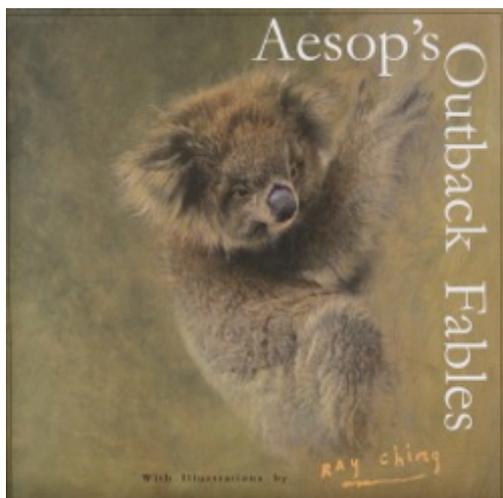




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Aesop's Outback Fables **Limited Edition Book**

A new book by Ray Ching to be launched at the opening of a major exhibition on Tuesday 1 May, at ARTIS Gallery, 280 Parnell Road, Auckland.

Born in Wellington New Zealand, Ray Ching has lived in the UK for many years where he has established himself as one of the world's foremost wildlife artists. His early reputation, built on his realistic paintings of New Zealand birds, quickly spread to England, where he was commissioned to prepare 250 illustrations for *The*

Readers Digest Book of British Birds. The book was published in 1969, and went on to become the best-selling ornithological field guide ever.

Since then Ray Ching has exhibited in many countries, and the numerous books of his works have become collectors items in their own right. Along with his better-known paintings of birds and other wildlife, Ching's portraits are also highly acclaimed, and are in private collections and galleries all over the world.

More recently, Ray Ching has combined his artistic work with his love of stories and fables, and in 2012 *Aesop's Kiwi Fables* was published. Two years later the theme continued with the publication of *Dawn Chorus: The Legendary Voyage to New Zealand of Aesop, the Fabled Teller of Fables*. The books and accompanying exhibition placed the fables in a New Zealand context, using paintings of native birds and other New Zealand scenes to illustrate the stories.

From here it has been just a short hop across the Tasman to recast the stories in Australia, where the artist lived for some years. In *Aesop's Outback Fables*, kiwi are replaced by koalas, pukeko by possums, and weka by wombats, all rendered in Ray Ching's wonderfully exquisite detail, supported by his hand-written interpretations of the cautionary tales of Aesop and others. In the final part of this major book, the artist places his own work in context by recounting the story of Aesop's fables from their origins over 2500 years ago, through their publishing history to the present day. This section is generously illustrated with the work of Ching's predecessors including the great French illustrator J. J. Grandville and Australia's 'master of line', Norman Lindsay.



Restricted to 460 individually numbered copies, *Aesop's Outback Fables* is not only the perfect complement to the exhibition of the same name; as a stand-alone work it will also appeal to devotees of the work of Ray Ching as well as lovers of Australia's unique wildlife.

***Aesop's Outback Fables* 268 pages**
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