



Artist Kevin Chin.  
PORTRAIT BY ZAN WIMBERLEY.

# COLLECTORS LOVE

Our writers look at the artists who have caught the attention of collectors in the past year and achieved sell-out shows.

## 23

KEVIN CHIN

*Structural Equality*, Kevin Chin’s sell-out exhibition at Martin Browne Contemporary in May last year, may have entailed several international residencies and 18-months of intense studio time. But Chin’s increasing success owes as much to his compositional, narrative deftness and masterful painting abilities as it does his sheer hard work.

What impresses dealer Martin Browne about Chin’s practice is the way in which he has developed his own voice with which to address the subjects that interest and concern him. “In an age when so much politically-concerned painting is little more than sloganeering, Kevin makes atmospheric and complex paintings that address many of the most important contemporary issues, including the challenges of globalisation, the plight of refugees, and the climate change crisis,” says Browne. “Yet his ability to seamlessly combine quite disparate imagery into one cohesive narrative is firmly based in a mastery of precise brushwork and painting techniques.”

A body of eight large-scale paintings, *Structural Equality* was inspired by time

spent in the USA in 2016, in the aftermath of Donald Trump’s election, while undertaking a residency in Yellowstone National Park. Observing the consequent rise in conservative nationalism and an equal and opposite push promoting diversity, as well as an increased awareness of America’s mass structural inequalities, Chin’s surreally assembled landscapes of natural, built and imagined environments “test how economic, cultural and social structures shape the world in which we live”, he says.

*Structural Equality* was Chin’s inaugural exhibition with Martin Browne Contemporary, which has represented the Melbourne-based painter since December 2017. Chin is also represented in Melbourne by THIS IS NO FANTASY.

For Browne, the success of the exhibition, beyond the obvious sales, was “first and foremost a reaction to the bold, exciting, and highly original work. As many visitors to the exhibition commented, Kevin Chin’s paintings are not like anything else that they had seen, and they were excited at this new vision.”





The critical response to the show was also gratifying for Chin. “Even coming off a string of successes, you just never know how things will go with a new audience, so it was reassuring to have such an amazing response to my first solo exhibition in Sydney – and a terrific way to start a new relationship with Martin Browne. I was so happy that bringing together residencies in USA, Asia and Australia connected with such a diverse demographic of collectors, and even found its way into US press. It reinforced the pressing need for me to continue exploring themes of cultural hybridity, and Australia’s place in the Asia-Pacific and the world. It was particularly gratifying to hear from all sorts of collectors that they see my painting as very current,

timely, and fitting on a global stage.”

According to Browne, the works were acquired by a diverse range of buyers, “from well-established collectors who were excited to see such accomplished and thoughtful work from one of the new generation of painters, through to young collectors who recognised the work as addressing key issues of our time”.

Several of Chin’s works have recently been acquired by public collections and Browne has noticed a dramatic increase in curatorial interest in his work also. And what is Chin going to do with this critical and commercial success? “It’s fuelling my investigation for my next solo exhibition.”

*Jo Higgins*



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:  
Kevin Chin, *Castle Under the Sky*, 2019. Oil on Italian linen, 138 x 199cm.  
Kevin Chin, *Blue Above*, 2018. Oil on Italian linen, 138 x 199cm.  
Kevin Chin, *Peaks*, 2018. Oil on Italian linen, 138 x 199cm.  
Kevin Chin, *Tiers*, 2019. Oil on Italian linen, 138 x 199cm.  
COURTESY: THE ARTIST AND MARTIN BROWNE CONTEMPORARY, SYDNEY.