



Nostalgia . . . John Bokor found echoes of his Paddington childhood in Marrickville Picture: BOB BARKER

Memories are awake in paint

John Bokor
King Street Gallery on Burton
Exhibition

John Bokor doesn't really think much of today's Paddington. Bokor was born there in the early 1970s but by the time he was growing up, architects and baby boomers had robbed him of the suburb he once loved. Designer homes and delicatessens moved into where tumbledown terraces and corner shops had been.

"By the late '80s it wasn't so much fun any more," he says. A few years ago, a mate asked him to house-sit his place in Tempe and Bokor was hit by a wave of nostalgia. Tempe was just like the Paddington of his youth.

"I did some good paintings in their garage and I thought, this is where I want to live — this is unreal," he says. Marrickville, not far from Tempe, was particularly captivating for Bokor.

"It gave me a real flashback to how things were when I was growing up," he says.

"There's a kind of organic quality to Marrickville, because so

many people have extended their houses and built things without DA approval. There's a lot of makeshift things happening, so it's funky to paint. You walk around a few streets and come to these strange structures."

He and his fiancée, Kristin Ryan, bought a house in Marrickville, built an attic studio and Bokor painted the body of work that has just gone on exhibition at King Street Gallery on Burton, in Darlinghurst.

Representing almost a year's work, the oils on canvas glow with Bokor's joy of living in the city. For a split-second you can see faces in the windows of trains that shriek along the tracks at the bottom of the garden, where TV sets flicker in the windows of a block of flats, where a suburban hillside is a patchwork of backyard washing lines, gardens, kids and dogs.

Bokor's childhood was an ideal training ground for an artist. His family lived in the top two floors of a four-storey warehouse and they let the lower floors to a succession of galleries, which included Barry Stern's famous one. And today,

Bokor's father runs the space himself as Mary Place Gallery.

Bokor attended Sydney Boys High, where he claims he was "useless" at almost everything except for art.

In 1991 he enrolled in the National Art School, where Elisabeth Cummings, Paul Higgs and Kevin Malloy were his most inspiring teachers.

At a time when photography is a standard reference for painters, Bokor works from drawings as well as his memory.

As an artist who injects so much vernacular poetry into his landscapes, he does not believe that photographs could record the small things that interest him — a faux sandstone finish, a pebblecrete driveway or, say, a cement statuette.

"These are the things that appeal to you when you look at something, so that's what you should be painting," he says.

King Street Gallery on Burton,
102 Burton St, Darlinghurst,
Tues-Sat 11am-6pm, 9360 9727.
Exhibition continues until Nov 12.

ELIZABETH FORTESCUE



Spooked by sta

Miranda Otto (pictured), star of STC play *Boy Gets Girl*, has been left a little spooked by her role playing a New York magazine writer who becomes the subject of a stalker (played by **Matthew Newton**).

"I was actually moved read it," she says, "but been more spooked. I more than I used to . . . devastated by the end further than I thought didn't think she would the way she does."

Stork's gold mi

One of the comic high all year has to be **Bruce Spence's** karaoke-styl *You Don't Know Who Billie Holiday*, as a crin sidekick in *The Marve SBW Stables Theatre* comic timing and stag showed he's not only n the big screen.

Firebrand's birt

Playwright **Mona Bra** ground as one of a new Australian women dra

