

REVIEW

[Indefinable City - Changing City Laid Bare](#)

by Gabriel Gregory

'I Love you Tacoma' and the AirSpace netherworld absorbed the heartfelt sentiment of Tommy Lee and resounded with the prolonged clatter of his drums. You couldn't just imagine a greater emotion for a place you barely know you're in; just passing through, but leaving something of yourself as you do.

Indefinable City is the title of AirSpace's first exhibition of 2007. It's theme is a metamorphosis of modern cities, the perception of them by their inhabitants and the effect they have on people who live in them. Although such themes are universal, as reflected by global sourcing of participants artists, stoke on trent is a much perfect venue as anywhere could possibly be, as we are arguably in the process of metamorphosis...as we speak.



So Tommy Lee loves Tacoma, but in this version it is local artists Ian Brown, lip synching to the live soundtrack, indulging in a live drumming mime in the confront of his own bedroom. One of the screens shows the mime with cooling fan strategically placed, while facing it, another screen shows displays the settings with a silent, static image of a domestic Stoke on Trent curtains. It is a very

amusing piece, and one with immediate resonance, citing the timeless and universal tendency of human beings to transpose themselves, imaginatively to venues and activities they have never experienced; a very everyday easence of what it is to be a fixed resident, made more real by the easy accessibility of recording technology.

Anna Francis, fine art lecturer at Staffordshire University, is the curator of Indefinable city, Her own work, Terrace, deals directly with the bare bones of the shows theme, documenting in intimate detail process of housing regeneration involved with a typical terraced house. The final, defining word is trumpeted by a massive 12ft photographic reproduction of a chopped off terrace end, as traumatic as an assumption, yet more elegy than protest. All the works selected probe at feelings of attachment and immersion in a particular place. And 'place' is the key word.

Polly Penrose highlights the significant of 'place' as regards its normal usage and the sudden presence of temporary, naked abnormal activity. Ben Frost signals the universality of 'place' with simultaneous showing of Happy Family graffiti stencil in Hanley and his base, Sydney, Australia. Heather Buckley cuts a scarlet swathe through the lot, courtesy of a flying snake of PE knickers, seeming emphasising experience rather than place, although each pair is decorated with different house number plaques, gifting the viewer with an enigma; why the number 11?