



Shaun Tan (1987 to 1991) – Oscar award winner, animator, artist and writer

Shaun Tan is a distinguished alumnus and ambassador of Balcatta Senior High School from which he graduated in 1991. He was a student of Balcatta's Gifted and Talented Visual Art Program and after school, undertook teaching himself the art of book illustration.

While at school Shaun enjoyed reading, writing and illustrating poems and stories; and spent a lot of time drawing dinosaurs, robots and space ships. He was attracted to anything about monsters, outer space or robots.

He also started painting and drawing illustrations for science fiction magazines and horror stories. He said that he was mostly influenced by the short stories of Ray Bradbury, and that visually was probably influenced more by the designs than the storylines in movies and television.

Finally, after facing some rejections, Shaun had a breakthrough and his first illustration was published in 1990, in a magazine called 'Aurealis'.

Shaun went on to study Fine Arts, Literature and History at the University of Western Australia from which he graduated in 1995.

From 1992 to 2011 [Shaun Tan](#) was been honoured with 45 awards and prizes and achieved national and international success with his work.

He received worldwide acclaim as an illustrator and author of such works as [The Red Tree](#) and [Tales from Outer Suburbia](#).

His illustrated work *The Arrival* is an international best seller and won multiple awards including both the Western Australian and NSW Premier's Book Awards and the Children's Book Council of Australia Picture Book of the Year.

In 2011 he won an Academy Award for [The Lost Thing](#), a 2011 animated film adaptation of a 2000 picture book he wrote and illustrated.

In the same year, he received the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award, a prestigious international prize for children's and young adult's literature.

In 1992, he won the International Illustrators of the Future Contest, the first Australian to achieve this award.

On Friday 1 November 2019, Shaun shared his experiences of being a student in the Gifted and talented Visual Art Program during an informal interview at the City of Stirling to promote the 40th anniversary celebrations. He explained that he did no formal art training at the school after the end of Year 12 which showed just how important the program and its Saturday morning classes were in nurturing and developing his talents.

Shaun has given his name to the Balcatta Senior High School Shaun Tan Emerging Artist Award which was presented to Torren Whisson, a Year 12 student who graduated from the school in 2019.