

Press Release: For immediate release

Lucy Beech unveils new work *Me and Mine* commissioned by FVU

**Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Preston: 2 May – 4 July
The Tetley, Leeds: 17 July – 27 September**

fvu.co.uk #LucyBeech



Above images: *Me and Mine*, Lucy Beech (2015)

Lucy Beech's new work 'Me and Mine' is a 40-minute film which will premiere at the Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Preston, from 2 May – 4 July, before travelling to Tetley, Leeds, from 17 July – 27 September. This is her most significant solo show to date.

In the words of Lucy Beech's new film *Me and Mine*, empathy – the compassionate attempt to see the world through another's eyes – is 'a kind of penetration, a travelling'. When you enter someone else's pain, it's 'like you enter a country'. Death, like empathy, is often spoken of as a transition: a journey into the unknown.

In *Me and Mine*, Beech examines how the so-called feminine 'virtues' of empathy and 'relationality' have gained increasing currency within previously patriarchal industries. Set between a traditional undertaker's and an annual award ceremony defined by one of its visitors as the 'nucleus of the funeral industry's female revolution', the film follows a central, female protagonist as she negotiates her experience as a woman amongst women. Though still dominated by men, as the starched collars and polished black hearses of the film's opening scenes remind us, the funeral industry is changing. Women are increasingly coming to the fore, challenging outdated traditions and mobilising a particular brand of feminist discourse in order to intervene in the sacrosanct space of the funeral parlour.

Ostensibly a study of the cultural and economic forces surrounding the business of death, *Me and Mine* is more deeply concerned with ideas of transition: between social groups; private and public worlds; tradition and innovation; individuals and communities; the self and the other. Concerned with the ways in which women construct and sustain communities, often in explicit opposition to patriarchy, *Me and Mine* investigates how the

rhetoric of 'inclusion', 'empathy' and 'care' could potentially reinforce an essentialist view of gender. As one of the film's female characters puts it, referring to women in general: 'We are the natural carers, aren't we?'

Beech interrogates the presumptions that frame this collective 'we', and questions the basis of this 'knowledge'. By mobilising affect in opposition to discourse, *Me and Mine* is a surprisingly life-affirming film about death. Dying is not the end of life, but a catalyst for its ceaseless reorganisation or renewal.

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Notes to editors

Project Credit: Commissioned by Film and Video Umbrella (FVU), with the support of Harris Museum & Art Gallery, The Tetley, The Fenton Trust, The Elephant Trust and University of East London, School of Arts and Digital Industries. With thanks to Open School East. FVU is supported by Arts Council England.

Film and Video Umbrella (FVU) commissions, curates, produces and presents artists' moving-image works that are staged in collaboration with galleries and other cultural partners. Since the late 1980s, FVU has been at the forefront of this vibrant and expanding area of practice, promoting innovation through its support of some of the most exciting figures on the contemporary scene. During this time, the organisation has commissioned and produced nearly 200 different artists' projects, ranging from ambitious multi-screen installations to shorter film and video pieces, as well as numerous online commissions. fvu.co.uk [@FilmVidUmbrella Facebook.com/FilmandVideoUmbrella](https://www.facebook.com/FilmandVideoUmbrella)

Since 1893, the **Harris Museum & Art Gallery** has enriched the lives of our visitors and the local community by creating links between people, collections and exhibitions, by celebrating creativity and stimulating learning ... something that continues today. Our vision is to extend our reputation as an outstanding museum and art gallery that is distinctive, ambitious, audience-focused and open to change. harrismuseum.org.uk [@HarrisPreston Facebook.com/HarrisMuseum](https://www.facebook.com/HarrisMuseum)
Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Market Square, Preston, PR1 2PP

The Tetley is Leeds' newest centre for contemporary art and learning that opened in November 2013. Created in the iconic headquarters of the former Tetley's Brewery in South Central Leeds, the Tetley shows and champions work by emerging and mid-career artists that is critically engaged and ambitious. Whilst The Tetley supports artists who are pushing the boundaries of contemporary art practice, the centre is committed to making their work accessible and enjoyable to visitors of all ages and backgrounds through participation and events programmes. www.thetetley.org [@The Tetley facebook.com/TheTetleyLeeds](https://www.facebook.com/TheTetleyLeeds) **The Tetley, Hunslet Road, Leeds, LS10 1JQ**