



Fig. 1. Exhibition piece #1, by Steph Aitchison.

The Cat's Cradle

“This string picture reminds me of a children’s game, called Cat’s Cradle, which you play with pieces of coloured string held between your fingers, and which you use to make different patterns by moving your fingers together in different ways. This string game reminds me of how language is used in multilingual situations, when seen from a multilingual perspective. When multilingualism is seen from a monolingual perspective, people see different languages, but when we see multilingualism from a multilingual perspective, we see all our languages as somehow connected. So, it works like this string game, they’re always connected, so the elements don’t change, the string is always attached to the ten fingers, but we, by moving the fingers, change the shape. So, by using a particular language of our repertoire, or a particular form of language in our repertoire in a particular situation, our multilingualism takes on different shapes”.

Professor Lynn Mario T. Menezes de Souza at the opening of the
Re-imagining Multilingualisms exhibition, in the UWC Library Atrium,
6 June 2018.