

Jonny Kan

Jonny Kan is an artist living and working in Papaioea/Palmerston North. He has been an award winner at the IHC art awards and has work in private collections around New Zealand. Jonny Kan has exhibited multiple times over the past seven years – almost exclusively at Palmerston North’s Snails gallery. As Curator Kirsty Porter puts it: “His vision may seem far-flung for us right now, but perhaps we need to take a visionary leaf from Jonny’s book...to imagine a new and better world.”

Kirsty Porter also says “To say that Jonny is prolific is an understatement, he is possibly one of the most passionate and visionary artists I have ever met. Though he favours working in wood, there are also works on paper, zines, painted tables, board games and Jonny painted plinths. His work is a reflection of the modern mind, or a mind flitting about on the unfettered information treadmill of the internet.”



Photo by Deano Shirriffs

Jonny has had solo exhibitions at Thistle Hall (Wellington), Square Edge community arts in Palmerston North and at Snails Artist Run Space where he is embedded into a creative community and works as the Janitor. He has had work in group exhibitions at Square Edge Community Arts and Te Manawa

Jonny has a head injury, and he is totally OK with everyone knowing this. When he was 5 years old, he was involved in a traffic accident. After a lengthy recovery he was left with the superpower of retaining a childlike enthusiasm for curiosity, creativity and wonder. He embraces art making just like a typical primary school aged child would, without the hang ups of perfectionism that adults tend to cling to. He is excited about the world, constantly exclaiming his delight at discovering a nugget of interesting information. Though Jonny lives, works and socialises independently as an adult he feels like his body is stuck in the process of ageing; he says that he can relate to the character Benjamin Button, who is also lost somewhere in the aging process. There are many ways to see the world. Some of us see its endless potential, others see living history as it unfolds in an endless cycle of life, beauty, death and rebirth. Through our arts, we are gifted the opportunity to see all of these perspectives.