

The Ghosts of King's Cross*

Luise Vormittag, 2017

When I visit [Anne Howeson](#) she shows me her latest work about the King's Cross area on her computer. 'This is my first moving image piece,' she tells me. I squint. Moving image? What exactly is moving? Ah! I noticed something. The drawing on the screen is fluctuating. Slightly. The colours drift, the atmosphere darkens, realities are gradually shifting. 'How did you make this?' I ask her. 'Oh, 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.

It occurs to me that this process of incessant subtraction and addition mirrors that of the area itself. On some days you barely notice the shifting grounds, but suddenly you realise things have gone awry: Something is missing. But what exactly? And then you stub your toe on a newly erected structure. How did this get here?

We look through some of Anne's previous work. 'First I used archival prints, now I'm working with early photographs', Anne tells me. 'Wait, these aren't your drawings?' 'Yes, well,

*The last image of Anne Howeson's stop frame 'moving drawing'.
Anne Howeson, Regeneration and Revival at King's Cross, 2017*



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Above: *The ghosts of King's Cross yet-to-come rush past, clawing their mobile phones while horses graze on meadows undisturbed. Anne Howeson imagining King's Cross, 2015.*
Below: *Another image from the series*

it's a mixture. I erase the boring parts and blend in my own elements.' I do a double-take. You notice the seams only when you look carefully.

Anne 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; in others it is the architecture that butts against its structural heirs and predecessors.

So what will become of these animated pieces? 'I will project them,' explains Anne, 'in some kind of in-between space. Not only in a gallery.' I picture myself turning a corner in an alleyway and unexpectedly encountering the projections. It would probably take a little while to orientate myself. Where am I? Or probably more like when am I? My presence would add yet another layer to these images. I will be yet another figure on yet another plane of existence inhabiting King's Cross.

annehoweson.com

