

Cities, Communities and Homes: Is the Urban Future Livable?

- **Paper / Proposal Title:**

The good place that is no place

- **Format:**

screening

- **Author(s) Name:**

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- **University or Company Affiliation:**

Sheffield Hallam University

- **Abstract (300 words):**

This is a screening of *The good place that is no place*, a photographic essay shown as an 18 minute duration projection with voiceover. Its title derives from Thomas More's play on the etymological double entendre between *eutopia* meaning a good place, and *outopia*, no place: utopia is the good place that is no place. The project essays a constellation of ideas around home, belonging, migration, escape and sanctuary, via an engagement with social housing, modernist architecture, common land and horticulture. It draws upon photographic research in and around six tower blocks scheduled for demolition in Grimsby's East Marsh, where it attends literally and metaphorically to a now-abandoned garden, once only accessible to residents with keys, which was located on the architectural podium linking three of the blocks of flats. This site, with its sense of the medieval 'hortus conclusus', prompted a consideration of places of safety, asylum and recuperation, as well as issues of retreat and control. The investigation was inflected by experiences from the nine years during which I lived and photographed on the 24th floor of a Brighton seafront block, and my more recent return to ground level life in the centre of England in Sheffield, with the particular visual,

cultural and economic perspectives these offer. Looking out from on high(rise) and examining the view from the edges of the country to its interior, from the coastal border out to Europe and beyond, and from an economically prosperous area to its opposite, a place in decline, it also discusses twentieth century urban planning, the social stratification enacted in current housing development, and the possibilities for cultivating different futures. Commissioned by *We Must Create* through funding from Arts Council England, it was first screened in the East Marsh flats during Grimsby's 2016 *Lightworks* festival.

• **Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

Joanne Lee is Senior Lecturer in Graphic Design at Sheffield Hallam University. She is an artist, writer and publisher of the *Pam Flett Press*, a serial publication essaying aspects of everyday life. The *Pam Flett Press* has appeared in *PROGR-Fest*, PROGR - Zentrum für Kulturproduktion, Bern, Switzerland; *Offprint*, Tate Modern and *KALEID London*, an exhibition showcasing the best books by European-based artists. Her research on place has been presented in *Art of the Edgelands*, University of Exeter; *Provocative Plastics*, Arts University Bournemouth; *Northern Light: Landscape Photography and Evocations of the North*, Sheffield Hallam University; *Perequian Geographies*, University of Sheffield; *Species of Spaces: A Transdisciplinary Conference on the Work of Georges Perec*, Teesside University, from which an article *On Not Staying Put: Georges Perec's 'Inter(in)disciplinarity' as an Approach to Research:* is forthcoming in the journal *Literary Geographies*; and in exhibitions including *Green and Pleasant Land?* Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Preston and *In return*, Sheffield Institute of Art Gallery.]