

In spring 2017, the South London Gallery (SLG) invited artist Jessie Brennan to collaborate with residents of Pelican Estate on a project titled YOUR WORDS. Jessie spent time listening to residents' experiences which, in different ways, celebrate the value of public housing and speak to the broader challenges often faced by those on council estates.

*A broader context of the project, including Jessie's introductory text and examples of further conversations between Jessie Brennan (JB) and Pelican residents, can be found on the South London Gallery website:
<https://www.southlondongallery.org/projects/jessie-brennan-words/>.*

Leila (b. 2003, UK), Pelican Estate resident

JB What was it like to grow up on Pelican Estate?

L Well, at first when I was younger it was good, it was fun. I'd go out every day to see my friends in the park. But as I grew up I kind of got bored of it and didn't come out as much as I did when I was younger.

JB And now, as a teenager, what do you enjoy about living on the estate?

L Well, I do like the neighbours. I pretty much know a lot of the people who live around here, and they're all nice. So you'd meet people who'd pay for things. You'd meet people who'd, if you're stuck outside your house, take you in. And they wouldn't get mad that you're disturbing them or anything. And it's just really easy to see or meet friendly people around here. [...] So it's a welcoming and loving place.

JB Are there any challenges about living here?

L I think a really bad thing that's going on around here is litter. [...] In my estate, it's like, I don't know if it feels this way in others but it's kinda like dirty when you walk the stairs and you go on the ground floor. Compared to when you go to other buildings, there might be a floor cleaner. And is it just us or is it always that way? [...]

JB Do you feel there's a difference between how Pelican is perceived by people outside the estate and how it's experienced by the people who live in it?

L I think that people on the outside shouldn't really judge. Because if you don't live in a certain place then you don't know what's happening there. If I were to go to an outsider's place and be like 'oh my gosh your house is so messy, god knows what's been happening here' they'd probably be like 'well, you don't live round here, you don't know what's actually going on'. Like they say in the movies: don't judge a book by its cover.