

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/>.

Chantel (b. 1978, UK) with son Tye, Pelican Estate resident

JB How long have you lived in Peckham?

C I've lived in Peckham all my life. [...] I was born here in London. My mum and my absentee dad were both born in Jamaica. [...] I live in Crane House. I've lived there for five years. I moved from my mum's house after I had my son and moved straight from my mum's house, a one bedroom flat, to a two bedroom flat. I was quite lucky. [...]

'Cause I know when the Camden Estate got regenerated – knocked down [part of the Five Estates demolition and redevelopment] – we got moved or they tried to move us, but they wanted to move us somewhere like Bermondsey. That's where a lot of my friends who lived there at the time all moved to – the Bermondsey area. And my mum didn't want to live down there. [...] So she fought to stay where we were until she wanted somewhere that she actually wanted.

There was talk about them [Southwark Council] knocking down this [Pelican] estate – Crane House – for years and years; [I remember] from when I used to bunk over here [from school, now Harris Academy]. They wanted to knock it down and all that kind of stuff, but it's still here. [...] But they've just invested a whole lot of money in giving us new corridors and new doors and new electrics and stuff like that, so whether or not they've just invest the money because they got the money and it needs to go somewhere or what, I don't know... [...]

JB How do you feel about regeneration?

C I'm probably 50/50. 'Cause in some cases, yeah – it's good to sort of reinvest back into the area. But it seems like where they're knocking down these big estates they're not supplying the housing back necessarily for us to get them back. So it's like they've moved everyone out of the area where they can. And trying to come back is a bit of a nightmare. It's like either part-buy-part-rent or it's too expensive now, so people end up pretty much moving out of where they pretty much

grew up. [...] So I don't know, it'd probably scare me more than anything else, because the whole thought – I know how long it took me to get my flat the way it is and it's still not where I want it to be!