



Real Student Stories

presents

Journeys of the Othered

Friday 23 June – Saturday 22 July 2023

Turner Sims Foyer

Journeys of the Othered is a multi-media exhibition with pieces created by nine students from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds in Higher Education about their own educational journeys. The exhibition has been curated by the students, who have been mentored by local artists, consultants, and technicians.

This exhibition is brought to Southampton by the Real Student Stories project by Emily Bastable, Vice President of Education and Democracy (22/23) at the University of Southampton. The aim of the project is to reflect the diversity at the University of Southampton and consider the strengths of the students who find themselves navigating Higher Education.

The students all come from a variety of backgrounds and are studying a diverse range of courses from Business to Health Sciences. They have been working since December on their artistic submissions with a mentor selected for them by the project.

A big thank you to our mentors:

Aline Giordano Humanistic coach and organizational consultant

George Tate Videographer at Southampton University Students' Union

Jilly Evans Artist and Box Office Manager at Turner Sims Southampton

Chris Macfarlane Animator & Illustrator

Anthony Welch Multimedia developer in Digital Learning, iSolutions, University of Southampton

Luke Shears Interim Gallery Development Manager, Engagement and Enhancement,
University of Southampton

Issa Farrah Poet with Artful Scribe

JJ Gale Artist and Director with Theatre for Life

Liam Gifford Widening Participation Coordinator, University of Southampton and local theatre artist

Josef Hill Installation

***Facing the Day* (Inés Borley)**

Facing the Day is a gouache animation exploring themes of anxiety and depression. Inspired by the artist's own experiences the work seeks to highlight the cyclical nature of mental health. While the events of the film take place over a day the cycle through the colour spectrum hints at a wider timeframe, demonstrating the artist's observation of mental health and recovery as non-linear. Noticeably, the film has no discernible beginning or end, instead cycling through different stages of mental state. Through this the artist conveys the commonly held frustration of mental health as a continual battle which needs constant energy and effort to be faced, without ever delivering the satisfaction of a distinct end point.

Inés Borley is a first-year archaeology and anthropology student studying in Southampton. She has a background in mixed media with a focus on oil pastel and acrylic; her work is characterised by its bold use of texture and colour. Inés' work often contains themes of the natural world and its connection to personal identity. *Facing the Day* is her first piece in animation and seeks to explore the mental health challenges faced by the artist.

***Dark Green* (Maduabuchi Aniekwe)**

Maduabuchi Aniekwe is passionate about creative writing, reading, and researching. He believes that if judiciously utilised, these tools have the power to positively sensitise, impact, break stereotypes, and spread hope. He is best known for his work 'Mystical season', a collection of ten captivating short stories that explore the intricate realities of everyday humans and the enigma of the supernatural.

Coming from a modest background dogged by remarkable struggles and life lessons, this project snappily captures his perseverance and



inspirational experiences to empower disadvantaged but industrious students on how he came to the UK on a fully funded scholarship against all odds. Perhaps through his success tips, they and many can learn that through hard work, discipline, and other sterling attributes, they can ultimately be accommodated in building an inclusive world.

***Orange* (Bilal Faiq Al Hammed)**

Hi, I am Bilal, a first-year medic at Southampton. My story is about my journey to studying medicine in the UK. I was born in Faisalabad, a city in Pakistan, and at the age of two my family moved to Italy. I was brought up in Italy, and lived there up to the age of 16, before moving to the UK. My dad spent 25 years of his life and was well-settled in Italy. He gave up everything and started again from scratch. All this just to provide better education for his children. When I came to Manchester in 2015, I was new to this language, education system and environment. I did not even know what GCSEs were, or that I had to do them to get access to A-levels. I then spent time researching which colleges offered the most number of GCSEs, as being 16 I could not go to high school. I then did all my GCSEs in a single academic year, and I won the Student of the Year Award in GCSE Science and

Mathematics. I subsequently got an offer from a grammar school's Sixth Form and completed my A-levels there. However, being from an under-represented background I did not get into medicine. Being determined to study medicine, I took a gap year. I got two interviews and secured both offers in that gap year. Today I am on the second year of my six years widening access to medicine programme, and I am enjoying every bit of it here in Southampton, where non-traditional students like myself are looked after well and efforts are made in order to bring us to a level playing field, in order to achieve our full potential. In my time here at Southampton I am committed to help those around me, who like myself, may not have access to the best resources to get into the career of their dreams.

***The Perfect Blues* (Nicola Alina Nnkiru Ezekude)**

Northfield School & Sports College 2010-15
Barton Peveril Sixth Form College 2015-17
Human Sciences | University of Oxford 2017-19
Child and Mental Health Nursing | University of Southampton 2021-present

Nicola Alina Nnkiru Ezekude is an autistic poet and academic with a passion for entertainment and storytelling. *Journeys of the othered* has uncovered an unprecedented creativity and marks her official artistic debut. Heavily inspired by Korean popular music, Japanese animation and British landscapes, Nicola has crafted experiences from her upbringing to present *The Perfect Blues*. In 2021, Nicola explored purpose through working with children and young people, discovering the significance of community aged 22. It was at this time that mentorship was revealed to be her calling.

With her second year of studying at the University of Southampton coming to a close, Nicola has at last unlocked insight into her true character, culture and faith. She looks forward to expressing this through prose for the foreseeable future.

The Perfect Blues answers the following question – *What would I tell my past self about my experience at university?* It is a collection of somewhat abstract and entirely heartfelt poems that she hopes will encourage movement in and a deep love for others. With thanks to her family for raising her, and her friends for their immeasurable encouragement. Dedicated to all born with unusual vigour.

***Moving Still* (Iona Bateman)**

Moving Still documents Iona's journey to studying physiotherapy at the University of Southampton illustrating the chaotic paths our lives can take in leading us to unexpected destinations. Through film and photography, we see the numerous turning points in this journey around the globe where

stumbling blocks and tragedies transform into opportunities for new adventures, connections, and personal growth. From touring with bands around the world to working in the middle and far east, studying Zoology, Film, 11 languages and physiotherapy, being misdiagnosed with terminal cancer and losing everything multiple times over; *Moving Still* is a story of resilience, rolling with the punches that life throws us and never giving up.



Iona Bateman is a second year Physiotherapy student who sustained a hand disability following a boxing injury in Russia which propelled her from the world of photography and journalism to a career in healthcare. Facing regular discrimination due to her disability has fueled her passion for advocacy and reducing the barriers to education, employment and leadership opportunities for people across the spectrum of protected characteristics.

***Yellow* (Liu Xiao)**

My name is Liu Xiao, I am from China and I am currently studying Education at Southampton University. The theme of my story is about how I dropped out of high school and then how I went to university. Going to university was a major turning point in my life. Because before that, hardly anyone believed that I could go to university and because I



had been demeaned for a long time, I had very little confidence. It wasn't until I got into university that my life changed so much. I became more confident and I gradually started to believe that I could do a lot of things too. I no longer felt that I was different from my peers who had excelled in their studies from a young age because I had done the same things as them. In addition, I feel that the attitude of many people around me is different from what it used to be. For example, my father, who used to be very disappointed with my academic performance, thinks that I am quite good even after I went to university.

Through this experience, I have learnt something about life. In life, some people go faster and some people go slower. The slower ones don't need to be anxious, and don't think that if they are slow they will never have a chance. In fact, if you work hard, you must still have a chance.

In the video, I tell you my story.

个人简历

我叫刘啸，我来自中国，我目前就读于南安普度大学教育专业。我故事的主题是：关于我如何在高中辍学，然后如何上了大学。

上大学是我人生一个重大的转折点。因为在这之前几乎没有人相信我能考上大学，并且因为长期被贬低，我之前也非常缺乏自信。

直到我考上大学之后，我的人生发生了很大的变化。我变得更有信心了，我开始逐渐相信自己也能做到很多事情。我不再感觉我跟那些从小就学习优秀的同龄人有什么区别了，因为我做到了跟他们一样的事情。此外，我觉得我的身边的很多人的态度也跟以前不一样了。比如我的父亲，以前他总是对我的学习成绩感到非常失望，我上了大学后他觉得我也是挺优秀的。通过这个经历，我有一些人生的体会。就是在人生的道路中，有的人走的快一点，有的人走的慢一地。走的慢的人也不用着急，不要觉得走的慢了就再也没有机会了。其实只有努力，一定还有机会。

在视频中，我将我的故事告诉你。

Rose Land 《玫瑰园》(Zhaodi)

Women in China face many limitations in terms of accessing resources, investing in themselves, and exploring the world beyond their immediate surroundings.

They are robbed of educational opportunities and resources, have higher standards to meet in the workplace, have their marriage age lowered 2 years than male, and are subjected to additional obstacles such as a waiting period for divorce that disturb

them from escaping domestic violence. Women are only thought of when it comes to promoting suffering, giving birth, exploiting and occupying their bodies, being free babysitters, and maintaining social stability by becoming somebody's wife and reducing the instability caused by single men.

Despite these challenges, some people choose to ignore or downplay these issues. As a woman, I empathize with the struggles of other women and cannot help but wonder if I could be in their place one day. To improve the lives of women in China, we must first acknowledge these problems and work towards finding solutions.

中国的女性在她们的一生中面临着许多困境。她们往往比男性难以获得同等的教育资源和投资自己的机会，也难以有机会去看到更广阔的世界。

在这个社会中，女性的读书机会和教育资源被无形地侵占，女性面临着更高的就业标准和更低的结婚年龄，甚至因为离婚冷静期等重重关卡而无法逃离一段不合适的婚姻。但当需要宣传苦难，需要生孩子，需要剥削霸占子宫，需要免费保姆，需要减少单身男性数量维护社会稳定的时候却总是想起女性。

更为悲哀的是，一些人选择忽视这个事实，无视房间里的大象。作为一名女性，我深刻地同情同性所受到的不公，并能够感同身受。我们能为了女性的生存空间做些什么？第一步就是承认且直视问题。

Knife mouth, tofu heart (Yijia Luo)



My mother is Knife mouth, tofu heart. Who am I? I am strong heart. This is the story of finding myself in broken English, finding my voice beyond language.

***Just A Little More* (Angelina Yb Der Arakelian)**

As a published author and international graduate student of Film and English at the University of Southampton, my journey hasn't been easy, as I've had to navigate financial worries and anxiety surrounding my future steps in a new country, all by myself. But my struggles have inspired a beautiful artwork called *Just A Little More* which captures the essence of my story.

The painting features two sides of my face. On the left is a young woman who is constrained by old traditional ways, which is slowly killing her. On the right is a young woman who has adapted to new opportunities that she had not opened her eyes to yet and is now rejuvenated.

Throughout my journey at university, I've discovered that the answer to my deepest questions and salvation have been closer to me than I thought.

This artwork represents the dichotomy between the weight of tradition and the freedom of exploring new horizons. It's a reminder of the power of breaking free from old patterns and embracing new possibilities. The painting itself is a strong representation of my struggle to break free from the traditional patterns that were holding me back and embrace the new opportunities that awaited me.

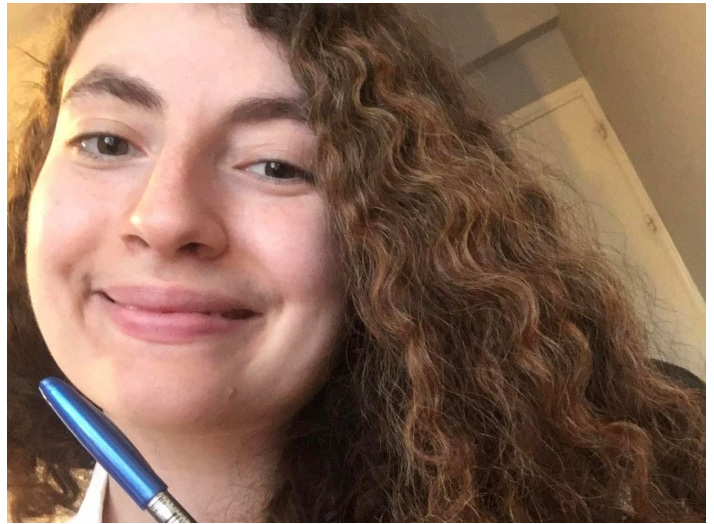
Accompanying the painting is a poignant poem that speaks to the feeling of being on the cusp of something great yet held back by the weight of financial and emotional stress. The poem is a reflection of my innermost thoughts and feelings, and it captures the essence of my journey through university. It speaks to the feeling of being caught between the past and the future, and the struggle to find a way forward.

Through the Real Student Stories project, I hope to share my story and inspire others to break free from traditional patterns and embrace new opportunities, no matter what obstacles they may face. My artwork is a reflection of my journey through my studies and a powerful symbol of hope for others who may be facing similar challenges.

I believe that we all have the power to break free from old patterns and embrace new possibilities, no matter how difficult it may seem. It's all about having the courage to take that first step, to explore new horizons, and to never give up on our dreams. I hope that my artwork and my story can inspire others to do just that.

About Angelina Yb Der Arakelian

Hi there, my name is Angelina, and I'm an author who loves to explore themes of life through creative writing. I have been blessed to have three published books, including one novel and two poetry



collections. As I continue on my writing journey, I hope to someday work in the film industry, where I can bring my stories to life on the big screen.

Writing has always been a passion of mine, and I have loved storytelling for as long as I can remember. It's what led me to study Film and English, and I have been grateful for the opportunity to learn and grow in these areas.

As an international student, my university journey has not been easy. Despite always having achieved high grades in school, I have faced challenges such as anxiety, depression and financial worry. However, I am determined to overcome these obstacles and use my experiences to help others who may be going through similar struggles.,

That's why I started my Real Student Stories project, which aims to reflect the hardships of studying for a full-time degree while dealing with these challenges. I hope that by sharing my story, I can inspire others to persevere through difficult times and pursue their dreams, no matter what obstacles they may face.

Thank you for taking the time to explore my artwork and read a little bit about my journey. I am grateful for the opportunities I have had and excited to see where my writing and film career will take me in the future.

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