



Inclusive Spaces: Artwork curated by Elnur Bayaliyev

In response to a year of isolation and online studies, the 2020-21 Library Champions initiative invited students to curate inclusive library spaces. The three artworks chosen by Elnur, PG Digital Humanities, are those of his countrywoman, Kazakh artist Kamila Abdygapparova. Originally digital works, they have been printed onto canvas for the Champions initiative and will be hung in the entry hall of the Maughan Library, to welcome students returning to study after the long period of isolation during the pandemic.

'Self-Portrait' depicts the artist Abdygapparova in the environment of quarantine. The background depicts the tempting 'outside' with fresh air and nature, embodying freedom as opposed to the restraining 'inside'. Elnur chose this work for its emotional relevance to all students stuck indoors for recent lockdowns.

“ *I have always been mesmerised by the way some world libraries have been able to make the library experience so engaging. As a Library Champion, I was able to participate in the transformation of my own KCL library space. The Inclusive Spaces initiative appealed to me as the chance to provide the libraries with artwork to inspire students at late night when they dig down into studies.* ”

The series 'Deep Blue Eyes', comprised of two portraits of enigmatic individuals, is described by the artist as a reflection of thoughts about loneliness. The pale skin of each character represents estrangement from others, detachment and coldness while the bright colours represent individuality. Their 'deep blue eyes' symbolise 'the presence of soul'. Elnur believes this duality – estrangement and detachment versus the proud spirit – exemplifies the COVID-19 pandemic, which challenged us all to be divided against ourselves on an unprecedented level.



Artist Kamila Abdygapparova

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2020-21