

Part 5: Creating Me + Us Self-Portraits

This session is not a group activity but rather work with children individually or in pairs. The session:

- Connects the ideas and words from all of the Me + Us sessions.
- Sees the children produce their final self-portraits and artist statements.

In advance of the session:

The children will have completed all sessions of Me + Us (Preliminary – Part 4). The children will have surveyed five of their peers.

Their videos from Part 4 will have been edited together to form a short, clear Me + Us movie.

Set up:

You may need the photo studio again if the children bring in additional objects to be included in their self-portraits.

You will also need:

- Computer(s) with photo editing software
- Access to the Internet
- Word Wall
- Children's work from previous sessions

Depending on access to technology, this session can be done individually or in pairs. Each child will need sufficient time on the computer to complete his/her self-portrait and artist statement, so how you construct these sessions will depend on how many children are in the group, number of adult facilitators involved, the number of computers with photo editing software available and the time you have to complete the project.

We recommend **2 to 3 hours** to complete this session with each child/pair.

Click through for the following props or resources:

- [Link to CP Me + Us video](#)

Newsround + Recap

Like the previous sessions, start off with a Newsround to get updates from the child or pair of children.

Show the Me + Us movie to remind the children what they've been talking about during the sessions so far.

Ask about the Peer Surveys – how did it go? Did you learn anything new? What did you find interesting? Was it easy or difficult to ask your peers these questions?

Self-Portrait Guidelines

The self-portraits will be unique to the children that make them and will vary depending on skill, time, ideas for the final product, etc. We have put together some guidelines to help you get started with the process, but the exact details of the self-portraits will be left up to you.

Size

The size and form the children's self-portraits take will be determined by your budget, exhibition space and your taste/aesthetic. The original Me + Us self-portraits were 1m x 1.5 m and printed on fabric. However, this came at a cost and it might be necessary to scale back your final product. We recommend A2 or larger, if possible, and they can be printed on a variety of materials. To get an idea of what is available, speak to a local print shop and discuss your ideas for the project – they may even offer a discount!

To help the children create their self-portraits, make a blank 'canvas' in software programme you are using that is the correct dimensions of the final product. This will keep all of the self-portraits uniform in size and the children can easily add their collection of images to this canvas.

Composition

Encourage the children to think creatively when making these collaged self-portraits. Unlike the collages they did in Part 1, they are not restricted by the size, colour, etc. of their images. There are unlimited possibilities when creating a digital collage, so it might be helpful to have the children plan or visualise their final portrait before they start. Then they will be able to use the various tools of the photo editing software to create the image that they want.

Elements of Composition

- *Unity* – Do all parts of the self-portrait feel as if they belong together or does something feel stuck on or out of place?
- *Balance* – Symmetry and asymmetry can be used to create feelings of calm and stability or unease and imbalance. Do you want your image to be balanced or do you want to emphasise a certain area?
- *Movement* – To help the eye travel around the image, it's important to create a sense of movement with the arrangement of objects, lines moving throughout the piece and connections between objects. How do your images connect with each other and how can you help the viewer's eye move throughout your image?
- *Rhythm* – Like music, a piece of art can have a rhythm, which sets a pace as people view the image. How can you use shapes, colours, lines and patterns to create movement?
- *Focus* – The viewer's eye ultimately wants to rest on the 'most important thing(s)'. What do you want to emphasise? How can you draw attention to it?

- *Contrast* – Strong differences between colours, textures and images can make the image more intriguing. What does it say if you put something light next to something dark? A modern image next to an old one?
- *Pattern* – Creating patterns with lines, shapes and images in your self-portrait give it an underlying structure. How can you use patterns and repetition to help with this structure?
- *Proportion* – In these self-portraits, how things fit together is very important. The size of images and how they are layered together will help create focus. How do you want your images to relate to each other? Does everything have to be 'realistic' in proportion to other images? (No!)

Artist Statement Guidelines

An artist statement is a brief written description of a piece of work. The Me + Us artist statements not only support and help explain the self-portrait, they also give children the space to delve more deeply into some of the concepts they explored in Me + Us and share their ideas with the viewer.

Depending on the individual child, these statements could be short or very long. We suggest keeping them within the range of **300 - 450 words** so as not to overwhelm the viewer.

Some children might be comfortable writing on their own while others may need more support. You know your children, so be flexible with this activity and adapt it to their needs and abilities as you see fit.

Questions for the children to consider as they write their artist statements:

1. About my self-portrait

What does your self-portrait say about you? What makes you, you? What do you want people to understand about who you are? Have you learned anything about yourself or others?

2. Me + Us Ideas and Words

Throughout the project, we have thought about and discussed many different ideas and words. Is there one or two that really stick out to you? What do they mean to you? How have you experienced them in your life? How do they impact your community?

3. Making Scotland an inclusive and respectful nation

Each of us can play a part in making Scotland a better place for children to grow up. Are there things that you would like to change in your community or in Scotland generally? Do you have any ideas about what could be done to help make this change happen? How could we make sure everyone felt included and respected, regardless of their background?

4. Final Message

Your artist statement is your chance to share your thoughts, feelings and ideas with the viewer. Is there anything else that you want them to know?

Examples of Me + Us Self-Portraits and Artist Statements.

Again we share these with you as adult facilitators so you feel confident in understanding the process that takes children to this point. We would advise you not to share these with children so that they feel very much in control of their final product.



Frankie

S1

Stereotyping is when you think someone is something because of where they were brought up or their hair colour or skin. In some ways stereotypes can be good e.g. Scottish people are brave, but they can also be bad e.g. the Scots are fat. I don't think stereotypes should be used at all because everyone is an individual. Stereotyping has affected me in many ways, but I think you should not beat yourself up about it, it's just what people think and they mean no harm.

Sectarianism is when someone judges someone else based on his or her belief. It is horrendous. Silly people have made comments about me they say that because I am a Catholic I am all 'goodie-goodie'. It's sometimes annoying to hear these comments.

In my portrait I am wearing a costume that I wore for a stage show called, Ololyp, performed by my drama group. In the group everyone is an individual no matter how big their part is. From main to chorus we all feel included and I think Scotland should follow this lead. In my portrait there are three images of me; musical me, funny me and religious me, these are the things that make me who I am and I hope that people accept me for who I am.

Aisha

P6

I think that people would be less racist and more tolerant if they did more stuff together. When I started to play football most of the boys didn't like me playing with them, but now I don't think they really mind. I think the government should help people of different beliefs and races by encouraging communities to do more stuff together, like playing sports or art or something.

There should be a better understanding of what different people believe in and how other people live. I think the government could help racists by giving them the opportunity to see how it feels to be the victim of racism. They should encourage people to do more stuff together and share their different beliefs.

I use these images to tell about me and what's important to me in the world. The star and crescent symbol represents my heritage, my mum is from Indonesia, and my belief in the Muslim faith comes from her. I think that no matter what beliefs you have we are all equal in a way. Everyone has a right to feel safe and sometimes I don't feel safe on the streets in my local area because there could be junkies and racist people. Once I was going along the road and there was a group of racists, so me and my family avoided them by going a different way home.

In the middle of my collage I decided to have different images of myself to explain that there are lots of sides to me, I'm not just one thing. I also included a picture of my family, my Great Gran and Grandad are from St. Andrews and my other Gran, who is from Indonesia. I chose this picture because it is really rare for all of my family to be together in the same place, so this picture is special to me. I'm really proud to be from two different nationalities, I feel like I have so much to learn about myself and my heritage, even things like learning two languages, it makes me feel special.