

We all came here from somewhere

23 November 2024 – 9 February 2025

We all came here from somewhere is a thoughtful showcase of stories, artwork and objects made in collaboration with communities Baltic works with, welcomes, and creates with.

The exhibition spotlights what welcome means at Baltic and celebrates the people and collaborations that make it possible. *We all came here from somewhere* is an evolution of the relationships and ways of working which form part of Baltic's ongoing community activities. Those activities are driven by the question: 'How can we be a good neighbour and support people seeking sanctuary to feel welcome and at home in the North East?'

The artworks include layers of sound, art objects, live captions and a photo mural that give visibility to the liveliness of human connections that underpin the community of welcome in Baltic's Language Cafe sessions.

Annie Bedford, Baltic Communities Producer and exhibition co-curator said:

"We all came here from somewhere is an exhibition about welcome. It celebrates the often everyday and hidden practice of welcome and hospitality in bringing people and communities together; it signals the importance of welcome for people seeking sanctuary; and raises awareness about the unwelcoming nature of the UK asylum system."

"Together we hope the exhibition provides space for people to explore ideas of hospitality, to reflect on their experiences of welcome, and take action towards creating a culture of welcome for all."

The exhibition includes a series of newly commissioned portrait photographs by established, acclaimed photographer Kuba Ryniewicz, the video work *Understanding the UK Asylum System: Myths and Realities*, made by Zilan Kuzu, Tracy Affleck's banner *Together with Refugees*, work by the North Tyneside Schools of Sanctuary

There will also be a new photographic portrait series on display entitled *Asylum: A Long and Painful Process* by Sadia Sikandar, created in collaboration with Walking With's community group. Sikandar's portraits - and the stories her

subjects tell of the ways in which the asylum process has taken its toll on their lives – provide a harsh reminder to all that 'welcome' remains a work in progress. These images are accompanied by a display of orange hearts, made in collaboration with Schools of Sanctuary in the North East of England. These hearts signal togetherness with people seeking sanctuary, with messages of hope and solidarity inspiring a wider culture of welcome.

Clare Campbell, Walking With's Operations Manager said:

“We hope this exhibition will challenge people's perceptions of what it means to seek sanctuary and encourage them to think beyond the words 'asylum seeker' to understand the individuals and the very real difficulties they face in a damaging system”

Officially recognised as a Gallery of Sanctuary since 2022, Baltic embeds a culture of welcome and seek to promote understanding and celebration of the ways those people seeking sanctuary enrich society. *We all came here from somewhere* centers the communities who help create a warm welcome at Baltic. It is a reflection on experiences of belonging, creating and welcoming.

ENDS

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About Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art

Baltic is a major international centre for contemporary art situated on the south bank of the River Tyne in Gateshead, England and has welcomed over eight million visitors since opening to the public in July 2002. BALTIC presents a distinctive and ambitious programme of exhibitions and events, and is a world leader in the presentation and commissioning of contemporary visual art.

Housed in a landmark ex-industrial building, Baltic consists of 2,600 square metres of art space, making it the UK's largest dedicated contemporary art institution. Baltic has gained an international reputation for its commissioning of cutting-edge temporary exhibitions. It has presented the work of over 460 artists of 60 nationalities in 220 exhibitions to date. www.baltic.art