



Press Release  
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## **FOOTBALLERS AND ARTISTS COME TOGETHER TO CREATE NEW WORK FOR MANCHESTER INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL**

**Eric Cantona, Edgar Davids & Ella Toone among footballers creating  
works with artists for *Football City, Art United*.**

*Football City, Art United*. pairs 11 artists and footballers to create new artworks for an ambitious group exhibition at Manchester International Festival 2025. The exhibition will be at Aviva Studios from 4 July – 24 August 2025.

The project is co-curated by World Cup and Champions League winner **Juan Mata**, renowned curator and Serpentine Artistic Director **Hans Ulrich Obrist** and writer, filmmaker and curator **Josh Willdigg**. They step into each other's creative fields to explore what art and football can learn from each other. From interactive play arenas and sound installations to animation and sculpture, *Football City, Art United*. expands the worlds of art and football and the cultural contributions both make to our daily lives.

The artists and footballers include:

### **Alvaro Barrington and Raí**

London-based artist Alvaro Barrington and Brazilian footballer Raí come together to explore their shared experiences of community in sport and the multi-faceted purposes it can serve.

### **Ryan Gander and Eric Cantona**

British conceptual artist Ryan Gander and the French footballer, actor, musician and Manchester United icon Eric Cantona playfully explore the effects of fame on players. The new work will see a spotlight randomly pick a visitor and follow their movement around the exhibition until they leave the space, continually repeating the process and selecting a new subject to shower with attention.

### **Keiken and Ella Toone**

The Berlin- and London-based Artist collective Keiken team up with Manchester United and England trequartista Ella Toone to explore what football means to her. Audiences can experience an intimate sonic journey, and hear directly from Toone on her inner world, discovering her perspective, dreams and driving forces.

### **Suzanne Lacy and Vivianne Miedema**

American artist and educator Suzanne Lacy, Manchester City and Netherlands star Vivianne Miedema and Angel City FC team up on a short film exploring and questioning football's complex relationship with gender.

### **Jill Mulleady and Diego Maradona**

Argentinian artist Jill Mulleady draws on her memory of meeting football legend Diego Maradona to create a new large-scale canvas. Her work is inspired by Maradona's La Mano de Dios (Hand of God), the controversial goal scored during the quarter final of the 1986 World Cup between Argentina and England.

#### **Paul Pfeiffer and Edgar Davids**

American sculptor and video artist Paul Pfeiffer collaborates with Dutch ex-footballer and photographic artist Edgar Davids to create an art installation that serves as both the entrance to the exhibition and an integral part of it. This immersive installation takes the form of a tunnel, inviting visitors to step into the thoughts, feelings, and rituals players experience as they move through the sacred space between the dressing room and the pitch.

#### **Bárbara Sánchez-Kane and Jorge Campos**

Mexican sculptor and fashion designer Bárbara Sánchez-Kane and Mexican goalkeeper Jorge Campos create a sculptural piece inspired by the Neomayan architecture of Manuel Amábilis. The piece takes inspiration from Campos' unique goalkeeping style, agility, colourful kits and love of surfing.

#### **Rose Wylie and Lotte Wubben-Moy**

English painter Rose Wylie collaborates with Arsenal and England defender Lotte Wubben-Moy. Sharing their love of drawing, the pair are collaborating through image exchange, with Wubben-Moy providing images and sources of inspiration for Wylie's interpretation and reimagining.

A wall of vertical video screens will showcase the journeys that the artists and footballers have been on to create the works in the exhibition, offering audiences a behind-the-scenes look into the making of the show.

#### **Footballer and co-curator Juan Mata said:**

"Working with Tino Sehgal as part of MIF23 was an incredible experience, and I wanted more footballers to have the chance to work with artists. The result is the work in this exciting group show. The worlds of football and art can both be beautiful, complicated and powerful; something that is explored through these collaborations. We can't wait for people to experience *Football Art, City United*. a real collaboration of two worlds."

#### **Serpentine Artistic Director and co-curator Hans Ulrich Obrist said:**

"*Football City, Art United*. is an urgent and global dialogue that has the capacity to reach people that may never step foot in a gallery or a stadium. Football is for everyone. Art is for everyone. We hope to create a bridge full of possibility for Manchester and beyond."

#### **Filmmaker, writer and co-curator Josh Willdigg said:**

"At their best, these worlds we are fortunate enough to play within meet in the middle at moments of wondrous epiphany. The greatest difference between the imagination fuel provided by a great painting or goal, song or skill move, film or diving save, are the permissions we give ourselves to prescribe meaning to them. All are sources of endless inspiration. All can change or even save a life. And of course, all are works of art."

*Football City, Art United*. began at MIF23 as *The Trequartista – Art and Football United*. It featured a world premiere of Tino Sehgal's playful performance piece *This entry* at the National Football Museum, made in collaboration with Juan Mata.

Commissioned by Factory International and TO Live. Produced by Factory International.

Common Goal is a partner for Football City, Art United.

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**Notes to Editors:**

**About MIF**

Factory International is the organisation behind Manchester International Festival and the city's landmark cultural space, Aviva Studios.

Factory International commissions, produces and presents a year-round programme of original creative work and special events at Aviva Studios, online, and internationally through its network of co-commissioners and partners. It also stages the city-wide Manchester International Festival (MIF) every other year.

MIF is one of the world's leading arts festivals, and the first to be entirely focused on the commissioning and producing of ambitious new work. Staged every two years in Manchester since 2007, the festival invites world-renowned artists from different art forms and backgrounds to create dynamic, innovative and forward-thinking new work in venues and spaces across Greater Manchester. Previous artists include Björk, Jeremy Deller, Akram Khan, Yayoi Kusama, David Lynch, Wayne McGregor, Steve McQueen, Yoko Ono, Maxine Peake, Skepta, and The xx.

Factory International plays an important role in the lives of Greater Manchester residents, bringing jobs, skills, training and creative opportunities. Through the Factory Academy, Factory International is training the creative workforce of the future, while its pioneering creative engagement and artist development programmes create year-round opportunities for local people to get involved, from participating in flagship commissions to shaping the organisation through involvement in its public forums.

Aviva Studios was designed by the world-leading practice Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), with Ellen van Loon as lead architect – their first major public building in the UK. Its development was led by Manchester City Council, with backing from HM Government and National Lottery funding from Arts Council England.

Factory International is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation.

[factoryinternational.org](http://factoryinternational.org)

**About TO Live**

TO Live is one of Canada's largest multi-arts organizations, operating three iconic venues: Meridian Hall, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, and Meridian Arts Centre. In addition, TO Live presents a full range of performing arts, theatrical, and concert events at these venues in both downtown and uptown Toronto. With these two hubs of creativity and content creation, TO Live has a unique place and perspective to activate creative spaces by inspiring local and international artists, connecting audiences, stimulating new ideas, and elevating artistic potential, becoming a catalyst for creative expression that is reflective of Toronto's diversity.

**About Common Goal**

Common Goal activates the power of football to bring people together and deliver positive society-wide change. As a football-focused network we work to connect the cultural and financial influence of the football industry with local organisations all around the world that use the beautiful game to dismantle inequalities and build a better future for all. Our network works in more than 200 communities and over 90 countries to deliver change through football to young people. With decades of work in the field of football for good, we have seen that real, transformative impact is possible, through the shared joy that football brings.