

The Ecology of Staying-With

Written response by Madeline Hann

What does lingering mean in a space built for relationships? In Whakawhanaungatanga, lingering felt like relational time made visible, an exchange that unfolded long before the works were installed. The show carries its own ecology: works clustering and cross-pollinating as students share space.

To linger is to action a space, and in Whakawhanaungatanga that felt especially true. As we reworked our installations and navigated floor sheets, the movement itself became part of the work, adjusting, reconsidering, and allowing fragments to find their place. Our cluster operated as a constellation of pieces that invite viewers to pause and assemble their own associations. People are rivers, ever changing, ever flowing. I became aware of how their movements through the space inhabit the work, shaping it in ways that we could not fully predict.

Community leaves room for you to evolve, and in this exhibition two institutions become one temporary ecosystem, waning and waiting, offering new wisdoms through the simple act of being together in space.

Sharing in this context felt reciprocal, a process that feeds rather than simply displays. The vulnerability of showing work publicly created a current that moved between strangers and peers alike. I felt the works being subtly reshaped by the small shifts in atmosphere that accumulate when many practices coexist.

The Kaupapa framed the space as something porous, a place where practices could sit alongside one another without collapsing into sameness. This allowed the exhibition to feel less like a static presentation and more like a vessel, absorbing what we brought into it and returning something altered.

Walking through Whakawhanaungatanga, I return to how an artwork stays with us in a slow, sustained unfolding. Its thresholds opened a space for reciprocity, making clear that communities of practice are an effort of ongoing negotiation across surface and space. That negotiation doesn't end with the exhibition. The relationship continues beyond the walls, carried by those who were changed in the act of staying-with.