

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

- **Paper / Proposal Title:**

Creative energy or Quality of life

- **Format:**

Written paper / verbal presentation

- **Author(s) Name:**

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- **University or Company Affiliation:**

Cambridge School of Art / Architectural Association London

- **Abstract (300 words):**

At the age of paradoxes and extremes our urban reality is full of contradictions. Increasingly, only the extremely rich and the extremely poor can afford to live in our cities. This could be connected to the idea of outsourcing and making people work from home and use their home as their office; as well as zero-hours contract.

This is how in global capital cities such as London there can be simultaneously a housing crisis and an abundance of empty luxury properties. Whilst some councils may be trying to force the owners to occupy these apartments or at the very least rent them out, there is little hope that this will be successful on a large scale. In the current urban reality of not only buy-to-let but buy-to-leave and the success of AirBnB; communities easily get fragmented and even potentially destroyed.

One such paradox involves a group that calls itself Anal (Autonomous Nation of Anarchist Libertarians), squatters who occupied a Mayfair mansion empty since 2014. Anal were holding poetry workshops before being evicted and moving into another abandoned luxurious property.

The concluding parts of the paper will speculate if architects and designers are needed to make the urban reality more livable by their creativity and if the public space design and the abundance of creativity can make up for the hard reality and low quality of everyday life.

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

Nerma Prnjavorac Cridge grew up in Sarajevo, ex-Yugoslavia. She completed her architectural studies first at Birmingham, then at the Bartlett, UCL. After graduating, Nerma has worked for several distinguished architectural practitioners, including Thomas Heatherwick and art2architecture. She taught at a number of universities including University of Greenwich, Birmingham, London Met, Central Saint Martins and Hong Kong.

Nerma was awarded PhD in 2011 at the Architectural Association in London. Her first book *Drawing the Unbuildable* based on her PhD thesis was published by Routledge in May 2015. At present, Nerma is teaching at the Architectural Association and Cambridge School of Art, as well as running her own small art and design practice -Drawing Agency. Her current research interests encompass the relationship between architectural drawing, image and materiality, as well as 'post-socialist' urban constructs.