

The Collective Souvenir

The collective souvenir was a creative and engaging project with which to collect memories of the three days spent at the LESS Symposium. It not only preserves key memories, but encapsulates the importance of individuality within community and the unique differences present among Liberal Arts and Sciences students.



With the aim of creating a physical representation and reminder of the LESS experience, this contribution gave all participants the opportunity to work on a piece of art together. During the second day of our stay at the hut, the canvas and all the supplies needed to write and paint were located on the upper floor, near to the dorms, accompanied by a note encouraging everyone to participate. Throughout the day, nearly all participants passed by this spot, and many of them left their mark. In the evening, some of the participants joined forces to finish the piece and make it into a cohesive final product.

Each unique contribution to the collective souvenir was as varied as the contributions to the symposium. And, as the various methods and topics within which we explored and engaged with the purpose of Liberal Education created a holistic spirit of the conference, each individual contribution to the souvenir built upon each other to create a finished unit.

Each contributor displayed a moment which had impacted them most and individuality is evident in the varying artistic styles and the distinctive moments, yet it created a collective. Phrases and representations that have impressed upon us most, 'Stop and Think', 'Wicked Problems', and the images of candles upon the floor are individual representations to which we are able to attach collective meanings. In this respect, the collective souvenir is far more intimate than a photograph to remember the event. Indeed, far in the future when we return to this image, so too will the collective memories of the experience.

Now, the art piece is located in Freiburg - more specifically, it decorates the common room wall of some of the students who organised the event. It will be a lasting reminder of all the participants' shared experiences at the southern German hut, including heated debates, inspirational insights, lovely people, campfires, and much more.

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