

Belonging at CMU, a film by Hannah Wyatt

Artist's Statement

This film was originally created as a final for 66-139 – Grand Challenge Seminar: Reducing Conflict Around Identity and Positionality, under advisors: Bonnie Youngs and Liz Walker. The goal of the course is to foster understanding of identity, bias, and societal barriers, exploring themes of belonging, culminating in the creation of a website aimed at promoting inclusivity within the CMU community.

To represent a story of belonging that wasn't my own was a unique experience as a filmmaker. I believe that, through the use of a personal first-hand account, this grounded her voice within the work. It was fulfilling to use my creative passions to build something from just someone's auditory story. My (anonymous) subject was not extremely involved in the short-film creation process due to the quick turn-around after receiving the initial interviews.

As an artist, to successfully capture one's story of (non-) belonging was compelling; I hope to inspire others to share, speak out, and express their struggles in different ways. To me, the choices that culminated in a successful story was the use of visual metaphors: flowers, thorns, child-like crayon drawings, eyes. Through these universal symbols, I hoped to convey her stated themes of vulnerability, isolation, and lack of community, such as the lecture hall, where people's faces are blurred, drowned in an overwhelming, bright red.

Hannah