

SOMERSET HOUSE PRESS RELEASE



Somerset House Studios

A new experimental workspace for artists, makers and thinkers, launching on 26 October 2016



- **36,000 sq ft of former Inland Revenue offices transformed into studio, rehearsal and project spaces at Somerset House**
- **Creates affordable and secure workspace for around 300 artists, makers and thinkers in the centre of London, which supports their varied practices**
- **Artist applications open 26 October**
- ***Studio 01* exhibition showcases works from some of the first Somerset House Studios residents: 27 October – 6 November**

This autumn, Somerset House is thrilled to launch Somerset House Studios, a new experimental workspace for artists, makers and thinkers in the centre of London.

Situated inside Somerset House's New Wing, it aims to meet the changing creative needs of today's artists and address the acute shortage of affordable and secure studio space, which has seen an accelerating exodus of artists from London due to rising rents and redevelopment.

Somerset House is transforming 36,000 sq ft of former Inland Revenue offices to establish over 35 shared and solo occupancy studio, rehearsal and project spaces, which will accommodate around 100 artists. Somerset House Studios is also home to Makerversity, a workspace for professional makers with cutting edge workshops, which was born in 2013 with backing from Somerset House.

In total, the initiative will enable the work of over 300 artists, makers and thinkers in the heart of one of the world's most creative cities.

Reflecting Somerset House as a centre of contemporary culture with a focus on cross-disciplinary work, the residents will cover all forms, including visual art, music and composition, performance, dance and live art, fiction and non-fiction, fashion, film and those working at the intersection of art and technology.

A small group were selected to pilot Somerset House Studios over the past few months. They include fashion designers **Gareth Pugh** and **Charles Jeffrey**, musicians **Anna Meredith** and **LoneLady**, visual artists **Christian Marclay**, **Katie Paterson** and **Larry Achiampong**, Internet artist **LaTurbo Avedon**, experimental architecture studio **Minimaforms**, performance artists **Project O**, writer **Juliet Jacques** and Forest Fringe co-director **Deborah Pearson**. They will be joined by up to 25 new arrivals in 2017, who will be selected through an open application process, launching on 26 October 2016.

In addition, 8 dedicated event and exhibition rooms will host a new strand of programming driven by the Studios, including work produced on site, to some of the 3.2 million people who already visit Somerset House every year.

Somerset House has a long tradition in supporting new generations of artists and thinkers with the Royal Academy of Arts and other Royal Societies being the first occupants of the 18th-century Strand site. Since becoming a charitable Trust and reopening to the public in 2000, Somerset House has become home to over 100 cultural and artistic organisations including The Courtauld Gallery and Institute and The Cultural Quarter at King's College London.

With the arrival of Somerset House Studios, Somerset House aspires to redefine the arts centre for a 21st-century audience and create a place where innovative art will be imagined, made and exhibited.

Jonathan Reekie, Director of Somerset House, said: "We believe that by giving over space to some of the best artists, makers and thinkers in the centre of the city, we will be doing three vitally important things.

"Firstly, we will be making a new kind of space that is needed to support the practice of today's artists, who are thinking and working in very different ways across artistic disciplines. Secondly, we feel strongly that artistic talent should not be marginalised and driven out of the city, but has a place in one of London's iconic buildings. Thirdly we want the brightest new creative voices to be experienced by a bigger audience.

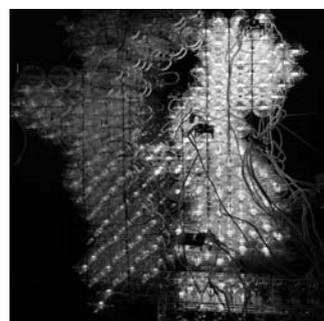
"We want Somerset House Studios to be a vital and vibrant landmark for Somerset House and London's artists and audiences."

Musician, artist and writer Brian Eno, a supporter of Somerset House Studios, said: "People sometimes think that everything artists need is in their own minds. But it isn't: as well as talent and enthusiasm, they need good places to work, and they need people to talk to and share ideas with. Somerset House is a fantastic space right in the heart of cultural London, and with these new studios, it represents a lot of possibilities for creative cross-pollination. I look forward to seeing it develop as a crucible of creative thinking in London."

Offering residencies for a focused period of artistic and professional development of up to two and a half years, it will champion a diverse community who pioneer experimentation, provocation and collaboration, and fully represent the arts in the UK today.

The Studios rental will be calculated using a base rent equivalent to the London average for artist workspace rate, as identified by the Mayor of London in 2014. With a commitment to invest in the future of the UK's leading artists, Somerset House's subsidies and long lease on the site will provide security to the Studios residents.

STUDIO 01 EXHIBITION



To celebrate the launch of Somerset House Studios, a free exhibition will feature work by some of the first Studios residents. Open to the public from 27 October to 6 November, *Studio 01* will explore the practices and concerns of some of the UK's brightest creative talent who are now based on site at Somerset House. Covering themes of behaviour, identity and construction in the virtual and physical world, highlights include artist avatar LaTurbo Avedon's virtual nightclub and fashion designer Gareth Pugh's sculptural installation of The Tempest's Sycorax to mark the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death.

Inés Cámara Leret, an artist who turns DNA into tangible objects, will show her *Memory Stone* imprinted with participants' breathes, and design practice Superflux will present a fictional court case *Dynamic Genetics vs. Mann*, whose suite of evidence set in a laboratory imagines the implications posed by a world of mandatory health insurance, genetic risk profiling and backstreet gene-fixing.

Studio 01 will additionally comprise works from Larry Achiampong, Memo Akten, Charles Jeffrey Loverboy, Minimaforms, Deborah Pearson, Erica Scourti and Werkflow.

Further details of the Somerset House Studios public programme will be announced in November 2016.

Somerset House Trust is grateful to supporters of the Studios including Westminster City Council, Garfield Weston Foundation, Foyle Foundation and Sir Siegmund Warburg's Voluntary Settlement.

Ends

NOTES TO EDITORS

Somerset House Studios residents currently include:

Aisha Zia
Anna Meredith
Buckley Williams
Caroline Williams
Charles Jeffrey
Chloe Lamford
Christian Marclay
Deborah Pearson
Eloise Hawser
Erica Scourti
Estela Oliva
Gareth Pugh

Graham Dunning
Inés Cámara Leret
Jennifer Walshe
Jessica Rinland
Juliet Jacques
Katie Paterson
Larry Achiampong
LaTurbo Avedon
LoneLady
Makerversity
Matthew Plummer-
Fernandez

Mel Brimfield
Memo Akten
Mind the Film
Minimaforms
Paul Purgas
Phoebe Boswell
Project O
Strange Telemetry
Superflux
Unmade
Werkflow

For press enquiries and images, please contact Stephanie Lilley, Acting Head of PR:
press@somersetshouse.org.uk / 0207 845 4624.

Dates: Applications to Somerset House Studios will be accepted from 26 October 2016

Address: New Wing, Somerset House, Strand, London WC2R 1LA

Somerset House public enquiries: 020 7845 4600 | www.somersetshouse.org.uk

Somerset House Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/SomersetHouse>

Somerset House Twitter: [@SomersetHouse](https://twitter.com/SomersetHouse)

Somerset House Instagram: [@SomersetHouseLondon](https://www.instagram.com/SomersetHouseLondon)

About Somerset House

A unique part of the London cultural scene, Somerset House is an historic building where surprising and original work comes to life. From its 18th century origins, Somerset House has been a centre for debate and discussion – an intellectual powerhouse for the nation. Somerset House is today a key cultural destination in London in which to experience a broad range of artistic activity, engage with artists, designers and makers and be a part of a major creative forum – an environment that is relaxed, welcoming to all and inspirational to visit while providing a stimulating workplace for the cultural and creative industries. Since its opening in 2000, Somerset House has built up a distinctive outdoor public programme including Skate, concerts, an open-air film season and a diverse range of temporary exhibitions throughout the site focusing on contemporary culture, with an extensive learning programme attached. It is one of the biggest community of creative organisations in London including The Courtauld Gallery and Institute of Art, King's College London Cultural Institute and over 100 other creative businesses. It currently attracts approximately 3.2 million visitors every year. www.somersetshouse.org.uk