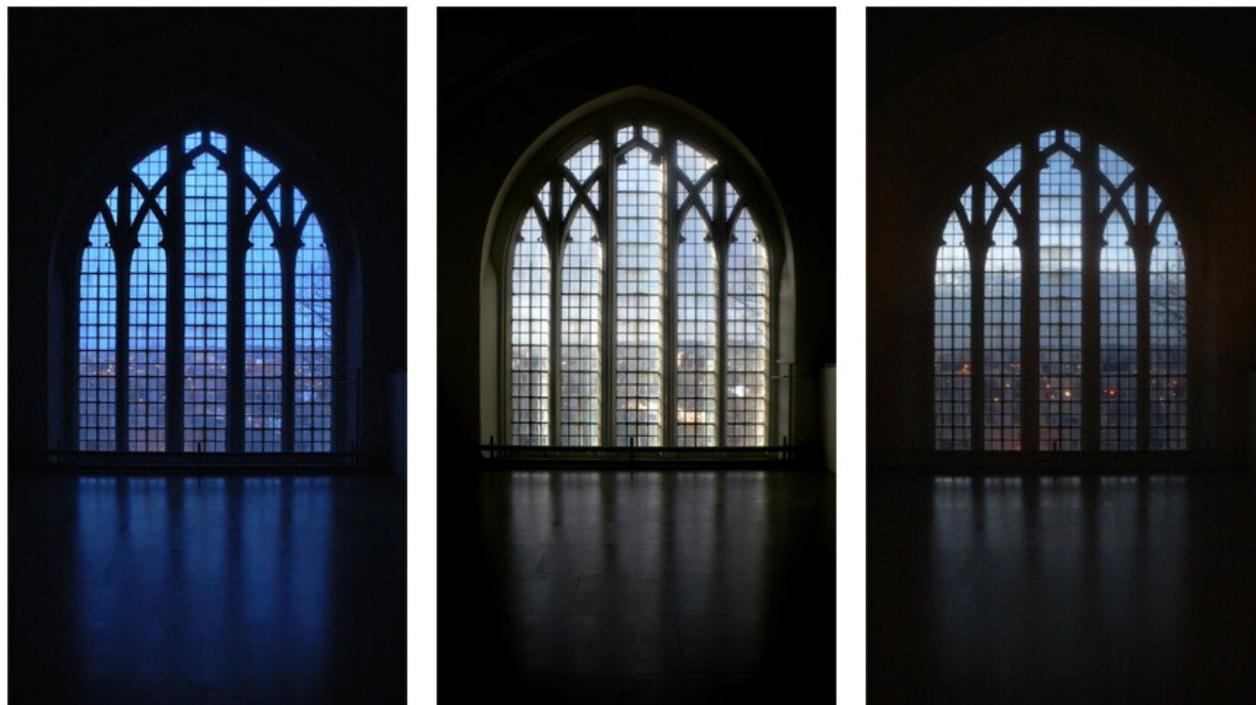


Veni Emmanuel: Trying to Let Light In
Sheona Beaumont

Reviewing Jane Lee, Artist-in-Residence at St Michael and All Angels' Church, Bedminster, Bristol (2009-12). Published in *The Creative Year: The View From Here* by Jane Lee (Bristol: Tangent Books, 2015), p.40.



Photographic stills from *xxiv*, 2012 (24mins)

In Jane's studio at the West End of the church, light filters through a clear-glass unadorned Victorian window which reaches from floor to ceiling in the space. It's perhaps not surprising that the window has become the frame for all of Jane's work during her residency, as it is an unavoidably dominant feature of a working area which one usually finds elsewhere to be white-walled and sterile – rather like most of the UWE MA displays, in which Lee's work also features this year. As such, the window is an interesting site of intersecting ideas, all of which cross like the leading into different aspects of Jane's work for her MA by Project award.

On the one hand, the window can't help but be associated with a rather stale, uninspiring view of 'church' – a space from within which the regulations of religion mount up like a grid of so much doctrine and ritual, forming a boundary and measuring line to be layered over the outside world. Wall-mounted prints in Jane's space form such a grid, either directly re-presenting the individual panes of glass, or with selected stills from the film – the former poetically revealing the crusting layers of grime and rain-streaks.

On the other hand, the window is only ever trying to let light in, becoming a screen for mediation and transition where the weather and the outside start to dematerialise the setting. It's a dematerialisation that seems best suggested in Lee's film *xxiv*, as the sequence of photographs taken at 5-minute intervals throughout the day is accompanied by a soundtrack of background noises (a phone, a car starting, a siren), birdsong, and the occasional line of sung music. Unlike the visual collage of images in physical and lateral comparison, the film creates a sense of dimensions acting on, in and *through* the window. It becomes a site of extraordinary sensitivity, where the inside and the outside overlap in traces of song and air, and in the myriad paths of humans coming-and-going.

This seems to me to be beautifully evocative of the ever-growing ever-moving life of a local community hub, while keeping that which is static in sight. The two aspects of the window, its structural visibility and its lattice of invisibility are held together, and in doing so become something of a reflection on faith which is both inherited and lived.