

Innovators – Public Realm

## Luise Vormittag selects Anne Howeson's *King's Cross St Pancras* project

When I visit Anne Howeson's studio she shows me her latest work about London's King's Cross St Pancras area on her computer. "This is my first moving image piece," she tells me, I squint, what is moving? The drawing on the screen fluctuates, the colours drift, the atmosphere darkens, realities are gradually shifting. "How did you make this?" I ask. "I just keep reworking the same drawing over and over again, erasing bits, adding other bits and taking a photo each time." The sky takes on a reddish hue. Buildings appear on the foggy horizon.

This incessant process of subtraction and addition mirrors that of the area itself. Some days you barely notice the shifting grounds, then suddenly you realise things have gone awry, stubbing your toe on a newly erected structure.

We look through some of her previous work. "First I used archival prints, now I'm working with early photographs", says Howeson. "These aren't your drawings?" "Yes, well, it's a mixture. I erase the boring parts and blend in my own elements." I double-take. You notice the seams only when you look carefully.

Howeson's alternative urban imaginaries dissolve temporal distinctions. The ghosts of King's Cross-yet-to-come rush past, clawing their mobile phones while horses graze on meadows undisturbed. Eighteenth century aristocracy stroll across St Pancras-in-the-Fields while improbably tall skyscrapers foreshadow the dictates of twenty-first century living. In some of the work, figures born into different eras are inches away from an encounter while in others it is the architecture that butts against its structural heirs and predecessors.

What will become of these animated pieces? "I will project them," explains Howeson, "in some kind of in-between space. Not only in a gallery."

I imagine turning into an alleyway, encountering the projections. It would take a while to orientate myself. Where am I? Or more like when am I? My presence would add another layer to these images. I will be yet another figure on yet another plane of existence inhabiting King's Cross St Pancras.

**Luise Vormittag** is an illustrator, designer, researcher, writer and educator who works on the Graphic Communication Design programme at Central Saint Martins, UAL. She is currently studying towards a practice-based PhD at London College of Communication, UAL.

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Rhythm

61

## ANNE HOWESON ARTIST AND LECTURER

**BRIEF:** The constraints imposed by a self-generated brief liberate and point towards unexpected connections with your own world. Recently I've worked with archives, including the London Metropolitan Archives, Museum of London Archives and Holborn Library — that was a self-imposed constraint, yet it helped me produce some good work. This theme is ongoing as I'm doing new work on it currently, making more moving drawings, similar to my work that was short listed for the Ruskin Prize.

**MATERIALS:** Pencil, gouache, Conté, digital prints, paper and a camera.

**RESEARCH:** I do two kinds of research. This new series focuses more on found photographs as a starting point and I've also been to Holborn Library for these. But usually it is anywhere with resonance of place — currently walking, drawing and photographing a seaside beach near Dublin. I've really only started to use the Wellcome Trust Reading Room while doing recent research. It has shelves of unusual books full of pictures that you can photograph for free, luxurious loos, ice cold water on tap and a smart café.

**PROCESS AND RHYTHM:** Rigging up an old-fashioned bracket on a shelf in my studio so I could make a stop frame animation on the development of the 1860s St Pancras Midland Line Railway. I took a photograph each time I altered the drawing on the digital print. The film lasts about 5 minutes and shows a city growing and changing through time.

**RESISTANCES:** Rigging up an old-fashioned bracket on a shelf in my studio so I could make a stop frame animation on the development of the 1860s St Pancras Midland Line Railway. I took a photograph each time I altered the drawing on the digital print. The film lasts about 5 minutes and shows a city growing and changing through time.

**INSIGHT:** Commitment, dogged persistence, having a work routine. And my favourite cliché: feel the fear and do it anyway.

**DISTRACTIONS:** Lottie the dog.

**NUMBERS:** 250 — the number of drawings used for the stop frame drawing of St Pancras.

**RHYTHM:** Comes naturally from being absorbed in the process of making, in the zone of flow, rather than the ego.

[annehoweson.com](http://annehoweson.com)

*Regeneration and Revival at King's Cross.*  
Drawing on digital print. Shortlisted for The John Ruskin Drawing Prize 2017