Prize Finalist Exhibition, Clifton Venue Auckland CBD, NZ.

2014 The Adam Portraiture Award Touring Exhibition (17th June - 17th August), The Pah Homestead Auckland, NZ.

2014 The Adam Portraiture Award Exhibition (20th February - 25th May), New Zealand Portrait Gallery, Wellington, NZ.

2014 Hibiscus and Bays Art Awards Exhibition (1st November -30th November), Estuary Arts Centre Orewa, NZ.

2014 "Figure in Art" Exhibition" (24th October - 20th November), Uxbridge Arts Centre Howick, Auckland, NZ.

2014 Bucklands Beach Yatch Club Annual Art Exhibition (Selected as the guest artist), Bucklands Beach Yacht Club, Half Moon Bay Auckland, NZ.

## SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Wallace Arts Trust

New Zealand Portrait Gallery

Porirua City Council

The Stevenson Collection