

art

Taking flight ... Noel McKenna's Annandale Scene 2.



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VISITOR FROM OUTRE SPACE

NOEL McKENNA LOOKS AT SYDNEY WITH AN OUTSIDER'S EYES.
TRACY CLEMENT REPORTS.

METROPICKS

THE SCIENCE FAIR

Eleven local artists get creative with cardboard, tape, chemicals and plants in sculptures and video art. Marley Dawson puts his own spin on that old standby, the simulated volcano. **Firstdraft Gallery**, 116 Chalmers Street, Surry Hills, 9698 3665. Last days, **until Saturday**.

NIGEL MILSOM

The Sydney painter uses black, white and grey to create dark tableaux of paper dollies. In 26 canvases, all called *Untitled (The Incident)*, Milsom's mini-protagonists get up to mischief. **Yuill/Crowley**, 4-14 Foster Street, Surry Hills, 9211 6383. **Wed-Sat, until March 15.**

YOU CAN COUNT TO TEN

Curator Greg Perano, one-time percussionist for rock heroes Hunters & Collectors, allowed people all over the world to do whatever they wanted in 23 sketchbooks. Gallery visitors are invited to add to the eclectic results.

Black & Blue Gallery,

302/267-271 Cleveland Street, 0412 100 833. Last days, **until Sunday**.
Tracey Clement



affectionate portraits of the city. As with most pictures from the past, they seem sentimental, but thankfully not sickly sweet.

Occasionally McKenna captures Sydney's dark heart. In his etchings of Annandale, locals out walking their dogs are shadowed by low-flying helicopters. A sinister vision of Sydney's future, perhaps?

NOEL McKENNA: THE WEEKLY BUS-RAIL TICKET

NAS Gallery, National Art School, Forbes Street, Darlinghurst, 9339 8686. **Mon-Sat, until March 29.**

In common with any good tourist, in the early days McKenna couldn't resist the magnetic pull of Sydney's icons: the Harbour Bridge, the Opera House and Luna Park. Yet his watercolour sketches, drawings and etchings of mundane inner-city scenes are most exciting.

It's amazing how much has changed over the years but even more stunning to see what has stayed the same. His *Service Station, Paddington* is long gone but the looming chimneys of the defunct brickworks at St Peters are still there and Redfern station, which McKenna painted at night in 1985, still seems vaguely menacing after dark.

Most of McKenna's images are accurate,

NEWCOMERS know Sydney looks different once you have been here a while. The clear, sharp tourist-vision of a visitor, a rosy filter that makes everything look marvellous and new, quickly mutates into the blinkered, streetwise gaze of a local who barely sees anything at all.

In *The Weekly Bus-Rail Ticket*, painter Noel McKenna invites us to see our city with fresh eyes.

McKenna left Brisbane in the late 1970s for the lure of Sydney's big smoke. *The Weekly Bus-Rail Ticket* traces more than a decade of McKenna's adventures through the city, armed with watercolour paints and pencils, as he got to know his new home by public transport.