

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/>.*

PAUL (b. 1981, UK), Pelican Estate resident

JB What does it mean to you to have a council home?

P Me, it means I could buy it, honest truth. My aim is to buy it, yeah. It just means that's my way of getting my foot onto the ladder. If I lose my flat, being a young black male I would never get a property or help like that, so I cannot afford to lose it, like it's not an option. [...]

I don't think black [male] kids still now believe they could be a doctor, d'you get me? At the age of 19/20 I think you start to realise your potential. And I think because you've been on the street doing badness from [age] 15 it's probably too late by then for you. [...] Robbery, stabbings, smoking weed, antisocial behaviour: this is his frame now, this is how he's going to grow, d'you get me. This is how he's going to grow up. You don't want that. You want a black man to not wear a suit because he's going court, funeral, or a wedding. You want to have a suit for a different reason. [...]

Honest truth, I felt trapped in Peckham for a good couple years. So now that I've branched out and realised – seen other things, shall I say – realised my likes and dislikes, I think I'm more inclined to understand what I want from the place I live.