

The Street: Matt Stokes: Give to Me the Life I Love

The Street is a programme of artist projects, events and research taking place both in and beyond the Gallery. Artist **Matt Stokes** has made a film tracing a story set within the local Bangladeshi community.

Matt Stokes (b. 1973) immerses himself in communities to look at the culture that shapes people's lives. His projects develop into films, installations, archives and events that utilise the collective knowledge and skills within these communities.

The film *Give to Me the Life I Love* shows two stories mirroring each other across different moments in time. Iqbal, shown in the present day, has a curious friendship with Mohib, a teenager who works in his uncle's food emporium. Iqbal is also shown in the late 1970s, when a young person himself, caught up in an area beset by racial tensions.

The story draws on accounts of the struggles faced by Bangladeshis when first arriving in the UK and the experiences of younger generations living in east London today. Stokes collaborated with scriptwriter Syed Rahman to weave these sources together into a story uncovering possible tensions between friendships and communities in the face of hostility.

Presented alongside the film is a collection of Bengali books spanning 38 years. Transforming the Gallery into a library and archive these books underpin the significance of language to Bangladeshi identity.

The idea for *Give to Me the Life I Love* was formed when Stokes visited the 40th anniversary celebrations of Bangladesh's liberation in 2011. Over the last year he has searched archives, talked to people locally and travelled to Bangladesh, learning about language, music and activism.

To find out more about a series of events including walks, film screenings and talks exploring themes from *Give to Me the Life I Love* pick up a leaflet or visit whitechapelgallery.org.

For more information on The Street and the making of the film see whitechapelgallery.org/projects.

Co-commissioned with Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle.

In partnership with the Swadhinata Trust and with generous assistance from Ruposhi Bangla Bookshop Ltd.

Supported by:

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