Best known for its proud ship-building past, Glasgow is a post-industrial city still struggling to come to grips with the impacts of deindustrialisation. Our title for this poster aims to be suggestive of such impacts. It wants to open some windows onto the political and socio-cultural challenges that arise from the forms of rapid urban change cities like Glasgow have experienced in the past 50 years and ask questions about how a city responds.

As a heartland of industrial activity from the early stages of the industrial revolution, Glasgow as a work-house became the ‘Second City of Empire’, a crucial cog in the machinery of producing and sustaining Empire. The city’s merchants became wealthy from cotton and tobacco production in America, inevitably built on slavery and land dispossession. Drawing its workers from Ireland and the Highlands, industrial bosses created forms of accumulation and industrial production in Glasgow that capitalised on the poverty, land dispossession and restructuring of land ownership that began with the Enclosures in the 16th Century and took its peculiar Scottish formation in the Highland Clearances during the 18th and 19th Centuries. The concentration of workers, in impoverished conditions, created deep concern with property and labour rights. This is the famous ‘Red Clydeside’ Glasgow became known for during the 19th and early 20th century, when political radicalism amongst the working classes was at its peak of organisation. Rent strikes, labour movements and anti-war activity characterised the political character and energy of the city at this time.

Glasgow is a very different city today. Deindustrialisation processes since the 1970s and the effects of neoliberal economic policies have torn the fabric of the city. As Scotland’s largest city (home to 3% of its population), and the fifth largest city in the UK, it is also one of Europe’s most divided and unequal cities. The leafy neighbourhoods of the wealthy ‘West End’ contrast starkly with poverty, deprivation, inter-generational worklessness and low life expectancy in the east and north. Decades of ‘urban renewal’ and renaissance projects seem to have increased the effect of that divide and furthered the concentration of wealth and ownership. The city has been home to countless regeneration programmes, most famously the GEAR (Glasgow East Area Renewal) programme in the 1980s, only partially fulfilled. The city centre has been transformed into hubs of successful/financial and retail activity, built on speculative wealth and rapidly rising land prices. Buchanan Street is now one of Europe’s more sought after shopping destinations. Glasgow is, according to the billboards, ‘Scotland with Style’.

The city is now undergoing new modes of transformation. Intensive inner city redevelopment, particularly along the river Clyde with new apartments and high-end city spaces, occurs alongside the demolition of large swathes of public sector housing, particularly the infamous ‘tower blocks’ for which Glasgow’s skyline is known. Alongside a series of flagship initiatives (new media and museum developments, the 2014 Commonwealth Games, and major new road infrastructure), these new modes are shaping the possibilities and spaces for urban action.
### Glasgow's Transformation

Glasgow is a city that has layers of (post)industrial and regeneration continuing with its urban form and social fabric. It is a city that remains starkly divided in both spatial and socio-economic terms. The demolit, poor hous- ing, loss of facilities, high unemployment and poor health in the East continues starkly with the wealth, privilege, high land values and leafy areas of the West. Success- ful waves of ‘re- generation’ appear to have failed to re- dress this division in any significant way. With their focus on comprehensive redevelopment, flagship projects and displacing as a means of capital accumulation, this is not surprising. The question we see for Glasgow is the extent to which the current moment of crisis in capital accumulation is seized as a moment of possibility.

As the money runs out for large-scale regeneration programmes and investor appetite for high-risk land speculation is limited, policies to prevent public sector-led bidding and sale in the face of burgeoning public debt, people are mobilising. Glasgow has a long tradition of social action. Urban struggles today are focused on the very significant restructuring of the social housing sector; the closure of local schools to sell public land for the profit, the heavy im- pact of new road infrastructure on the poorest communities; and exposing other truths behind the city’s desires for major events and flagship projects.

### Demolishing housing tower blocks

- **Purpose**: To publish the wealth of cultural facilities Glasgow has to offer ranging from all galleries, concert halls to libraries.
- **Dimensions**: 27,000 square metres.
- **Projects costs**: £74 million.
- **Investors**: Glasgow City Council, private funding.

### European City of Culture

- **Purpose**: To publish the Glasgow 2014 programme.
- **Dimensions**: 150,000 square metres.
- **Projects costs**: £5.4m.
- **Investors**: Glasgow 2014 Ltd.

### Significance for New Metropolitan Mainstream

The city’s response to diverse pressures is evidence of the city’s ability to adapt and thrive in the face of adversity. Glasgow’s resilience is evident in its ability to shift from an industrial economy to a service economy; to accommodate the influx of migrants from the former colonies; and to attract investment in the cultural sector. The city’s ability to adapt and thrive in the face of adversity is a key example of the changing discourses of urban policy in Britain. The story of Glasgow is a testament to the city’s ability to learn from its past and to respond to the challenges of the present.

### Impacts

- Reduced levels of social inclusion and community cohesion.
- Increased levels of crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Loss of community assets and public spaces.
- Displacement of local residents.
- Increased economic inequality.
- loss of cultural heritage.