



The Evolution of Eian & Eien
16 May – 12 August 2018

R18 (portrayal of male genitalia & female frontal upper body nudity)

Cover Image:
“Don’t just wake me up when its Spring, for I want to watch the leaves fall,
and experience the snow melting away, before watching the flowers bloom again”





The Evolution of Aiman

A Visual Analysis

The Evolution of Eian & Eien is Aiman's second solo exhibition since graduating from LASALLE-Sia College of the Arts in 2004. In his graduation exhibition, Aiman's body of work, after having acquired formidable figure drawing skills and building a strong foundation in painting, demonstrated a series of figurative paintings that expressed his trepidations and the issues that he encountered during his academic training.

Fourteen years is quite a long journey, and although Aiman has veered towards other interests and pursuit of another degree along the way, he has never ceased to create striking and poetic art. Taking part in numerous group exhibitions, he has been devoted to his passion of what he does and who he is. Making art is a lifelong commitment and the artistic journey can be demanding and sometimes lonely. One needs to possess a certain drive to work hard, as well as the confidence and bravery to withstand rejection. I have taught thousands of fine art students since 1999. Every year I witness hundreds of fresh, hopeful, graduates boldly venture into our local art scene, with only some taking the challenge further. To date, Aiman is one of the latter among the handful from his cohort. With perseverance, I am pleased to say, he has stayed the course.

Following the path of Aiman's progress and development, one observes that his current body of works is significantly different from his earlier works. To start with, his colour palette has evolved to become more sensitive and sophisticated; visible evidence of his excellent technical competence. With a firm grasp of colour properties, he manipulates the spectrum of hues and grey colours to vividly bring out the figures and background relationships. Also, long gone are his monochromatic and minimalistic milieus and the cliché repetition compositions that he was once fond of. Instead, we are now confronted by large scale paintings that reveal Aiman's maturation and confidence as a visual artist with works that demonstrate his superb understanding of visual concepts.

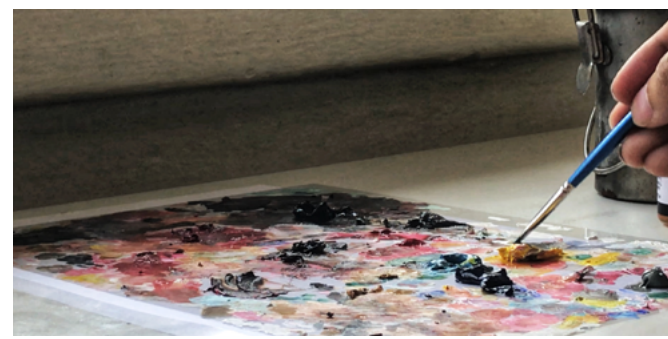
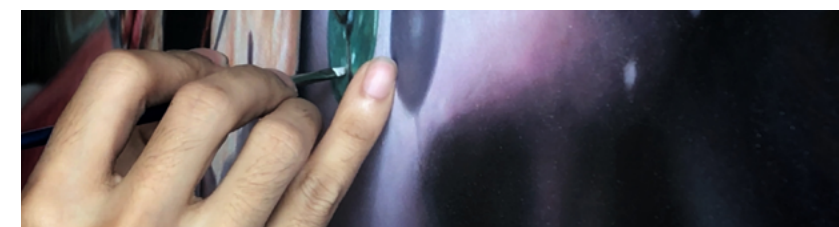
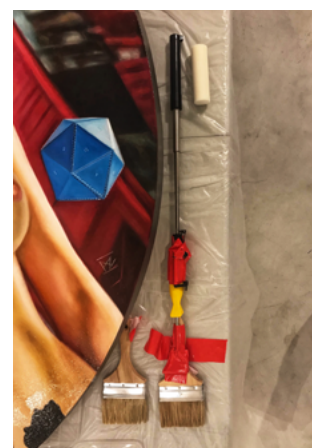
Every pictorial composition has its own dynamic unique approach and one cannot take their eyes off of the dominance of life-size figures; the subjects placed in a crafted frame within the canvas. Complex and provocative characters include the conjoined male and female nudes as the centre of interest in Aiman's creations. Commanding the viewer's immediate attention, one is at once lured in to study them closer. The forms are posed as sculptures atop pillars, displaying beautifully proportionate bodies against a familiar landscape, and with careful scrutiny, the viewer discovers that it is actually a reverse background that they are gazing at.

Such organisation creates an optical illusion of space, transporting the viewer into another dimension. Visual hints and symbolism are scattered randomly across the canvas and are well-considered. This rhythmic structure controls our way of seeing and reading of the work, while still leaving space for reflection of the viewer's own personal experiences. All of these elements trigger a curiosity to question the complexity of the images; to unfold the mysteries and drama hidden beneath and evoke emotions to interpret the narratives of the paintings.

Focusing on the formal appeal and its meaning, *The Evolution of Eian & Eien* discloses insight into Aiman's ideas and his mind's eye by tracing his psychological drawing of inspiration, from conceptual perception to his internalisation of the entire process of stimuli and relevant themes. It is with continued support, we eagerly watch Aiman take his next leap to bring us a whole new perspective and look forward to more visual treats offering further enriching experiences in the near future.

Ernest Chan

Visual Artist and Art Educator



The Evolution of Eian & Eien

The narrative begins with figures who are seemingly human, are hybrids of different ethnicities and who are intersex. What does it mean for a conjoined twin to carry two races in such stark hues? What does it look like to bring a person's obsession to the fore, and does this eliminate or confuse the idea of façade? I try to make sense of questions like these through the pictorial space of these paintings. I wanted to present this state of being in all its honesty and vulnerability. I stripped the figures of any implications of consumerism and interposed them into an alternate Eden—a world of new beginnings—reminiscent of the clarity of one's state of mind during meditation.

In a projection of consciousness to this effect, the idea of 'twins', quickly becomes a play and experimentation of 'multiplicities'. Image-making in painting is a complex process not often discussed. What can be unique about painting, is an expression of space which condenses various timeframes which therefore destabilises the implications of past, present and the continuing future. The compression effect also distorts perspective in a traditional manner, and offers a personal truth to how things are remembered. This is a studio process, a meditation, a construct. There are really endless rules to re-construct what can be remembered. In the dimension of time, is it possible to remember a future Eden?

Indeed, the play on words or language can be a counterpoint to remix time and spatial information in these paintings. **Eian & Eien**, when articulated, are homophones. They are also non-binary names. The difference is so subtle, implying that they exist alongside each other akin to analogous hues, contradicting conventional Eden's pair of opposites. Time of day (and night) is also expressed harmoniously. Darkness has a deep rolling contrast, and the brightness of daytime flare illuminates and obstructs a portrait. The pull of gravity is erratic, at times whirling marbles, pebbles and candy in a whirlpool, or disperses toward the foreground in visual assault. Swallows freeze, or swallow time, if you will. Standing can be falling, orientation of the body is tipped, pillars hold their weight differently. The protagonists' gaze is soft, hard and unfazed.

Time and spatial dimensions are regulated differently from one painting to the next. Some devices employed regulate and/or deliberately shifts focus from the perimeter of one border, to the central image. Sometimes this device may be a tint, a frame, or a reflective glint. This plays on the subtle idea that we can scratch on another reality while living in the present one. Afterall, there is no one way to read a situation without bias. At any point, some things in our lived experience falls out of focus while others unexpectedly hurtle to the fore.

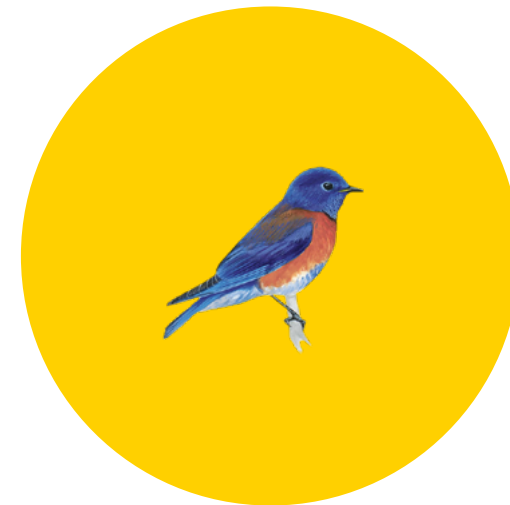


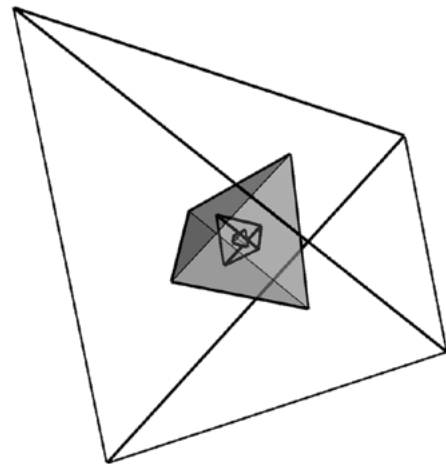
Aiman

“I’ve been collecting and following Aiman for 10 years now. He is evolving into one of the most important Singaporean painters of his generation and I am excited to be showcasing his new series in the gallery.”

Guillaume Levy-Lambert

Co-founder of The MaGMA Collection and
Art Porters Gallery, Singapore



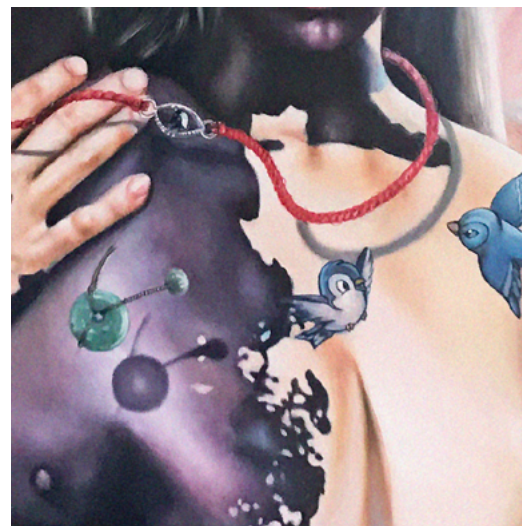


"He who hopes for victory wins, and not a moment too soon."

2018

150cm x 150cm

Oil on canvas



*"When you don't trust your own reflection,
don't blindly follow the sound of the Mountain Blue Bird."*
2018

150cm diameter
Oil on canvas

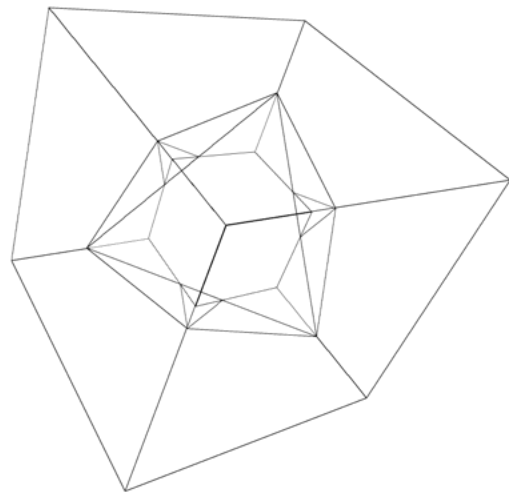




"Don't just wake me up when it's Spring, for I want to watch the leaves fall, and experience the snow melting away, before watching the flowers bloom again."

2018

150cm x 150cm
Oil on canvas



"The cure for time is eternity but a dose a day is required."

2018

154cm x 154cm

Oil on canvas



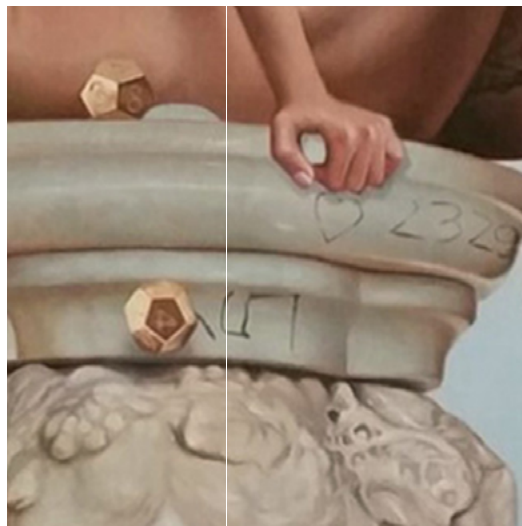


“The carpenter who finds the piece of wood that weeps and laughs like a child, will be the first to leave the spaceship; even if he’s the first to go.”

2018

154cm x 154cm

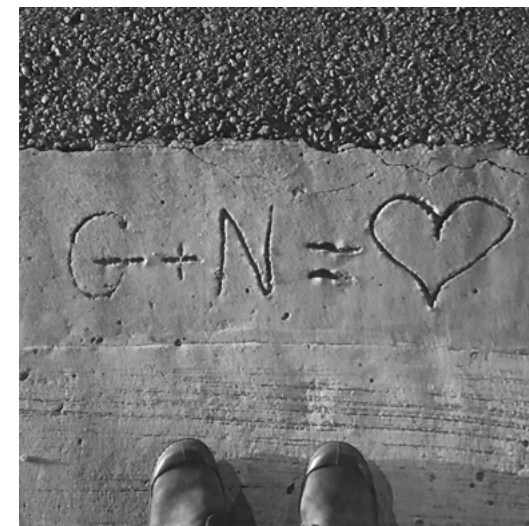
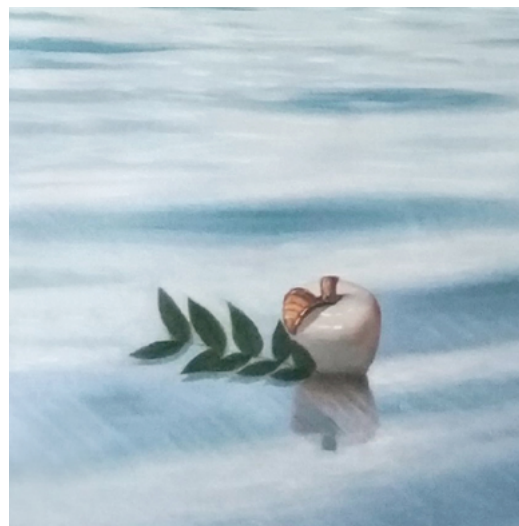
Oil on canvas



"Chapter I: Eian"
2018

130cm x 180cm
Oil on canvas





“Chapter II: Eien”
2018

130cm x 180cm
Oil on canvas

“Chapter I: Eian
Chapter II: Eien”
2018



260cm x 180cm
Oil on canvas



"The triumph of Ariadne"
2018

130cm x 180cm
Oil on canvas



The Evolution of Aiman

A Contemporary Tale of Transformation and Evolution

At first glance, Aiman's latest series, *The Evolution of Eian and Eien*, conjures an essence of surrealism. Canvasses with iconographic and symbolic forms, often narrating multiple realities, communicate reveries where the unconventional exists and portals open to interconnected versions of parallel universes. Freud surely would have found the unconscious of Aiman as fantastical and dreamlike as that of any surrealist painter, laden with references to themes such as sexuality identity, gender, multiple realities, transcendence, space and time.

However, upon closer examination, one comes to the realisation that the images Aiman paints are not surrealist in the contemporary sense. Although they may characterise modern surrealism in many ways, these works reflect deliberated thoughts that explore the themes of our time. Aiman is an artist who is deeply aware of his epoch, possessing a wisdom beyond his age. Channeling his thirst for knowledge, he pours his psychoanalytical mind onto the canvas with meticulous accuracy. As he adapts the stories of Greek mythology to present day social issues, he ties them into a world of technological and evolutionary fantasy.

Charles Darwin said “*It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.*” Aiman has taken this view as his mantra for *The Evolution of Eian and Eien*, with the notion of transformation being a running narrative in his work.

In *The Triumph of Ariadne*, we witness the heroine's tragic betrayal by Theseus and her victorious rebirth. Featured as a red-haired siren, she has dropped a ball of red thread, which epitomizes her intuition, trust, and commitment. Aiman repeatedly uses red string in his paintings as the Buddhist icon for protection, and to represent the reminders of one's past experiences, one's life force, and compassion. A peacock symbolises her pride, while lambs signify her new beginning, not yet matured.

In the diptych *Chapter 1 Eian* and *Chapter 2 Eien*, using the figures of conjoined twins, Aiman explores the dynamics between the hidden identity of the private individual and the fleeting nature of public fame, within the context of social media. These hybrid twins, who are balancing on top of a very small pedestal top, exist in an environment that seems to exist within two realities, each with its own rules of gravity. The character of Ariadne is interpreted again and seems to be apprehensively holding onto the pedestal, while her male counterpart merely sits there, looking slightly bored. The two characters suggest the idea of balance between taking control and letting go. Emblematic objects seem to be suspended between both spaces and times.

The pedestals in each of these works are carved with multiple faces of Dionysus, the Greek God of wine and merry making. Etchings on the statue form a heart and a row of numbers, a tongue-in-cheek reference to a “bare-it-all” Instagram post. *Chapter 1 Eian* shows 2329 likes, while in *Chapter 2 Eien* the number of likes has jumped to 3292. In *Chapter 1 Eian* one of the dice covers half of a word. The word is scratched onto the marble pedestal, possibly written upside down. In *Chapter 2 Eien* the word ‘Love’ is revealed, embodying the idea of time passing; humans evolve and transmute, growing with each new encounter. Further to this idea, branches die and leaves fall, as living beings wither and deplete.

Other works in the series illustrate an evolutionary process encompassing interracial life forms, gender neutrality and duality. All of these themes convey the need to embrace a self-reflective journey to achieve a higher emotional intelligence through the radical acceptance of all emotions, both positive and negative to build resilience and to live an authentic life.

Tanya Michele Amador
Amador Arts Projects

About Aiman (b.1984, Singaporean)

Obsessed with a dreamlike world, Aiman’s paintings aim to ignore realism and artistic conventions, blurring the lines between high art and low art. The universe in his make-believe world favours grace, sensuality and esotericism; staging mysterious icons, glorified, eroticised, divinised to the point that they integrate popular imagery. In this enchanted world, his subjects are born with the power of anti-gravity, and as this gift is slowly cycled back into the universe; symbolised through the use of flowers, energy is exchanged as they slowly ground themselves, to the possibility of a destination or the start of a new chapter. The story of these figures is told in a fairytale fashion, with both tenderness and cruelty, often interweaved with references of religious iconography, eroticism, mythology and children’s tales.

Aiman graduated from LASALLE College of the Arts in 2004 with a Diploma in Fine Arts. Awards he has won include the LASALLE-SIA Scholarship, the Georgette Chen Scholarship, and the Winston Oh Travel Award. Aiman has exhibited both in Singapore and overseas, including at the National Art Gallery of Malaysia and the Sunshine International Museum, in Songzhuang, China. His works are included in prominent local and international collections including the MaGMA Collection.

Selected Exhibitions

- 2018**
Art Stage Singapore
Marina Bay Sands Expo & Convention Centre
Art Porters Gallery
- 2017**
Art Expo Malaysia
MATRADE Exhibition and Convention Centre (MECC)
- Art Stage Singapore
Marina Bay Sands Expo & Convention Centre
Art Porters Gallery
- 2016**
BI LATERAL BONDS (KL)
Taksu Gallery (KL)
- BI LATERAL BONDS (SG)
Taksu Gallery Singapore
- Locals Only
Taksu Gallery Singapore
- 2015**
Fresh Takes
Chan Hampe Galleries

- 2014**
Jogja Open Studios 2014
Partner (Yogyakarta)
- 2013**
The Art of Naomi Hotel
Art Director/ Curator
- 2012**
Unnecessarily Well Made
Vue Privée
- Buy Bye
Vue Privée
- Staging Art - Organised as part of Art Stage 2012
Vue Privée
- 2011**
Boys Who Like Boys Who Like Girls Who Like Girls
Utterly Art
- Moving Stills
Vue Privée
- Hungry For More - Curated by Utterly Art
ION Gallery
- PantoneMyArt - Organised by Art Management and Presented by TCC
TCC (The Gallery)
- Now Boarding: Island Thinking and Flights of Fancy
Organised as part of Art Stage 2011, curated by Jason Wee
Give Art Gallery
- 2010**
HIV-Show Me The Love (In Conjunction with World Aids Day 2010)
Organized by Health Promotion Board and Arterial Creative Pte Ltd ChanHampe
Galleries@Tanjong Pagar
- Affordable Art Fair
F1 Pit Building, 1 Republic Boulevard
- 6th Culture and Arts Festival Songzhuang - China
Sunshine International Museum
- Art Triangle 2010
National Art Gallery of Malaysia
- Imprints
Red Dot Museum
- 2009**
Winston Oh 10th Anniversary Exhibition
LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts, Earl Lu Gallery
- A Marriage of Convenience
Forth Gallery
- For Ages 4 and Up (Solo)
Utterly Art
- 2006**
LoveMelt
Utterly Art
- 2004**
Erotica
Arts Seasons

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Ivan Heng, Olivier Burlot, Priyageetha Dia, Tanya Michele Amador.



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