



Picture Story

Friday 20 October 2023

Raheem Sterling visits the National Portrait Gallery in a bid to raise career aspirations in the cultural sector

On Wednesday 18 October 2023, Chelsea footballer, Raheem Sterling, visited London's National Portrait Gallery to meet with young people, who since December 2022 have been involved in Sterling's *Making of Me* project.

A collaboration between the National Portrait Gallery and Raheem Sterling Foundation, *Making of Me* is a creative youth programme that combines portraiture and photography, which has given 30 young people from London the chance to develop the skills needed to progress into future creative careers.

Responding to the Gallery's wider Collection of historic and contemporary portraits, participants have worked with photographers, filmmakers and digital producers over a ten-month period to create a collaborative piece of art responding to themes of self-identity, representation, place and community, which Raheem Sterling saw displayed at the Gallery for the first time this week.

An edit of these creative responses will be displayed at the National Portrait Gallery's Learning Centre until September 2024.



Footballer Raheem Sterling greets students who have participated in the Making of Me project at the National Portrait Gallery © David Parry

"It has been amazing to see the final portraits and meet the students today. It is great to see their passion for the project and how much they have got out of it. Young People need inspiration for their future, and this collaboration is really great for the kids to express their talents. This is what my Foundation is all about - education, social mobility and creating opportunities for young people to grow."

Raheem Sterling
Footballer and Founder, Raheem Sterling Foundation



"I'm overwhelmed by the amazing work created during the first Making of Me project. I'm so proud of the 30 young students from Brent and the brilliant work they have produced. They are a fantastic group of young people and we feel privileged to have created this amazing project with the National portrait Gallery. A huge thank you to Liz, Scarlett and all the artists involved in making this project a reality. It highlights the core of what the Foundation is all about - giving young people opportunities to shine and develop skills for their future prospects and social mobility."

Clive Ellington
Chair of Trustees, Raheem Sterling Foundation

"The brilliant Making of Me project, in partnership with the Raheem Sterling Foundation, has given this incredibly creative and hardworking cohort of students from Raheem's home borough of Brent the opportunity to work collaboratively with artists, as well as display their work at the National Portrait Gallery. This is just the beginning, and we look forward to continuing our work with Raheem and his Foundation, as together we strive to develop the skills and talent of young people and open up access to exciting opportunities within the arts and culture sectors."

Liz Smith
Director of Learning and Engagement, National Portrait Gallery

"This experience has been enlightening. I have discovered sides of myself I didn't know were there. Over the past few years, I became more introverted, but through this process I've started to see glimpses of my extroverted self again. I'm very thankful to have had this opportunity."

Participating student at Ark Academy



An edit of the Making of Me project at the National Portrait Gallery, supported by the Raheem Sterling Foundation © David Parry.



Raheem Sterling greets students who have participated in the Making of Me project at the National Portrait Gallery © David Parry.



Raheem Sterling signs a Chelsea FC banner for a student © David Parry.



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Notes to editors

National Portrait Gallery

Founded in 1856, the National Portrait Gallery tells the story of Britain through portraits, using art to bring history to life and explore living today. From global icons, to unsung heroes, our Collection is filled with the stories that have shaped, and continue to shape a nation. We celebrate the power of portraiture and offer encounters with some of the world's greatest and most exciting new artists, promoting engagement with portraiture in all media to a wide-ranging public by conserving, growing and sharing the world's largest collection of portraits.

www.npg.org.uk

Raheem Sterling Foundation

Created from Raheem's vision and dedication to championing the next generation, the Raheem Sterling Foundation will educate, empower and inspire young people to become better prepared for the future and to embrace opportunities to achieve greater social mobility.

The Foundation's mission is currently focused on initiatives in Kingston, Jamaica, Manchester and Brent to help and encourage greater social mobility, further education, and empowerment, and to facilitate young people despite the challenges they may face in achieving their full potential.