**Question: Aims of the proposed research programme

Proposed Title:** *Infrastructural Cosiness: At Home in the Network* **Background and Rationale**

I am proposing a PhD by artistic practice that will aim to rethink the spatial and ideological form of the home. I will focus on life within the contemporary city, extending domestic research towards a more urban condition that is increasingly shaped by the functions of networked technology. I believe that we are currently witnessing a not only a housing crisis in the UK but a much more widespread crisis of the home. We must interrogate our inherited structures of domesticity and familiality in order to progress the feminist task of constructing emancipatory and radical alternatives. A key proponent in this will be the role of technological developments, and how we might harness them towards re-thinking the spatial and relational forms of domestic arrangement.

My recent artistic output has explored these issues through installations of video and object-based works, performances and events that prompt and depict moments of rupture within the familiar domestic and networked urban experience. Constellations of collaged videos, domestic appliances, and figures made of soap have served to explore the intimate matters of living together, personal care, household maintenance, wellness, and the effects of globalization upon living space. In addition to gallery-based works, I have produced online projects and discursive events such as Comfort Zones – a series of symposia held without permission in the showrooms of various IKEA stores. These two strands of my practice both inform and draw from one another; with events and interventions in physical and virtual commercial spaces acting as a stepping stone between theory and practice.

**Research Questions**

The key questions I will be exploring through this PhD are:

- What is the significance of “home” within our current networked society?

Homes have become multi-identity, multi-task environments that no longer offer the stable “retreat” of past forms of domesticity. Is the home as a place of retreat a necessity and how might we successfully “retreat” within our networked domestic and urban context?

- How might we make ourselves “at home” within the network itself? Can a transient or virtual space be “home”?

Our hybrid digital and physical bodies have been incorporated into circuits that produce a new kind of digital home.

**Research Methodology**

I want to utilise the discursive and imaginative space of art to rethink the spatial and ideological form of the home. Art is closely involved in developments within the domestic and urban landscape, with its position at the front line of globalization; as a prototype of immaterial labour; and as an integral cog in the process of gentrification by which cities around the world are transformed and new lifestyle modes are promoted. Art provides a complex position from which to explore these issues. In what we might call hyper-gentrification, property developers in London and beyond are using art as a tool to “place-make” and generate cultural capital and thus more valuable assets. I intend to examine these developments alongside the role online platforms such as Airbnb have played in transforming the home as the fortress of the family, into the home as marketable asset.

My practice-based research will initially take the form of a series of discursive events and interventions that utilise the particularities of certain urban and domestic locations in order to facilitate conversations around these issues. These experiments will take place in both physical and virtual spaces; generating ideas and content for the development of object-based and video works. Working fluidly between spaces - both physical and virtual; private and public - fits my theoretical concerns as it allows an active exploration of the effects of an increasingly virtual architecture of the everyday upon the spatial and ideological forms of the domestic. Studio based production and experimentation will then lead towards the development of a new body of work that will take the final form of an installation that will serve to propose future spatial and ideological forms of the “home”.

**Time Schedule**

Year one: Review key literature on meaning and construct of home and effects of network upon spatial and social units . Research how artists are addressing the current domestic landscape; instigate a series of context-specific events/interventions.

Year two: In-depth experimentation with object and video forms in the studio; researching architectural theory and practice that propose new spatial forms for the home.

Year three: I will draw conclusions, and the work will come together through written thesis and exhibition that proposes potential “homes” for the future.