Religions *for* Peace
UNITED KINGDOM

INTERRELIGIOUS ENCOUNTERS & CREATIVE PRACTICE

Symposium and Exhibition

19 Jan to 19 Feb 2026

University of Edinburgh

Newcastle University
School of Architecture Planning & Landscape
THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH The Alwaleed Centre
THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH School of Social & Political Science

Foreword

Religions for Peace UK is honoured to sponsor the Interreligious Encounter and Creative Practice Symposium and Exhibition with Newcastle University and the University of Edinburgh. As the UK chapter of the global Religions for Peace movement—a network of over 90 chapters across six regions—we are a registered charitable foundation founded on the 1970s principle of "Different Faiths, Common Action."

Following the success of our first collaboration in January 2025, this second gathering at the University of Edinburgh deepened our shared inquiry into how creative practices shape encounters between different faiths, extending our work across institutions, disciplines, and communities.

Our mission is to translate shared religious values into tangible collaboration for peace. Creativity is our core methodology—the means by which we turn dialogue into shared purpose and principled commitment into action.

This symposium served as a vital development laboratory for us, connecting academic and artistic insight with on-the-ground application. Creative practitioners interrogated the very grammar of encounter—exploring how art, space, and medium shape interaction—providing essential frameworks to deepen our peacebuilding efforts across the interfaith sector.

We extend our gratitude to the organising teams and all contributors for making this event possible.



Cinde Lee
Chair, Religions for Peace UK

About RfPUK

Religions *for* Peace
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Religions for Peace is a global movement active since the 1970s, with over 90 national chapters across six regions, united by the motto

Different Faiths, Common Action

Religions for Peace UK is an independent national chapter working within this network to partner with peace builders across all 4 nations of the UK.



Our global movement originated as a World Conference. The strategic direction from subsequent World Assemblies provides a global focus for independent regional councils and national chapters to develop context-specific plans that respond directly to the challenges and contexts of their own constituencies and communities.

Religions for Peace World Assemblies Declarations

Religions for Peace 2020-2025 Strategic Plan

Through successive World Assemblies, our movement has grounded our priorities in the focus provided by the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This evolving alignment helps us define peace in tangible terms, advancing past an abstract ideal to the shared, hard work of progress in areas like humanitarian support, freedom of belief, gender equity, environmental sustainability, and interreligious education. The SDGs provide the measurable blueprint; our collective action builds the reality of peace.

Our key global priorities are driven by the
UN Sustainable Development Goals



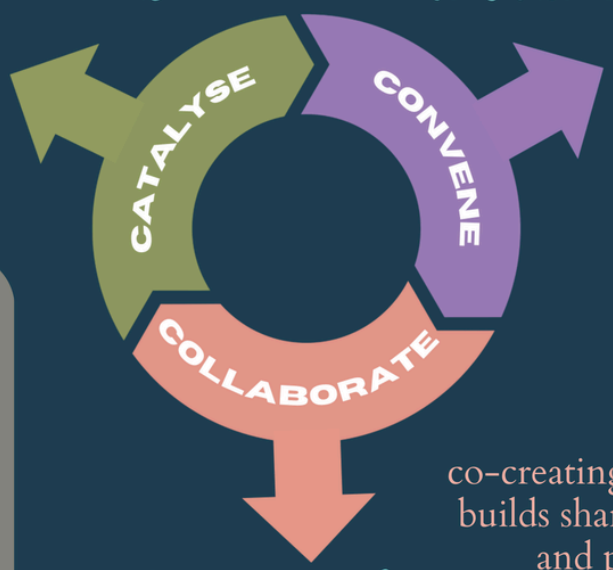
About RfPUK

Religions *for* Peace
UNITED KINGDOM

METHOD

with creativity & knowledge

sparking project ideas that align with our shared aims



with skill & conviction

mobilising communities around common cause for action

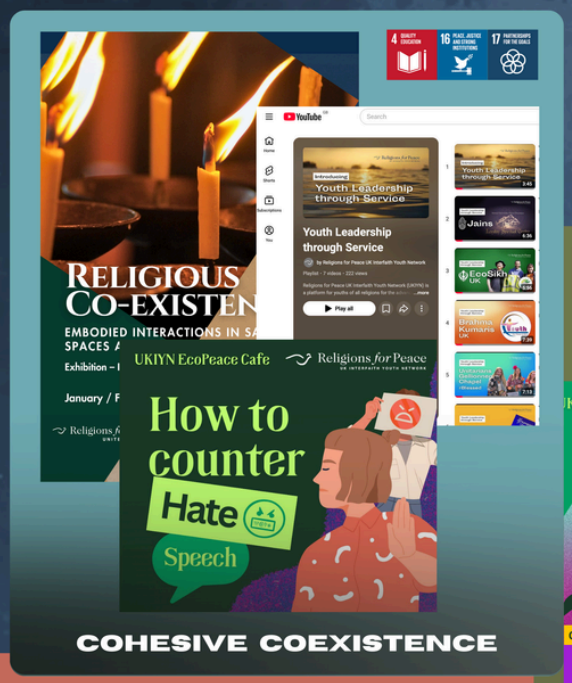
RfPUK aims to act as a national bridge builder across out four nations. Our working model offers a platform to channel unique assets into a shared effort for peace.

with time & talent

co-creating work that builds shared security and peace across four nations

DETAIL INFO

WORKSTREAMS



COHESIVE COEXISTENCE



ENVIRONMENT SUSTAINABILITY



RELIGIOUS LITERACY





GENDER EQUITY



CRITICAL THINKING



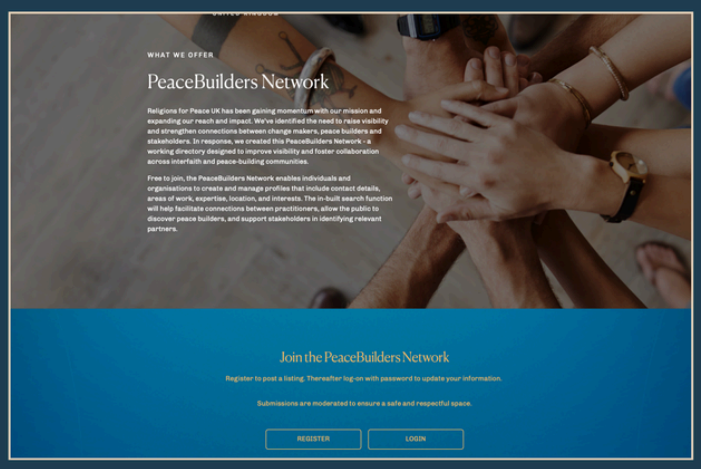
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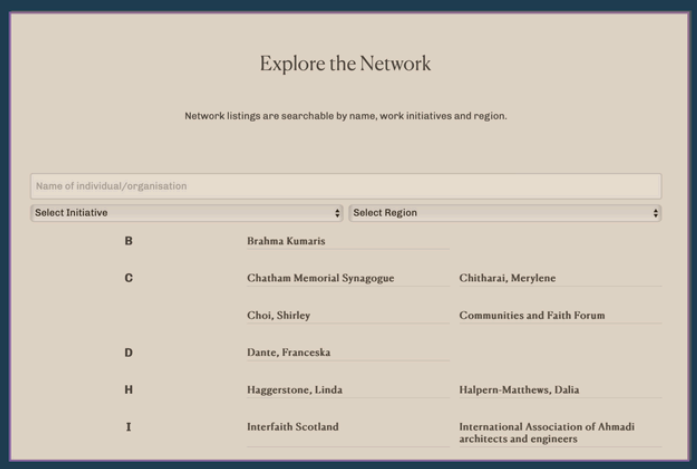
SDG REFERENCE

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CONNECT



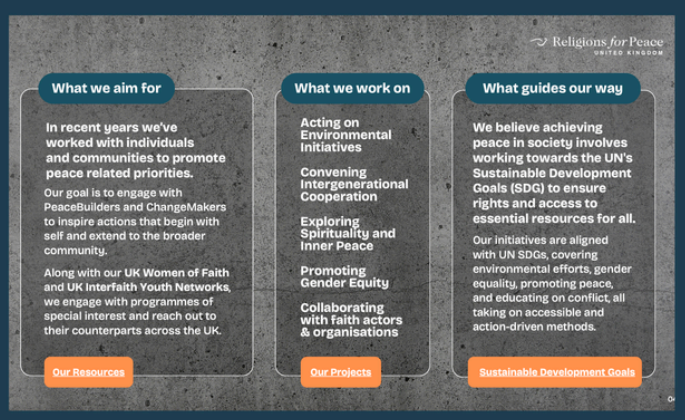


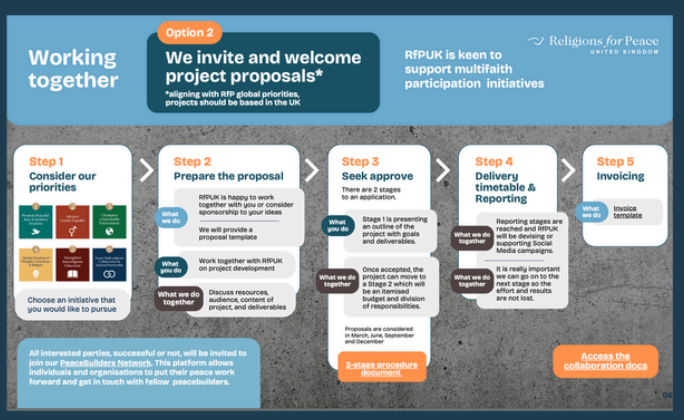
RfPUK's **free**, public, user-managed directory to find and be found by interfaith and peacebuilding actors across sectors. Upload and edit your profile; we moderate for safety before publishing.

CO-CREATE









CONTACT OFFICE@RFPUK.ORG

GET OUR NEWS ON LINKTREE

About RfPUK



St Luke's Church, London



SRMD Spiritual Centre (Jain), Bushey



Et'hem Bey Mosque, Tirana



Baktashi Teqe, Tirana

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UNITED KINGDOM

INTERRELIGIOUS ENCOUNTERS

Encountering sacred sites across diverse cultures, beliefs, and social realities fuels the creativity that shapes our approach to peace-building. In interfaith work, this diversity requires flexible, adaptive responses. We rise to the challenge of working across contexts, applying inventive approaches in practice and fostering possibilities, collaboration, and practical impact.



Cova de Sant Ignasi, Manresa



St Dionysius Cathedral,Athens



Ebu Beker Mosque, Skoda



Notre Dame Cathedral, Lindau



Resurrection of Christ Cathedral,Tirana



Sagrada Familia, Barcelona



Orthodox Shen Vlash Monastery, Durres



Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha, Birmingham



Basilica, Monserrat



Central Mosque, Cambridge



Buddhist Centre, London



Ring of Peace, Lake Constance

Event Concept

Interreligious Encounters and Creative Practice was conceived as the second in a series of meetings on embodied perceptions of Religious Coexistence after the first event and parallel UK debut of Shared Sacred Sites Exhibition, held in partnership with RfPUK in January 2025 at Newcastle University. The 2026 event took place in the Informatics Forum and the Chaplaincy Centre at the University of Edinburgh, with much appreciated support from the Alwaleed Centre.

Over the past two years, we have worked on the theme of religious coexistence and place, examining how encounters between religious traditions are manifested in and hosted by space. Across our symposia, meetings, travelling exhibitions, and the development of an edited volume, we have approached coexistence through space, materiality, and embodiment. Bringing together these two perspectives, we have bridged two angles at once: the lived, everyday negotiations through which people remain present in shared environments, and the spatial practices through which such environments are designed, curated, and interpreted.



Christos Kakalis
Newcastle University



Giulia Liberatore
University of Edinburgh



George Tsourous
Newcastle University

Call for Papers

Join us for an inspiring, in-person event that brings together faith, creativity, and dialogue

Interreligious Encounters and Creative Practice is an interdisciplinary event exploring how creative practices shape, challenge, and reimagine encounters and forms of coexistence between different faiths. Open to both academic audiences and wider communities, the event invites contributors to reflect on the potential of creative media to interrogate dominant models of religious difference and to offer new perspectives on the lived realities of interreligious interaction, particularly in sacred and contested spaces.

Organised by the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape at Newcastle University, Religions for Peace UK, and the University of Edinburgh (Social Anthropology & the Alwaleed Centre), the event aims to strengthen connections across architecture, social anthropology, art, film, performance, cultural landscape studies, and related fields. It builds on an initiative developed at Newcastle University in close collaboration with Religions for Peace UK, as part of the broader project Religious Coexistence: Embodied Interactions in Sacred Sites and Faith Practices.



Symposium Programme

19 - 21 January 2026

University of Edinburgh
Informatics Forum, 10 Crichton St, Edinburgh EH8 9AB

Symposium Programme

19 January 2026

14:00	**Welcome** Christos Kakalis (Newcastle University), George Tsourous (Newcastle University), Giulia Liberatore (University of Edinburgh), Cinde Lee (RfPUK)
14:30	**Film Screening** Laura Cuch (Goldsmiths, University of London), Spiritual Flavours, followed by a Q & A
15:30 - 17:00	**Exhibition Opening** Christos Kakalis (Newcastle University)

20 January 2026

09:00 - 12:00	**Live Drawing Performance:** Matilde Gliubich Tomat (Bangor University). Drawing as Encounter: Creative Practice and the Sacred
10:00 - 12:00	**Panel 1: Making Suburban Faith** *Chair: Christos Kakalis (Newcastle University)* Katy Beinart (University of Brighton/Open College of the Arts). The Fabric of Faith Laura Cuch (Goldsmiths, University of London). Spiritual Flavours David Gilbert & Ali Mangera. Title tbc
12:00 - 13:00	Lunch
13:00 - 15:00	**Panel 2: Learning through Making** *Chair: Tom Lea (University of Edinburgh)* Giulia Liberatore (University of Edinburgh) & Kate Stanworth. Islamic Traces: a digital installation Floriana Sciumé (Accademia di Belle Arti di Palermo & Officina di Studi Medievali). Luce da Luce – Luce su Luce Rosa Lin, Nikoleta Tsiama, George Tsourous, Christos Kakalis, (Newcastle University). Translating Religious Coexistence in Learning Environments Maggie Roe (Newcastle University), Sacred Spaces, Sacred Stories: Collaborative Creative Practices in the Sundarbans
15:00 - 15:30	Lunch
15:30 - 17:00	**Panel 3: Thinking Bodies** *Chair: George Tsourous (Newcastle University)* Sabina Sallis. Dance of Commoning: Embodying Composition of Vitalities and Analogies Matilde Gliubich Tomat (Bangor University). Drawing as Encounter: Creative Practice and the Sacred Gabrielle Heller. Solitude

21 January 2026

10:30 - 12:00	**Panel 4: Mediating Encounters** *Chair: Giulia Liberatore (University of Edinburgh)* Milja Radovic (University of Vienna). Cinematic Spaces of Memory R. Santhosh (IIT Madras) and Navaneeth H. (IIT Madras/University of Edinburgh). Between a Muslim Dargah and Hindu Temple: Religious Coexistence and the Discourse of Communal Harmony in Kerala, South India Marcelo de Medeiros Reis Filho (Instituto de Estudos de Sociais e Políticos, IESP/ UERJ). Sounds and the divine: mediation, connection and artistic practices in a carioca favela
12:30 - 14:00	**Panel 5: Shaping Encounters** *Chair: George Tsourous (Newcastle University)* Birgit Meyer (Utrecht University). Dynamics of urban-religious world making in Madina, Accra Joseph Fifi Fosu-Ankrah (University of Ghana). Religious Images, Lorry Parks, and the Dynamics of Coexistence: A Social History of Urban Encounters, Ecological Discourses, and Interreligious World-Making in Madina, Accra (2000s–Present) Frederico Dinis (Universidade Catolica Portuguesa). Performing Memory, Shaping Belonging: Site-Specific Art in Religious Contexts
14:00 - 15:00	Lunch
15:00 - 16:30	**Panel 6: Placing Encounters** *Chair: Christos Kakalis (Newcastle University)* Susanna Trotta (Humboldt University). Religious encounters in shared spaces: the case of the St. Georgis Eritrean Orthodox community and the St. Paul's congregation in Berlin, Germany Wai Weng Hew (University of Edinburgh). Cosmopolitan Islam and Its Limits: Chinese-style mosques in Malaysia and Indonesia Isabelle Christine Somma de Castro (University of São Paulo, Nupri-USP). From social threat to tourist attraction: the mosque Omar Ibn Al-Khattab in Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil
16:30 - 17:30	**Closing Remarks** George Tsourous (Newcastle University) and Cinde Lee (RfPUK)

click on the listing for bio + abstract

click here for YouTube playlist

Symposium Highlights

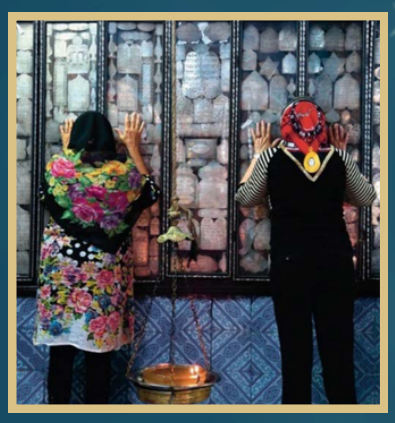
The Symposium brought together leading voices from academia, the arts, and faith communities. Keynote speakers offered profound insights into creative practice and interreligious dialogue, while 25 scholarly papers were presented across six panels to over 50 active participants. International presenters joined online from the Netherlands, Ghana, India, Brazil, Germany, and Austria, with hybrid sessions reaching audiences from South America to Asia Pacific. The programme also included a film screening and a live drawing performance. Faith representatives included Bishop Raphael of Ilion and chaplaincy staff representing academic institutions and diverse faith groups. Local and regional interfaith leaders enriched our discussions, and their engagement reaffirmed the value of bringing creative practice and interdisciplinary approaches into interfaith dialogue and action.



Exhibition

19 January - 19 February 2026 Monday - Friday 0930 - 1630

University of Edinburgh
Chaplaincy Auditorium, 1 Bristo Square, Edinburgh, EH8 9AL















EXHIBITORS

- Dionigi Albera & Manoël Pénicaud
- Katy Beinart
- Laura Cuch
- David Gilbert
- Interfaih Scotland
- Christos Kakalis & George Tsourous
- Giulia Liberatore & Kate Stanworth
- Rosa Lin & Nikoleta Tsiama
- Sabina Sallis
- Floriana Sciumè & Patrizia Spallino
- Matilde Giubich Tomat

CURATORS

Henry Martin, José Figueira

Exhibition Highlights

Focusing on creative practice, a key element of the event was the curation of a significant and inspiring exhibition on the theme. The exhibition featured 11 creative projects from universities, interfaith groups, and individual academics, offering practical examples of its scope and providing a visual, experiential, and public dimension to our academic and interfaith discussions. Alongside the exhibits, a film screening and a workshop for 28 school children from two local schools took place in the exhibition space, opening the event to intergenerational and intercultural encounters and testing the impact-generating dynamics of creative practice.

The exhibition was open to students and the public throughout its month-long run in the Main Auditorium of the Multi-Faith Chaplaincy. In addition to over 200 registered visitors, the exhibition reached hundreds more through its placement in a busy, open-access university space used daily by students and the wider public.





Exhibit: Making Suburban Faith

This project explored the ways in which suburban faith communities create space focusing on architectures, material cultures, rituals, music and performance.

The project was based in Ealing in West London and was led by Professor Claire Dwyer of UCL, who worked with the co-leader David Gilbert at Royal Holloway and a team of researchers, PhD students and artists. The project focused on eight different faith community case studies selected to represent different faith and migration traditions.

The project has four main aims:

1) To investigate how the aesthetics of faith, particularly migrant faiths, are materialised and negotiated.
2) To analyse the material cultures, practices and performances of faith in suburbia and to map these through community, public and domestic spaces.
3) To analyse how suburban faith communities engage creatively and meaningfully with their suburban locations and to seek to enhance these capacities.
4) To explore how design and creative practice might be used to create new forms of community belonging for suburban faith communities.

]

The three elements from this project joining the Interreligious Encounters and Creative Practice exhibition are:

The Fabric of Faith by Katy Beinart
Spiritual Flavours by Laura Cuch
Architectural Encounters by David Gilbert and Ali Mangera



For more information, please see: makingsuburbanfaith.wordpress.com

Exhibit: The Fabric of Faith

MY LIFE IS BUT A WEAVING

Katy Beinart, University of Brighton

The Fabric of Faith project was a collaborative arts project commissioned by AHRC funded research project Making Suburban Faith. The project emerged from research on creativity within faith communities in Ealing and Hanwell and particularly the significance of textiles for different faith groups. Katy ran a series of creative workshops in July to September 2016 with Project Lead Professor Clare Dwyer and Researcher Dr. Nazneen Ahmed. Katy, Clare and Nazneen collaborated in producing a series of exhibition and other outcomes from the workshops with the participants, including exhibitions at St Thomas Hanwell, UCL and Gunnerbury Museum.

For more information, please visit: Project: The Fabric of Faith (2016-18) - katybeinart











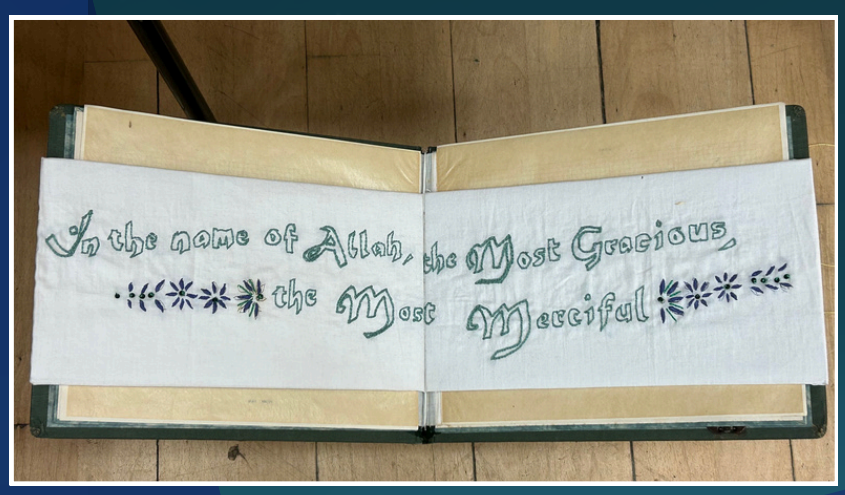




Exhibit: Spiritual Flavours

MEALS SERIES

Laura Cuch, Goldsmiths, University of London

Spiritual Flavours is a collaborative arts project with members of different faith communities in Ealing and Hanwell, who contributed recipes that related to their spirituality and religious practices. These faith communities comprise: a Liberal synagogue, a Sri Lankan Hindu temple, a Mosque, a Sikh Gurdwara, an Anglican church, a Roman Catholic church and a Pentecostal church. Through interviews and cooking sessions, the project draws attention to food, as a vehicle to discuss spirituality, inheritance, tradition and the relationship between home and religion. These sessions are the basis of a short film, a photographic exhibition, and a 'multi-faith' photo cookbook.

For more information please visit: www.spiritualflavours.com



Ealing Christian Centre



Caribbean and International evening,
St Thomas the Apostle Church



West Ealing Islamic Centre



Deanery Dinner, Our Lady & St Joseph
Catholic Church



Langar, Ealing Sikh Gurdwara



Rabbi's Tisch, Ealing Liberal Synagogue



Shri Kanaga Thurkkai Amman Hindu Temple

Exhibit: Architectural Encounters

ARCHITECTURES OF SHARED SPACE

David Gilbert and Ali Mangera, Royal Holloway, University of London



The project collaborated with the award-winning architectural practice, Mangera Yvars, in working with local sixth-form students (16 and 17 years old) from Brentside School in Ealing. This part of the project was called 'Architectures of Shared Space', with the students asked to design a building in their neighbourhood that could accommodate more than a single faith. They were given training in design principles, made visits to places of worship, met with faith leaders, and then undertook a series of intensive design workshops. Mangera Yvars developed the students proposals into a large-scale model of the neighbourhood, and large poster presentations of the ideas. The work was featured in events at Tate Modern, Somerset House, UCL, Ealing Central Library and Brentside School. Mangera Yvars has a long track record of cutting-edge work in religious and secular architecture both in the UK and in the Middle East. The importance of creative expression and inter-faith openness has been central to their work.

Participants: Christine de Souza, Eileen Sinclair, Krishnajit Kaur, Arda Metcalf, Mabel Green, Sharan Sachdeva, Rose Noel, Alice Mackenzie, Claire Dwyer, Nazneen Ahmed, Izzy Chapman, Santosh Jagpal, Mee Kuon Cheong, Jagreet Sekhon, Maggie Jones.



Exhibit: Faces of Faith

Interfaith Scotland



Over five million people live in Scotland, and each has a story to tell. This collection of people pf faith serves as a showcase of Scotland's diverse religious and cultural communities.

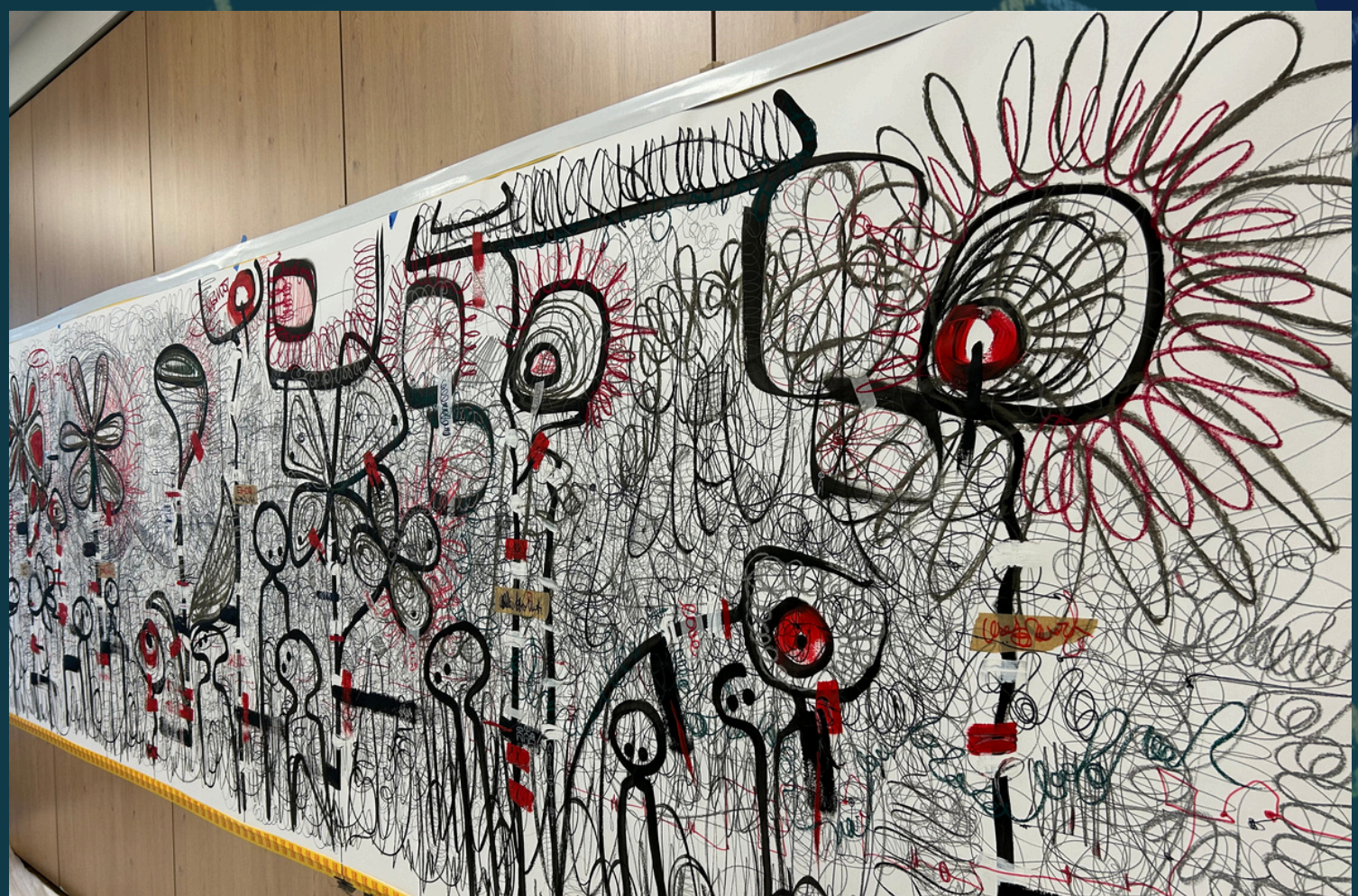
Freedom of religion and belief is a key part of Scottish society, yet few are aware of just how many beliefs are practised here, or of the diversity within each community. Through the stories of sixteen individuals, this exhibit explores the joys, challenges, and complexities of living as a person of faith in Scotland, as well as the impact these communities have on a local, national, and international level.

A common thread weaving through each story became clear with every interview: although the many religious communities may be diverse in culture and practice, their values are intertwined—they all hope for, and are working towards, a better future for Scotland and the world. In these photographs, viewers are invited to see not photos of strangers, but of the friends the curators came to know.

For more information please visit: Faces of Faith Exhibition

Exhibit: Marks of Presence

Matilde Gliubich Tomat, Bangor University



In Marks of Presence, the artist performs the act of drawing as a living encounter with the sacred. The session invites viewers to witness the emergence of marks in real time, where each gesture, line, and movement becomes a trace of presence: both of the artist and of something beyond the visible. The performance explores the intimate tension between creation and observation, the seen and the unseen, the ephemeral and the enduring. Drawing is approached as a ritual, a moment of attunement in which material, body, and consciousness converge, allowing the ineffable to make itself known.

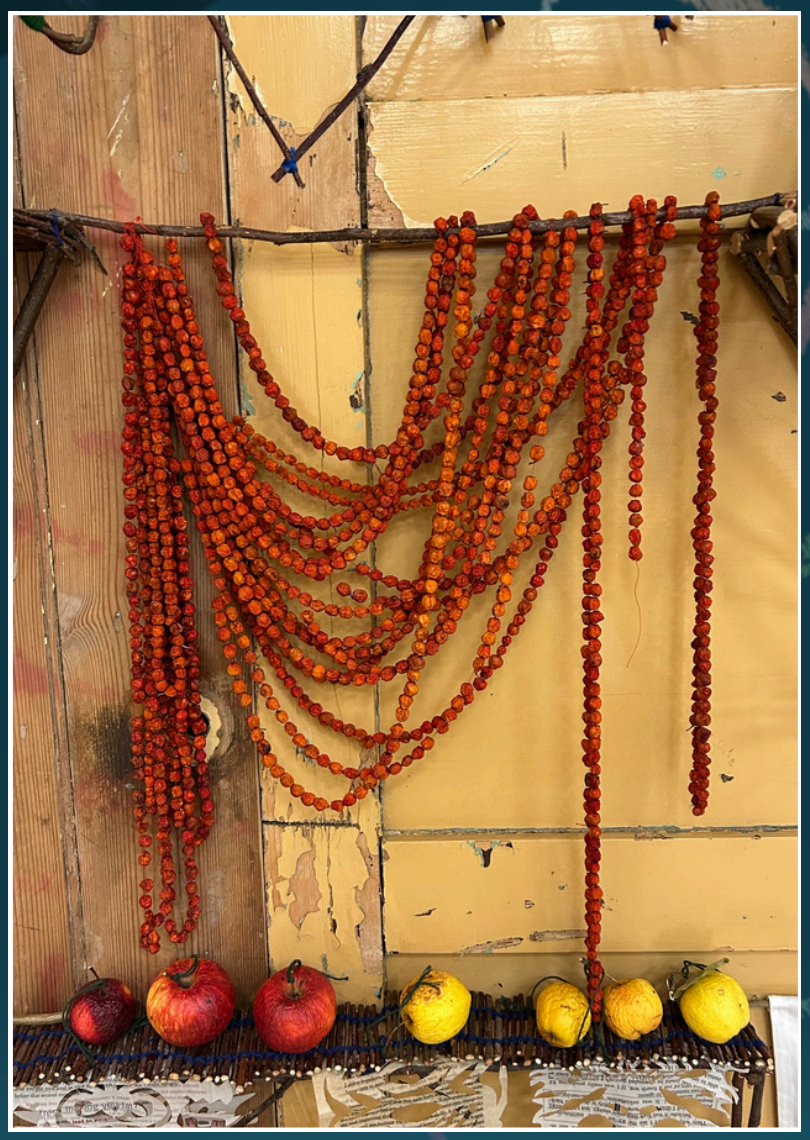
Following the performance, the completed work will remain on display for the month, offering a space for reflection and continued engagement with the traces of this encounter. Matilde Gliubich Tomat is a researcher and practitioner whose work investigates how creative practice can mediate profound, lived experiences of the divine, at the conjuncture, on paper, between immanence and transcendence.

Exhibit: One Vegetal Body

Sabina Sallis, Newcastle University







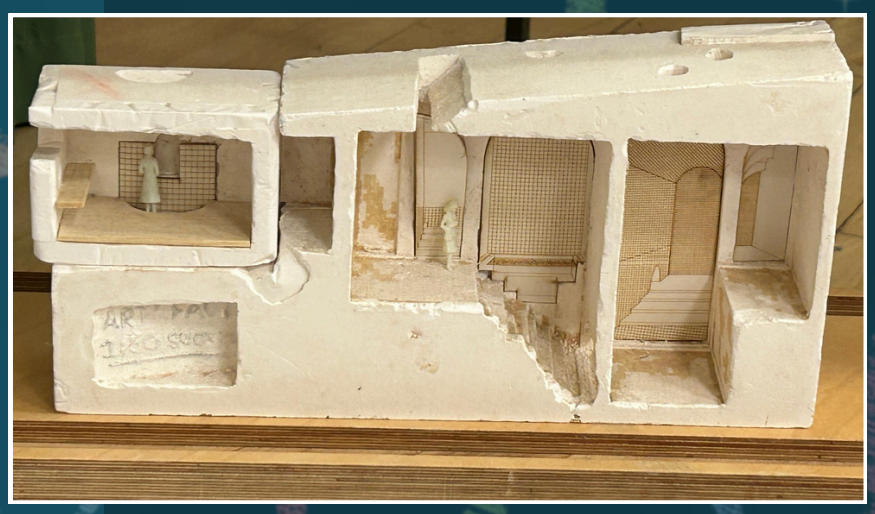
The wall-based installation Resonant Composition appropriates the formal vernacular of altars from multiple religious traditions. Constructed entirely from foraged organic matter—including sticks, prunings, and handcrafted objects gathered from a forest garden—the work utilizes a branch-supported shelf to display ceremonial items. Through its hanging devices and layered arrangements, the piece mirrors both sacred and domestic devotional structures. Designed to be adaptable, the installation prompts contemplative reflection on multispecies relationships, ritualistic form, and the spiritual agency inherent in humble, handcrafted materials.

Exhibit: Religious Coexistence in Design Education

Christos Kakalis, Newcastle University







Architectural Education involves a synthetic, multi-scalar understanding of space in which creative practice plays a key role. The installation exhibits the results of architectural theory and design teaching across undergraduate and postgraduate projects at the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape in Newcastle University: Afifa Rodoshi and Daria Bosak present results of their Stage 2-3 Dissertation Projects [In Resilience, Tutor: Christos Kakalis], Jose Jajes Machado Marques Figueira presents his Stage 3 [Part I] Design Thesis [Enclosed Order, Tutors: Christos Kakalis, Ivan Munoz Marquez], and Yue Quyng Ng presents her Stage 6 [Part II] Design Thesis [Quarrying a New Vernacular, Tutors: Christos Kakalis, Niki- Marie Jansson]. All the projects study religious coexistence, either through closer, ethnographic, analysis of existing sites of interfaith encounters, or through design propositions of sites that respond to peaceful coexistence of people from different backgrounds due to the diverse demographics of the context in which they find themselves.

Exhibit: Shared Sacred Sites

Dionigi Albera and Manoël Pénicaud, French National Centre for Scientific Research



A collection of 13 images from the seminal exhibition Shared Sacred Sites, that collaboratively investigates the sharing of spaces, sites, and symbolism by multiple religious communities that demonstrates the practical choreographies and social possibilities of cooperation between potentially antagonistic communities. The study of such sharing provides key insights into characteristics and features crucial to the cultivation of tolerance and understanding.

Using multiple tools such as mapping, storytelling, exhibitions, fieldwork, bibliographies, and a media database, this project seeks to build a global commons for research and teaching on shared sacred sites.

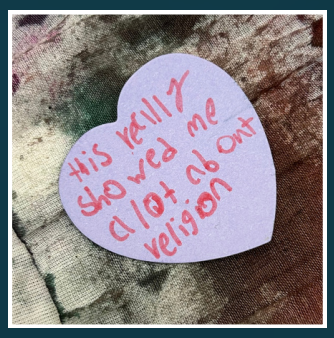


For more information, please see: Shared Sacred Sites.

Exhibit: Religious Coexistence and Primary Education

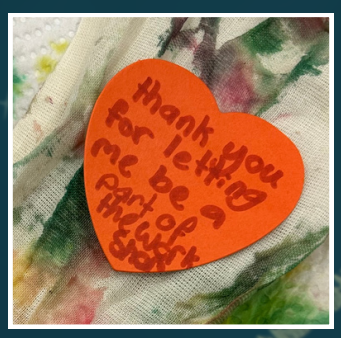
Nicoleta Tsiame, St Cyprian's Orthodox Academy
George Tsourous, Newcastle University
Rosa Lin, Unversty of Hong Kong
Christos Kakalis, Newcastle University













A primary school's pedagogical wall exhibit composed by Nikoleta Tsiama for religious education purposes at St Cyprian's Academy. In it objects and narratives from different faiths are synthesised into an interactive learning tool. The exhibit was further developed after pilot workshops taking place at St Cyprian's Academy in July 2025 for a mobile Interfaith Exhibition Cabinet to be used in workshops at different settings.

Two workshop sessions led by Rosa Lin as session leader took place during the Symposium period. Teachers and students from Trinity Primary School and George Heriot's School visited the exhibition, exploring multifaith expression through creative practice and developing their own understanding of interfaith encounter.

Exhibit: Islamic Traces

Giulia Liberatore and Kate Stanworth, University of Edinburgh



How is the Islamic past imagined in contemporary Palermo, Sicily? Islamic Traces follows a small number of Palermo's inhabitants – both Muslim and those of other faiths or none – as they search for remnants of the city's Islamic past. Through architecture, landscape, sensory experiences, religious practices, language and the arts, they bring their imaginaries of the past to life, recounting it and giving it meaning in the present.

Drawing on their own research and personal discoveries, the historical accounts they provide are infused with their feelings, narratives, forms of nostalgia, hauntings, resonances and sensory experiences. In doing so, they revive this Islamic past, emphasizing its centrality to present-day Sicily while also challenging dominant, linear, totalizing and objective modes of history-making.

Islamic Traces prompts reflection on the absence of this history in official heritage-making and in many contemporary representations of the city and its Muslim populations. What emerges from this work are visions of Palermo in which the Islamic presence is central both to narratives and memories of the medieval past and to people's present experiences and sense of belonging in the city.

Islamic Traces is part of Absent Presence, a larger digital project co-produced with Ammara Maqsood (University College London) and Leslie Fesenmyer (University of Birmingham) that explores imaginings of and relations across difference in Karachi, Nairobi and Palermo. It is funded by the ERC grant Multi-Religious Encounters in Urban Settings (MEUS, 2019-2025).

Exhibit: Luce da Luce - Luce su Luce

Floriana Sciumé, Accademia di Belle Arti di Palermo and Officina di Studi Medievali



Light from Light (phōs ek phōtos) – Light upon Light (nōr ‘ala nōr) is a multichannel video installation that emerges from a comparative investigation into the ritual, aesthetic, and spiritual foundations of Eastern Orthodox Christianity and Islam.

Grounded in the historical contexts of Sicily and Calabria between the sixth and twelfth centuries—regions shaped by enduring patterns of coexistence and layered devotional practices—the work examines Light as a central theological and perceptual category. Drawing on the Nicene-Constantinopolitan formulation “phōs ek phōtos” and the Qur’anic expression “nōr ‘ala nōr” the installation explores how both traditions articulate divine illumination through embodied practices, sonic repetition, and visual mediation. The research underlying the work integrates anthropology of ritual,aesthetic theory, and the study of sacred images and gestures. Ritual is approached as a shared aesthetic experience in which movement, breath, and voice structure the believer’s orientation toward the divine. Across both traditions, belonging is cultivated through repeated actions, codified words, and the disciplined training of perception. The installation unfolds across six synchronized screens presenting ascetic doctrines and practices: hesychasm, dhikr, prostration, and the call to prayer.

Through rhythmic editing and parallel sequences, the work highlights the role of the soul—especially the heart in Islamic thought—as the inner tablet upon which the laws of the Spirit are inscribed. Prayer becomes an act of interiorization, a pathway toward receiving and manifesting divine light. Engaging symbolic gestures, visual codes, and mediating devices, the installation functions as a relational space where ritual, art, and spirituality intersect.

Curating Team

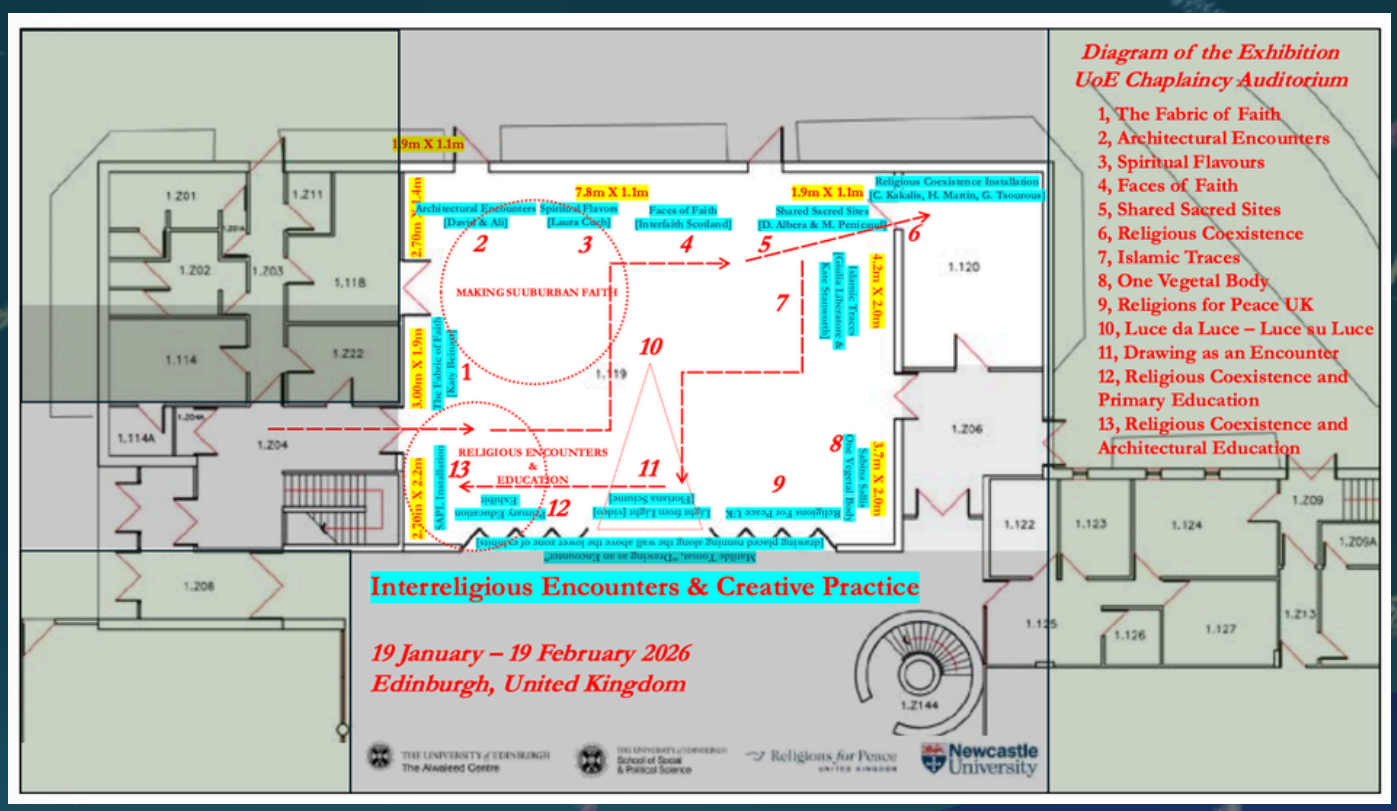
Henry Martin

IA sculptor, curator, and technician by training, Henry identifies first and foremost as a maker. They approach each challenge with practicality, striving for elegant solutions but never at the expense of functionality. Working alongside others, they are guided by a commitment to preserving the project's essential energy, keeping processes clear and uncluttered. For [Name], the act of making is its own reward, and they trust that following the material and process often leads to the most unexpected and rewarding outcomes. Their collaborative work spans disciplines—partnering with artists, musicians, architects, and designers—and venues, from galleries and museums to private collections and public commissions. In their curatorial practice, they embrace a philosophy rooted in compromise, compassion, cooperation, and coexistence.

José Figueira

José Figueira explores how architecture negotiates identity, memory, and social agency within urban landscapes. His final BA project, the Newcastle Ecumenical Centre, explored religious experience through a stratified architecture of worship, retreat, and harm reduction, where liturgical spaces intersect with supervised injection facilities and everyday life. Through iterative research (layering programmes, drawings, narrative and materials), the project tests how myth, liturgy, and care infrastructures can co-exist, treating sacredness as something constructed over time.

He is currently preparing for Part 3 examination while working as an Architectural Assistant at Medical Architecture, focusing on healthcare and wellbeing-led environments



Reflections

“”...I am writing to congratulate you on what has been a truly significant and inspiring collaboration through the Interreligious Encounters and Creative Practice symposium and exhibition...As we look ahead, there is a clear opportunity to build on this momentum, and the partnership you have helped to cultivate offers a strong foundation for further development. I look forward to seeing how this important work continues to evolve, and to supporting the next stages of this highly valued partnership.”

Professor Chris Day
Vice-Chancellor and President, Newcastle University

Newcastle University

“...This was a wide-ranging and stimulating symposium, which was outstanding in particular for its interdisciplinary nature and geographical range. Input was provided by scholars and practitioners in geography, art, architecture, anthropology, film studies, cultural studies, and other disciplines, including different performing arts. The conference as a whole provided powerful insights into the significant contribution of the human imagination to inter-religious relations in different parts of the world.”

Professor Hugh Goddard
Honorary Professorial Fellow, Alwaleed Centre for the Study of Islam in the Contemporary World, University of Edinburgh

THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
The Alwaleed Centre

“.....As a clergyman working in diverse and multi-religious communities, I am most interested in the subject matter of the Symposium and was keen to see how you and your team would handle such a sensitive issue. The speakers were equipped with top-level scholarship and originality, while their approach was unbiased yet sympathetic and insightful. The exhibition I found aesthetically pleasing and at the same time scholarly and informative. The event was very successful both in terms of scholarship and organisation and, most importantly, of driving home the message that religious coexistence—so beneficial for both society and faith groups—is perfectly achievable through creative practice such as that demonstrated in the Symposium.”

+Bishop Raphael of Ilion
Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain,
Ecumenical Patriarchate

Religions *for* Peace
UNITED KINGDOM

Looking Forward

The symposium and exhibition has reconfirmed itself as a successful format through the Interreligious Encounter and Creative Practice event in Edinburgh, which marked our initial steps towards deepening interfaith understanding and collaboration across devolved nations. Students and academics from architecture, anthropology, history, social sciences, and the arts have participated in this conversation, alongside faith representatives, civil organisations, and primary schools. We are building a multi-generational, multi-sector community of practice that spans the UK—one that is inter-religious and interconvictional at its core.

Developing network contact across the UK, we are in active conversations with partners in Northern Ireland, with a view to building bridges between our regions so that we might better understand one another across different contexts, and address the fragmentation of ethical consensus, societal tension, and conflict caused by mobility and immigration. We are looking forward to bringing the next instalment of the symposium and exhibition format to a hotly debated subject that concerns people of faith and of none.

Beyond this, we continue to explore partnerships that will deepen our work, using the SDGs as our blueprint so that our results are sustainable, measurable, and practical in local contexts. We look forward to seeing what fruits this network will bear as it grows.









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