



HONG KONG FREE PRESS

[< https://hongkongfp.com/ >](https://hongkongfp.com/)

☰ Menu

[HKFP LENS < HTTPS://HONGKONGFP.COM/CATEGORY/HKFP-LENS/ >](https://hongkongfp.com/category/hkfp-lens/)

HKFP Lens: scenes from Hong Kong pro-democracy protests come alive on Chow Chun-fai's canvas

by [HKFP LENS < HTTPS://HONGKONGFP.COM/AUTHOR/HKFP-LENS/ >](https://hongkongfp.com/author/hkfp-lens/)
30TH MAY 2020

By Chow Chun-fai and courtesy of Gallery EXIT

[Portraits from Behind < http://www.galleryexit.com/202002.html >](http://www.galleryexit.com/202002.html) is a series of small-format paintings by Hong Kong artist Chow Chun-fai, who depicts vivid scenes from the large-scale anti-extradition bill protests that have gripped the city since last June.



Painting by Chow Chun-fai depicts a footbridge outside of Cross Harbour Tunnel in Hung Hom being set on fire. Photo: Courtesy of Gallery EXIT and the Artist.

Key protest scenes come alive on Chow's canvases – including a rendering of the footbridge above the Cross Harbour Tunnel Toll Plaza **[bursting into flames](https://hongkongfp.com/2019/11/18/hong-kong-polyu-campus-surrounded-police-warn-live-ammo-may-used-protesters-set-fire-armoured-vehicle/)** < <https://hongkongfp.com/2019/11/18/hong-kong-polyu-campus-surrounded-police-warn-live-ammo-may-used-protesters-set-fire-armoured-vehicle/> > during the 12-day Hong Kong Polytechnic University siege last November. Protesters had tried to block police from entering the campus which they had occupied.





Painting by Chow Chun-fai of a vehicle on fire at a protest near the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Photo: Courtesy of Gallery EXIT and the Artist.



Painting by Chow Chun-fai depicts riot police officers holding warning flags at a protest. Photo: Courtesy of Gallery EXIT and the Artist.

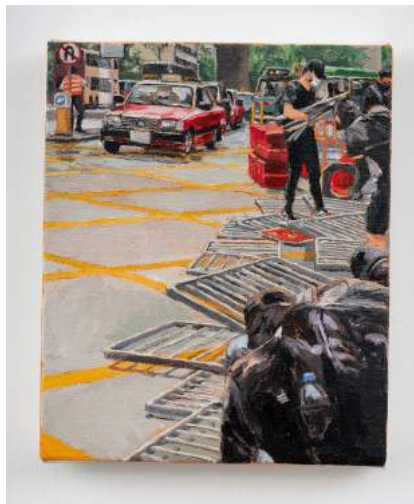


Painting by Chow Chun-fai of protesters holding umbrellas in front of a fire at a protest. Photo: Courtesy of Gallery EXIT and the Artist.

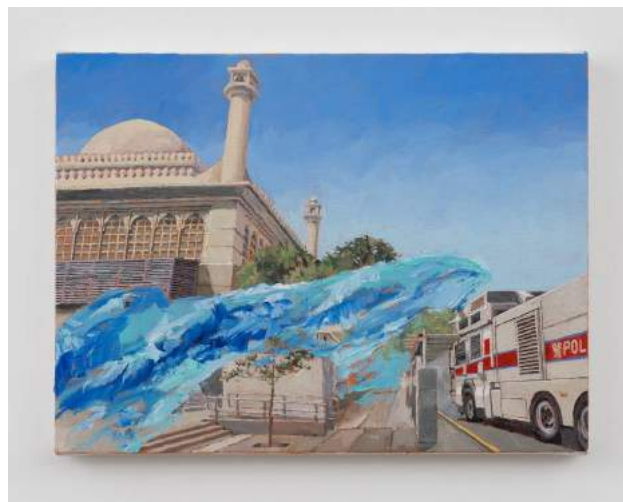
Chow's series has been on display in [Gallery EXIT < http://www.galleryexit.com/contact.html >](http://www.galleryexit.com/contact.html) in Aberdeen since mid-March, and the exhibition will end on May 30. The gallery [said < http://www.galleryexit.com/202002.html >](http://www.galleryexit.com/202002.html) the 40-year-old artist was “deeply disturbed and shaken” by the events in Hong Kong last year. The paintings served as an outlet for Chow's emotions.



Painting by Chow Chun-fai depicts a man being arrested by police. Photo: Courtesy of Gallery EXIT and the Artist.



Painting by Chow Chun-fai of protesters setting up road blocks at a protest. Photo: Courtesy of Gallery EXIT and the Artist.



Chow Chun-fai's painting of the Kowloon Mosque and Islamic Centre in Tsim Sha Tsui being sprayed by a police water cannon. Photo: Courtesy of Gallery EXIT and the Artist.

To enhance the authenticity of his work, Chow referred to photos and live streams taken at the demonstrations, giving his paintings an almost “documentary quality,” the gallery says. But the artist did not offer any context or explanation in his work, as he hopes viewers can reconstruct the fragmented pieces of information and come up with their own interpretation of the events.



Painting by Chow Chun-fai: the arrival hall of the Hong Kong International Airport filled by protesters. Photo: Courtesy of Gallery EXIT and the Artist.



Painting by Chow Chun-fai of riot police standing inside an MTR station. Photo: Courtesy of Gallery EXIT and the Artist.



Painting by Chow Chun-fai of a protester sitting at a makeshift gate at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Photo: Courtesy of Gallery EXIT and the Artist.

Apart from capturing the police-protester skirmishes, or the sea of people at public demonstrations, Chow's collection documents various kinds of people he met during the movement. In an [interview < https://www.thestandnews.com/art/%E5%B0%88%E8%A8%AA-%E5%91%A8%E4%BF%8A%E8%BC%9D-%E8%97%9D%E8%A1%93%E5%AE%B6%E7%9A%84%E5%86%B7%E8%88%87%E7%86%B1-%E5%8E%9F%E8%A6%81%E7%9F%B3%E6%B2%88%E5%A4%A7%E6%B5%B7%E7%9A%84%E5%8F%8D%E9%80%81%E4%B8%AD%E7%B9%AA%E7%95%AB/ >](https://www.thestandnews.com/art/%E5%B0%88%E8%A8%AA-%E5%91%A8%E4%BF%8A%E8%BC%9D-%E8%97%9D%E8%A1%93%E5%AE%B6%E7%9A%84%E5%86%B7%E8%88%87%E7%86%B1-%E5%8E%9F%E8%A6%81%E7%9F%B3%E6%B2%88%E5%A4%A7%E6%B5%B7%E7%9A%84%E5%8F%8D%E9%80%81%E4%B8%AD%E7%B9%AA%E7%95%AB/) with Stand News, Chow said that, because most people at the frontline were reluctant to be recognised, he decided to paint their “portraits from behind.”

“People may not know each other, they only knew they were ‘of the same road.’ It is even quite Utopian – you don’t have to know the other person’s identity, but you trust them,” he said.



Chow Chun-fai's painting of a protest at the Hong Kong International Airport. Photo: Courtesy of Gallery EXIT and the Artist.



Painting by Chow Chun-fai of a family taking part in a march. Photo: Courtesy of Gallery EXIT and the Artist.



Painting by Chow Chun-fai: a foreign journalist at a protest. Photo: Courtesy of Gallery EXIT and the Artist.

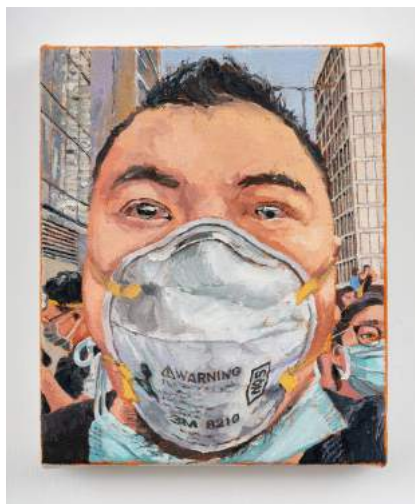


Painting by Chow Chun-fai depicts first aid volunteers at a protest. Photo: Courtesy of Gallery EXIT and the Artist.

Apart from protesters, Chow also depicts other people who were at the frontline, including journalists, first aid volunteers and fire fighters.



Painting by Chow Chun-fai of firemen putting out a fire at a protest. Photo: Courtesy of Gallery EXIT and the Artist.



Chow Chun-fai's self-portrait of himself at a protest. Photo: Courtesy of Gallery EXIT and the Artist.

The only face clearly captured in Chow's series was his self-portraits at the protests.

Chow Chun-fai: Portraits from Behind

Date: March 14 to May 30, 2020

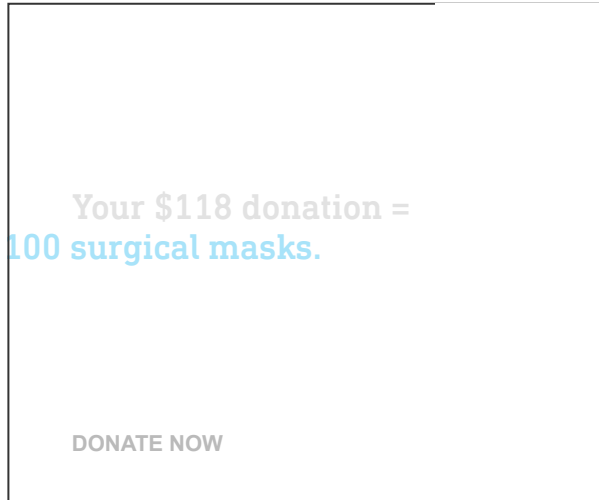
Venue: Gallery EXIT (3/F, 25 Hing Wo Street, Tin Wan, Aberdeen, Hong Kong)

Opening hours: Tuesday to Saturday, 11 am to 4 pm

[Chow Chun-fai < http://www.chowchunfai.com/index.html >](http://www.chowchunfai.com/index.html)

graduated from the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the Department of Fine Arts (BA and MFA). In 2012, he ran in the Legislative Council election in the Sports, Performing Arts, Culture and Publication constituency. Chow is a the recipient of the Grand Prize of the Hong Kong Arts Centre 30th Anniversary Awards, and the Sovereign Asian Art Prize. His work can be viewed on his [website < http://www.chowchunfai.com/index.html >](http://www.chowchunfai.com/index.html)

.



[Support HKFP < https://support.hongkongfp.com/ >](https://support.hongkongfp.com/) | [Code of Ethics < https://www.hongkongfp.com/hkfp-code-ethics/ >](https://www.hongkongfp.com/hkfp-code-ethics/) | [Error/typo? < https://www.hongkongfp.com/hkfp-corrections-policy/ >](https://www.hongkongfp.com/hkfp-corrections-policy/) | [Contact Us < https://www.hongkongfp.com/contact-us/ >](https://www.hongkongfp.com/contact-us/) | [Newsletter < https://www.hongkongfp.com/newsletter/ >](https://www.hongkongfp.com/newsletter/) | [Annual & Transparency Report < https://www.hongkongfp.com/hong-kong-free-press-annual-report-2019/ >](https://www.hongkongfp.com/hong-kong-free-press-annual-report-2019/)



[< https://www.hongkongfp.com/newsletter/ >](https://www.hongkongfp.com/newsletter/)

Latest

[Is this the end of Hong Kong Inc? What losing US 'special status' may mean for the finance hub <](https://hongkongfp.com/2020/05/30/is-this-the-end-of-hong-kong-inc-what-losing-us-special-status-may-mean-for-the-finance-hub/)

[https://hongkongfp.com/2020/05/30/is-this-the-end-of-hong-kong-inc-what-losing-us-special-status-may-mean-for-the-finance-hub/>](https://hongkongfp.com/2020/05/30/is-this-the-end-of-hong-kong-inc-what-losing-us-special-status-may-mean-for-the-finance-hub/)

['Let Hong Kong be Hong Kong' says US consul general <](https://hongkongfp.com/2020/05/30/let-hong-kong-be-hong-kong-says-us-consul-general/)

[https://hongkongfp.com/2020/05/30/let-hong-kong-be-hong-kong-says-us-consul-general/>](https://hongkongfp.com/2020/05/30/let-hong-kong-be-hong-kong-says-us-consul-general/)

[Video: How Hong Kong's pole dancing studios are surviving coronavirus lockdown <](https://hongkongfp.com/2020/05/30/video-how-hong-kongs-pole-dancing-studios-are-surviving-coronavirus-lockdown/)

[https://hongkongfp.com/2020/05/30/video-how-hong-kongs-pole-dancing-studios-are-surviving-coronavirus-lockdown/>](https://hongkongfp.com/2020/05/30/video-how-hong-kongs-pole-dancing-studios-are-surviving-coronavirus-lockdown/)



HKFP LENS

Showcasing photographic talent from Hong Kong and beyond. [More by HKFP Lens < https://hongkongfp.com/author/hkfp-lens/>](https://hongkongfp.com/author/hkfp-lens/)



[https://hongkongfp.com/>](https://hongkongfp.com/)

© 2020 HONG KONG FREE PRESS HKFP.

PROUDLY POWERED BY WORDPRESS. < [HTTPS://WORDPRESS.ORG/>](https://wordpress.org/)

PRIVACY, T'S & C'S < [HTTPS://HONGKONGFP.COM/PRIVACY-POLICY/>](https://hongkongfp.com/privacy-policy/)