

## **Belonging Through the Lens: Using Film to Explore Diasporic Identity**

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### **Abstract:**

This paper reflects on the use of film as a research method to explore migration, belonging, and identity among African student communities. Drawing on my experience as a researcher-filmmaker, I examine how (participatory) film enables underrepresented voices to narrate their experiences within and beyond academic settings. My practice-led work treats the camera as a tool for shared reflection rather than passive observation. The paper considers how film can uncover deeper layers of emotional expression that are often missed in traditional academic texts. Through examples from my creative research, I discuss how film can contribute to everyday negotiations of identity, race, and mobility, and offer a richer understanding of diasporic life in higher education contexts.