

ARTS • EXHIBITIONS • REVIEW

In praise of street art

Andrew Collis · Friday, November 9, 2012 · [Leave a Comment](#)

Newtown artist Bede Kelcher loves “the drama of clashing colours, the extremes of light and shade at sunset, the wonderful juxtapositions that a city presents” ...



'Newtown Praise' (2008) (Painting: Bede Kelcher)

Your new works, streetscapes especially, seem very free and full of life. Can you describe your current approach and process?

Firstly, that is exactly what I'm on about, so I'm pleased you see that. I know it sounds terrible but I hate sketching. I do, however, have a great camera on my mobile phone. The "sketchy" part starts in my studio and once I've worked out the basic composition I can "let it rip" to my favourite music. If I've freed up it's because I'm painting in acrylics and their sketchy wet-on-dry look suits the architectural subject matter.

How important is Newtown to your work as an artist? Is there a "Newtown style"?

Newtown's tremendous. The streetscape is remarkably well preserved and as a local I can be at the right place at the right time – such as

a rainstorm at 6am. The dramatic corner of King and Wilson Street is wonderful. It hits you as you come out of the station. The imposing building dividing the traffic, I call the “Green King of Newtown”, and I’ve painted it four times already! As for a “Newtown style” there may well be, but a stay-at-home bore like myself is not the person to ask.

By all reports your recent exhibition was a great success. What was the experience like for you? Collaborators?

It was great to see so many people come and enjoy the good vibes of Clash of the Frypans exhibition, at the very “arty” Fire Gallery [in Enmore Road]. The paint-splattered floor of that place is a work of art in itself! Two local musicians played an acoustic set and we even joined in the singing! My co-exhibitor Hilary Latta had a great time too.

What’s next for Bede Kelcher? Have you started work on a new project?

A complement to all this urban stuff is the Harbour. And I’m very excited about a series of large frameless seascapes I’m doing. I can’t wait for the next storm to rough-up the skies. Cloudless blue ones are SO boring. These new works really lend themselves to an expressionist approach and I’m puttin’ the paint on thick as toothpaste!

What have you learned lately about art-making – what challenges and opportunities do you see?

To take note of people’s comments and advice. I’ve just gotta get with the digital age and promote myself. Get up to Paddington and have a show. But above all, keep on painting. And as long as the sun spotlights the streets and laneways of Surry Hills, Newtown and Glebe, that I’ll do.

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