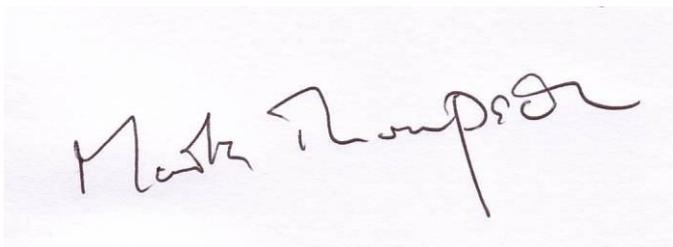


Welcome from the Senior Pro-Vice Chancellor Professor Mark Thompson

I would like to welcome you to the *Speaking Out – Women Healing from the Trauma of Violence* exhibition at Embrace Arts, the University of Leicester's art centre. As an art centre for all that fosters inclusive art practice for artists, audiences and participants across all its performing and visual arts programming, Embrace Arts is the perfect location for this event which focuses on survivors' strategies to prevail over trauma and disadvantages. The theme chosen by Dr Nicole Fayard relates to a major area of the University research and its strategic priorities. Unfortunately, we know women and children every day around the world experience violence of all kinds, irrespective of ethnicity, age, marital status, or creed. This includes not only domestic violence but also female genital mutilation, stalking, and so-called 'honour' killings. We need not think that these occur elsewhere as these crimes literally take place on our own doorstep. Many victims do not report abuse out of fear of experiencing further abuse or being stigmatised. This is because gender violence stems from a historical imbalance of power, and as such is an equal opportunity issue. It is a manifestation of abusive and coercive behaviours including physical, sexual, and psychological assaults, as well as economic coercion that adults or adolescents use against their intimate partners. The violence is predicated on power relationships in which the abused partner is dominated. The University of Leicester takes pride in the initiatives it has put in place to join and lead the fight in eliminating such behavioural patterns and enabling sufferers to speak *in their own voice*.

Speaking Out includes a wide variety of artworks, all profoundly imaginative and thought-provoking, which engage visitors with the creative strategies deployed by survivors of violence to speak out against abuse and isolation. I am as the Senior Pro-Vice Chancellor both privileged and delighted to formally receive the artists and most of all the survivors for whom we come to bear witness to their testimony. A very warm welcome to Leicester and I hope your work lights the way for others to come forward to speak out and be heard.

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature reads "Mark Thompson" in a cursive, flowing script. The first name "Mark" is written in a slightly larger, more prominent hand than the surname "Thompson".