

Maya McKone-Sweet '26

*Turning Together, 2025*

Acrylic on Birch Plywood and Poplar

In mechanical systems, gears are highly specified and designed for maximum efficiency. They take on a homogeneous and purely functional task. As a mechanical engineer and an artist, I challenge this idea. The vibrant colors of the gears bounce off the walls and shine through the whole space. My gears are supported by wooden sticks, not high strength steel shafts. Everything is static yet flows like a stream in a dense flourishing forest.

Inspired by a conversation with my dear friend Ian Eykamp '24, I knew that this piece should find its home in our dining hall. He challenged me to spread a sense of belonging and hope. Every day, hundreds of our community members gather here in the dining hall to sit, eat, and connect. Yet, despite this, many of us feel alone and invisible. Everyone who walks into this space deserves to feel seen and appreciated, as an integral part of Olin. Only when we all feel worthy and valued in our community can we truly power our collective gear train.

This piece exists because of the helping hands of Dyllan Nguyen, Professor Helen Donis-Keller, Reuben Lewis '26, Oliver Buchwald '25, Mark Belanger '26, Will Young '26, Ethan Chen '25, Noah Woosley '26, Kenji Sakaie '27 and Daniel Burns '25. Special thanks to CORe for funding this project, Chris Hayden and the entire facilities team for installing this project, and the Olin Machine Shop for their support at every step of the process.