

A SENSE OF BELONGING

EXHIBITION

'A sense of belonging is based on an individual's perception of their connection to a chosen group or place' and is often 'dependent on opportunities for interaction with others.'

(Allen et al 2021:90).

An exhibition by Heather Connelly, Nicholas Wilson, Dave Eccles and Jo Mansfield (Senior lecturers in School of Design and Architecture, University of Lincoln).

The work that you see exhibited is mix of works produced by the Arts Foundation Year (AFY) students, alongside works submitted via an open call from staff and students at the University of Lincoln and North West University, South Africa, with Zines and posters from the Arts Foundation Year at Staffordshire University. The exhibition was devised as the AFYs contribution to The foundations of belonging, Foundation Year Networks Annual Conference (hosted at UoL 9-10th July): <https://fynac24.lincoln.ac.uk/>

Our project looks beyond the Foundation Year to create a snapshot of what happens across the 4 degree - building on the spirit of AFY to create opportunities for cross-fertilisation between disciplines and fostering a sense of belonging within the school. This has been achieved by splitting the gallery into a studio and presentation space – providing an insight into the process of thinking and making as well as the 'finished' product, it includes sketchbooks and submissions from students in their 1st, 2nd and final year.

Participants were asked to write a short statement/rational, that accompanies the work about how it relates to the theme, to assist researchers to examine a number of questions:

- How can Art & Design can be used to foster a sense of belonging?
- How can the project briefs we write enable students to find their own voices? and become more aware of issues that may impact others' sense of belonging, by looking at decolonisation and considering equal, diverse and inclusive (EDI) practices etc.
- How does the studio environment encourage belonging – allowing us to see what key themes emerge.

The exhibition marks the start of the project and will be the subject of further events and outcomes. You can follow its progress by visiting the blog: <https://a-sense-of-belonging.blogs.lincoln.ac.uk/> and contribute to the project though a response to the exhibition and zine making workshop. Any enquiries should be directed to Hconnelly@lincoln.ac.uk.

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