

# SOMERSET HOUSE

SOMERSET HOUSE TRUST  
STRAND LONDON WC2R 1LA  
TEL: +44 (0)20 7836 8686  
INFO@SOMERSETHOUSE.ORG.UK  
WWW.SOMERSETHOUSE.ORG.UK

## JOB DESCRIPTION

### ASSISTANT CURATOR OF EXHIBITIONS

#### **Reports to Director of Exhibitions and Learning**

#### **Department of Exhibitions and Learning**

#### **Full time position**

#### **Salary range £25k-£28k based on experience**

#### **About Somerset House Trust**

Somerset House is a spectacular neo-classical building in the heart of London, sitting between The Strand and the River Thames. Built as government offices, for most of its history Somerset House was closed to the public. In 1990 The Courtauld Institute of Art moved into North Wing, and in 1997 Somerset House Trust was established as a charity to develop the buildings and surrounding open spaces as a centre for arts and culture. In 2000 the courtyard, South Wing and river terraces, restored with two major grants from the Heritage Lottery Foundation, opened to the public

Since 2000 Somerset House Trust has established a distinctive public programme, with an ice rink in the winter, concerts and an open-air film season in the summer, and twice a year Somerset House hosts London Fashion Week. Since 2008 a major new strand of our activities is our own programme of temporary exhibitions which focus on **contemporary fashion, architecture, photography and design**.

Somerset House is now also home to a growing number of creative organisations, across a range of cultural forms and practices. These include the British Fashion Council, the Sorrell Foundation, the Clore Leadership Programme, Dartmouth Films, Music for Youth, Sound and Music, the National Youth Orchestra and the Royal Society of Literature. Tenants also include think tanks such as Big Society Network, Editorial Intelligence, Britain Thinks and The Smith Institute; and support and mentoring organisations such as New Deal of the Mind and the School for Creative Startups. Somerset House also has strong links to higher education through its tenants the Courtauld Institute of Art, King's College London and The Culture Capital Exchange. Our aim is to build a creative hub of young, entrepreneurial and socially-aware businesses that contribute towards the artistic programme.

The Embankment Gallery opened in 2008 with the exhibition *Skin and Bones: Parallel Practices in Fashion and Architecture*. As well as partnering with other institutions to bring important exhibitions to London, we also develop and commission our own strand of artistic and cultural output. Exhibitions in the

Embankment Galleries have included *SHOWstudio: Fashion Revolution*, which brought world renowned fashion photographer Nick Knight's work to the gallery, *Maison Martin Margiela '20' The Exhibition*, which celebrated 20 years of one of fashion's most avant-garde designers, and *Dior Illustrated: René Gruau and The Line of Beauty*, an exhibition of 50 original drawings from the iconic master of illustration. From 2010 we have also hosted *Pick Me Up*, the UK's first contemporary graphic arts fair. In November 2011 the newly refurbished East Wing Galleries opened, augmenting our reputation as a venue for world-class exhibitions. A programme of free public displays in the Terrace and Courtyard Rooms runs alongside our major exhibitions. We aim to inspire and delight with distinctive, bold and imaginative work from around the world.

West Wing is currently being redeveloped, and is planned to open in 2013, and the entire frontage around the courtyard will then be open to the public.

### **Overall purpose of the post:**

The Assistant Curator will work within the Department of Exhibitions and Learning, reporting directly to the Director of Exhibitions and Learning, to develop the programme of exhibitions in the Embankment Galleries and East Wing Galleries, and, working closely with the Exhibitions Organiser, ensure their exemplary delivery and management.

This will involve liaising with external curators/partners in the development of the curatorial concept, as well as working with them and designers, production team and installation teams and others to ensure that all arrangements are planned and executed efficiently and effectively. The post holder will be required to have a broad knowledge of the arts, with a specialism in fashion and photography. They will need to have established contacts in the field, and be active in developing further contacts within the international museum and gallery world as well as in the fashion and photography world. The post holder will be required to work closely with all departments in Somerset House Trust to ensure a consistently high quality of service.

### **Main activities and responsibilities:**

- To assist the Director of Exhibitions and Learning in developing the exhibition programme.
- To undertake research and prepare exhibition briefs and budgets.
- To project manage exhibitions, working closely with the Exhibition Organiser, monitoring the programme and expenditure.
- To liaise with the design team, production team, technical team, lenders and installation team as appropriate.
- To liaise with exhibition partners and external curators as appropriate.
- To ensure that the day-to-day project management of each exhibition is put in place, liaising with [Director/Head] of Estates and [Director/Head] of Visitor Services & Communications.
- To contribute to the SHT annual business plan and manage the allocated budgets.
- To provide regular briefings to visitor services staff and volunteers.
- To provide information for all marketing and PR activities, and copy and content for marketing and social media.
- To work with the Head of Learning & Participation to devise a programme of learning and events that form part of or accompany exhibitions.

- To be aware of health and safety legislation and requirements for both visitors and staff.
- To assist at public events as necessary.
- To undertake any other related duties as requested by line manager.

**Person specification (including technical/professional requirements)**

**Qualifications, knowledge and experience:**

- MA in an Arts or Curatorial/Museum Studies subject.
- Broad knowledge of contemporary visual arts with a specialism in fashion and photography.
- Experience of working within a visual arts environment, preferably with experience of managing temporary exhibitions and liaising effectively with colleagues and external contacts within a museum/gallery environment, from planning through to execution and evaluation.
- Experience of supervising staff
- Experience of managing budgets and P&L responsibility

**Skills/abilities:**

- Excellent verbal and written communication skills.
- Excellent organisations skills, especially the ability to work on a number of different projects concurrently and the ability to prioritise and manage competing priorities.
- Highly motivated with the ability to work both using own initiative and as a team player, and the flexibility to work occasional evenings and weekends when required.
- Good interpersonal skills with the ability to communicate successfully across teams and hierarchies and with a number of different stakeholders.
- IT literacy with demonstrable proficiency in MS Outlook, Word, Excel and Access, and Powerpoint.
- Ability to work under pressure, meet deadlines and retain good attention to detail.
- An interest in and commitment to the work, culture and ambitions of Somerset House Trust.