



**ART**  
**Zadok Ben-David**  
 Annandale Galleries

Zadok Ben-David with his works *Fear Of Flying* and (below) a section of *The Other Side Of Midnight*. Picture: Ross Schultz

# Secrets, magic and ethereal sculptures

**ELIZABETH FORTESCUE**  
 ARTS WRITER

Zadok Ben-David's Eureka moment came in 1970s London. The then art student was leaving the British Museum when a magic shop across the road swam into his field of vision.

"I was hooked," the London-based Israeli artist says simply. "I started buying books (on magic) and I taught myself how to do it."

Since then, Ben-David has established an international reputation for his ethereal sculptures. He maintains a vast studio in central London. Last year he was overseas more than he was at home.

This year he's already been to Antarctica, and to Sin-

gapore where he partnered with Sotheby's on an installation of his sculptures in the Botanic Gardens.

But Ben-David's growing renown has not dimmed his fascination with magic and wonderment, as you can see in his latest exhibition at Annandale Galleries where he has exhibited regularly since 1991.

The focal work, *The Other Side Of Midnight*, is a stainless steel sculpture in a blacked-out

room. It is made up of tiny, inter-connected butterflies whose vivid colours glow under a UV light. Up close, the shapes are tiny human figures with insect wings. The other side of the sculpture is completely different. The surface crawls with myriad bluey-purple beetles and roaches.

Just how the work manages to be both fragile and sturdy, how it hangs in space, how it glows and manages to look like a

ball when it's really a disc, is all part of the magic. And, like any true magician, Ben-David is not giving his secrets away.

"It's like your virginity," he says humorously. "Once you lose it, it's forever. You see how it's done, and you can't see the magic in it any more."

Also on view are a number of large-scale botanical and figurative sculptures in hand-cut, painted aluminium. Ben-David says they are like line-drawings in air.

"Art has a very strong illusionistic part in it," he says. "The more you deceive the eye, the more you lie and cheat, the closer you are to the truth."

elizabeth.fortescue@news.com.au  
 twitter @Ozartwriter

Annandale Galleries, 110 Trafalgar St, Annandale; until May 11, 9552 1699, annandalegalleries.com.au

