

# RADICAL BEAUTY PROJECT

Radical Beauty is an internationally recognised art and fashion photography initiative operating under the umbrella of Cultural Device. A child of Culture Device, Radical Beauty is dedicated exclusively to working with models with Down Syndrome, blurring the boundaries between art, photography and fashion, and working to provide an alternative vision for beauty today. They aim to challenge commonly held perspectives of people with disabilities and facilitate conversations to celebrate their unique expressive and creative capabilities.

By challenging conventional notions of beauty and spotlighting the voices and talents of the artists to showcase their talents, Radical Beauty has already garnered immense global recognition for its ground-breaking contributions to conceptual art and fashion photography projects. Furthermore, they have launched the world's first photography collection exclusively featuring models with Down Syndrome. Collaborating with over 40 renowned fashion and art photographers from around the world and featured in Vogue, Dazed, and i-D to name a few, the project encapsulates the spirit of inclusivity and creativity.

<https://www.radicalbeautyproject.com/>

MORE INFORMATION ON  
RADICAL BEAUTY PROJECT





# RADICAL PLAY

*“Playing to me means joy - no rules, no limit, and not caring about what others think.”*

**-Jessica Williams**

*Radical Play*, the latest photographic addition to the Radical Beauty (RB) Project, features two newly commissioned portraits highlighting four models with Down Syndrome in a collaboration between RB and Central Saint Martins. It explores portrait photography through the interplay between subjectivity and representation. At a time when the agency of these creatives as autonomous individuals is often challenged and contested as coercion, *Radical Play* questions the normative conventions of desire, and artistic expression, and firmly believes in the agency and autonomy of neurodivergent creative individuals. Underpinning the rhetorics of play, the new commissions at display aim to challenge prejudices and preconceived notions of difference in the fashion and culture industries. Taking from its name, *Radical Play* emphasises play as a tool for communities to negotiate, construct, express identities and re-interpret societal expectations.

Ingrained in the ethos of RB, *radical* changes the fundamental nature and is the spirit of defiance of the status quo. The RB creatives represented here are its embodiment. Brian Sutton-Smith conceived *play* as a complex, multifaceted, and essential aspect of human behaviour influenced by social norms, significantly shaping individual identity. Play in these portraits allows these individuals to mediate subversive means of self-exploration and freedom away from convention, encouraging innovative, boundary-pushing ways of being. Through these portraits, radicalism is asserted as a celebration of unapologetic individuality, furthering RB artists' claim to creative agency.

The exhibition calls for a new framework for what the creative community can become when barriers to access dissolve. It offers hope and confidence in challenging normative conventions of beauty and change towards expansive, innovative and inclusive realities. *Radical Play* acknowledges that these models are neither mere representations of a label nor spokespersons for the entire Down's community. What they are is a testament to the boundless capacities of the human spirit in expanding representation; they are artists in their own right.

***Radical Play; assertive, disruptive, transformative.***



# IN THEIR OWN WORDS

*“Working with Radical Beauty Project and Radical Play helps me show the world that I can do anything. People say Down Syndrome means I have special needs - but I am just special.”*

**-Elena Turner-Thorne**

*“I love being a model because I love fashion and getting my hair and makeup done. Modelling makes me feel powerful, happy, beautiful, and free to be me. I am proud to be a model with Down Syndrome. I am always playing around. When I play, I’m free to make mistakes because I can try new things without fear and most of the time I get my best ideas from mistakes. Playing to me means joy - no rules, no limits, and not caring about what others think. I love it”*

**-Jessica Williams**

*“I love modelling for Radical Beauty Project because it allows me to meet new people, be myself, wear cool clothes, and have glamorous makeup. I go to a drama group at our local theatre because I like to perform, to feel confident, and be creative.”*

**-Lara Wates**

*“When I participated at the Radical Beauty photoshoot, I felt powerful and empowered. I am strong and certain that discrimination and prejudice no longer affect me.”*

**-Thati Piancastelli**