





Lucy McKenzie **SUDBURY TOWN STATION** Station Approach, Wembley

The suburbs aren't generally known for their iconic architecture, but an occasional gem does shine out from the otherwise undifferentiated sprawl. One such beacon is Sudbury Town station in northwest London, an exemplar of Modernism designed in 1931 by Charles Holden, who was responsible for more than 40 London Underground stations between the 1920s and 1940s. Inspired by innovative Dutch terminals, the design – subsequently known as the 'Sudbury box' and the prototype for other stops on the Piccadilly Line extensions – features a tall brick booking office with a flat concrete roof flanked by side wings, and large vertical windows that flood the space with daylight and transform it into a glowing lantern at night.

The station is now home to *Pleasure's Inaccuracies*, an installation by Scottish artist Lucy McKenzie. Commissioned by Art on the Underground, the work comprises maps of the local area painted on to waiting-room ceilings, a suite of posters and an architectural model of the station, which McKenzie – a doll's-house enthusiast since childhood – has furnished with miniature versions of her works.

A resident of Brussels since 2006, McKenzie creates paintings and installations, and collaborates with Beca Lipscombe on the fashion label Atelier EB. She casts a sophisticated eye on style and technique across creative disciplines, noticing how they develop and shift over time to generate what we think of as aesthetics. For her work at Sudbury Town, McKenzie delved into the Transport for London archive, seeking out documents from the time the station was built, notably maps and advertisements by RP Gossop and Herry (Heather) Perry. Following Perry's tendency to dot her maps with places of personal interest, McKenzie has included unconventional landmarks on her ceiling paintings of Sudbury, from the original Smith's crisps factory to a World War II bunker underneath the station.

On the platforms, where birdsong chimes in with the drone of traffic, McKenzie's billboard for the fictional brand Everyone's Cognac is illustrated by an inclusive line-up whose attire projects a range of social classes – lady, maid, worker, gent – all reading the same little blue book. Another design has an airy drawing of a glamorous woman applying lipstick framed by a motif in which a loose scribble seems to spell out the word 'zen'. Both posters incorporate stylised depictions of nearby fences and the sky beyond, connecting the artworks to their physical locations.

There is an undercurrent to McKenzie's work that pulls historical imagery and designs in new directions. In the quasi-utopian setting of Sudbury Town station, her installation has the added charge of being enmeshed in an environment that already combines the uncanny and the mundane. The 1930s ticket-hall clock is ticking, but it tells the wrong time. The typeface on station signage is the same, but different: a rare, serifed variation of the Johnston font used across the Underground network. The place can make a visitor feel refracted across distinct eras. Far from being regressive or saccharine, McKenzie's retrograde language is strange and erudite, holding us alive in the present with just a passing whiff of nostalgia. **LUCY MCKENZIE: PLEASURE'S INACCURACIES** runs until November; the ceiling paintings and model are permanent ■ ELLEN MARA DE WACHTER is the author of *'Co-Art: Artists on Creative Collaboration'* (Phaidon)

Pleasure's Inaccuracies, 2020. Opposite: installation view of scale model and kiosk posters.

This page, from top: installation view and detail of waiting-room ceiling murals, *Map I* and *Map II*; *Lipstick I*, westbound platform billboard; *Everyone's Cognac*, eastbound platform billboard

EXHIBITION diary

Platform alterations, tempera fugit, plus Charlotte Edwards's listings

