

**SOMERSET
HOUSE**



SOMERSET HOUSE

2017/18

INSPIRING CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

Somerset House seeks to be an inspirational creative community where contemporary culture is imagined, created and experienced. In 2017/18 our public programme was made up of more 'home-grown' work than ever before.

Alongside our annual events in the Edmond J Safra Fountain Court and major exhibitions *Perfume: A Sensory Journey Through Contemporary Scent* and *North: Fashioning Identity*, for the first time, our public programme featured the work of **Somerset House Studios** artists. Commissions included Eloise Hawser's exhibition *By the deep, by the mark*, Larry Achiampong's *Pan African Flag for the Relic Traveller's Alliance*, Chloe Lamford's Great Arch Hall installation *ShowRoom* and Anna Meredith's *Zarabande for Zamboni* during Skate.

We launched a major new **creative careers** initiative to boost young people's skills and help diversify the creative sector's workforce, tackling some of the barriers around access for young people wishing to develop a career in the creative industries and cultural sector.

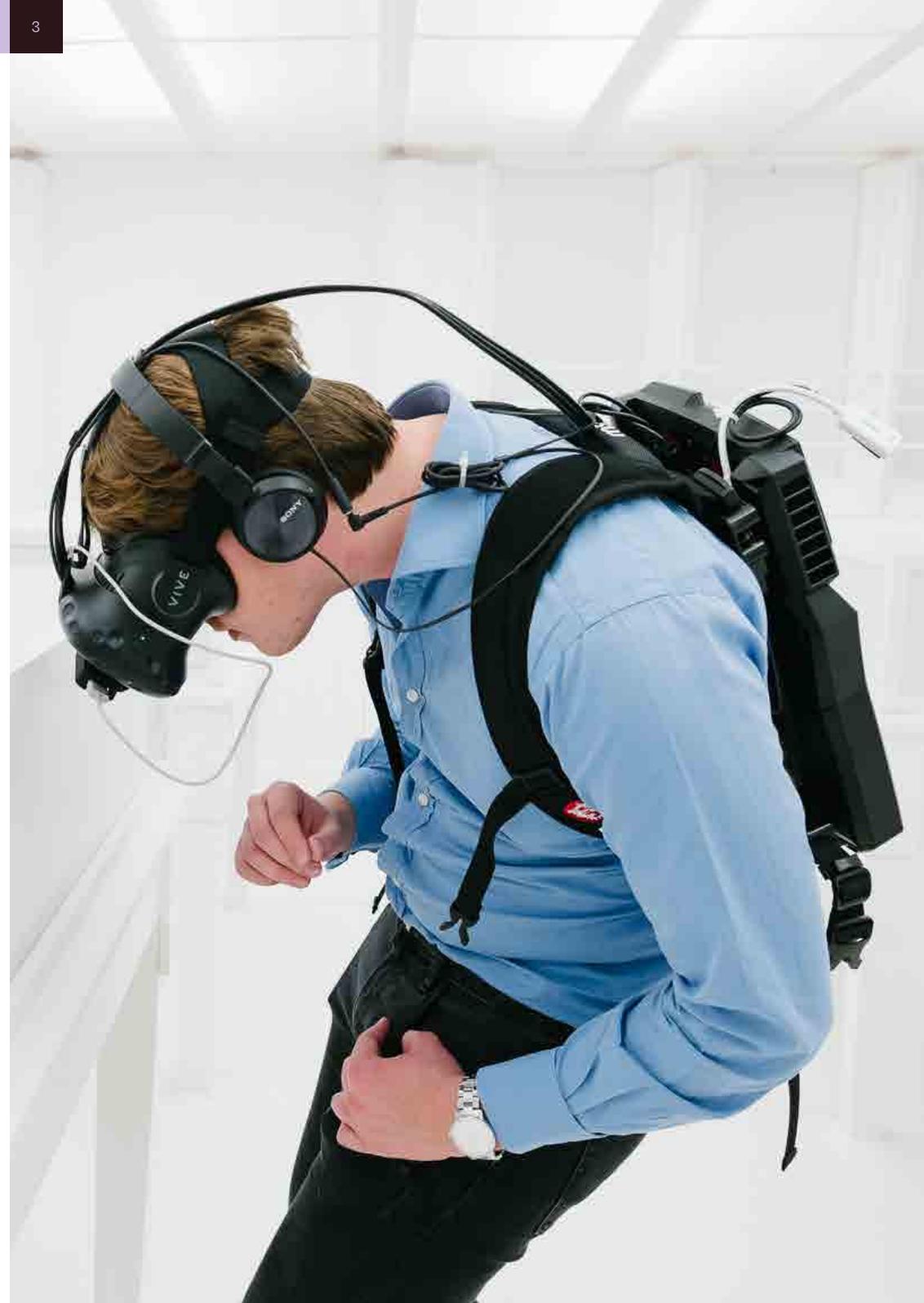
We continued to restore and renew the heritage of our site, which this year included cleaning the courtyard façade of our South Wing. In March, we also secured funding from the Mayor of London's **Good Growth Fund** to begin development of a new co-working space in a previously un-used area of the building, offering flexible working space to a new wave of individuals and small businesses.

In these ways, we have witnessed the opportunities that arise from our unique creative community. We are committed to developing these possibilities and expanding what Somerset House can offer to its residents, the public and the wider creative economy.

William Sieghart CBE
Chairman

Jonathan Reekie CBE
Director

Mat Collishaw Thresholds (photo Graham Carlow) | Cover photo John Gerrard Western Flag (photo by Damian Griffiths)



SOMERSET HOUSE AT A GLANCE

Our building

500,000
sq ft of Grade 1 listed architecture

Our visitors

Over **3.2 MILLION** visitors

Our people

70 STAFF
100+ VOLUNTEERS
for Somerset House Trust

A CREATIVE COMMUNITY LIKE NO OTHER

Over **400** resident organisations
With over **2,600** people

CREATIVE & ARTS ENTERPRISE

130 COMPANIES
92 MICRO-BUSINESSES
2,100 PEOPLE

SOMERSET HOUSE STUDIOS

85 ARTISTS AND THEIR TEAMS
100 TEAMS IN MAKERVERSITY
540 PEOPLE

OUR NEIGHBOURS

THE COURTAULD GALLERY AND INSTITUTE

KING'S COLLEGE LONDON

IN 2017/18 WE ACHIEVED...

3.2 million visitors. **15** exhibitions, 5 of which were free. **11** nights of live music and **14** nights of outdoor cinema including 3 UK premieres. **9** weeks of ice skating with over **116,000** visitors. **32** new businesses joined our creative community, with **54** networking and skill sharing events organised for residents. **Somerset House Studios** welcomed **20** new artists, created **7** public commissions, took part in **3** international showcases and opened up **4,883** sq ft of previously disused space. **46** Learning talks and events for **3,971** people, including **50** Spotlight Tours, **10** Creative Careers events reaching **923** young people. **4,582** visitors attended Historical Highlights Tours. **2** new cafes and restaurants. Our South Wing facades were restored.

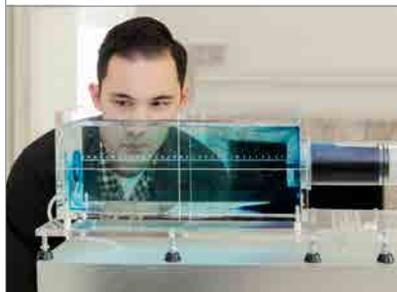
2017/18 PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

Our programme continues to challenge pre-conceived ideas of our culture, shining a light on previously unexamined subjects offering the public new perspectives. This work is influenced by the wealth of creative talent resident at Somerset House. In 2017/18, we launched the **Charles Russell Speechlys Terrace Room Series** supporting our commitment to free exhibitions throughout the year.



PERFUME: A SENSORY JOURNEY THROUGH CONTEMPORARY SCENT

“This is a revelation...The story of scent is the story of culture.”
- The Guardian



ELOISE HAWSER: BY THE DEEP, BY THE MARK

“There’s an almost-mythical connection between Londoners and their river - you can almost feel it in your waters.”
- Time Out



JOHN GERRARD

“Staked in a palace at the centre of London and beamed directly into our living rooms, Western Flag brought the consequences of the petroleum age home.”
- Frieze.com

(T - B) Perfume (photo by Peter MacDiarmid) | Eloise Hawser (Photo by Tim Bowditch) | John Gerrard Western Flag (photo by Damian Griffiths)

(T - B) North | (photo by Tim Bowditch) | Hassan Hajjaj (photo by Max Creasy) | Mat Collishaw (Photo by Graham Carlow) | Summer Series (Photo by Owen Harvey) | Skate (Photo by James Bryan)



NORTH: FASHIONING IDENTITY

“Intelligent, celebratory and in love with its subject matter.”
- The Guardian



HASSAN HAJJAJ

“A statement about collectivity and collaboration, about the possibility of coming together through culture.”
- Financial Times



MAT COLLISHAW: THRESHOLDS

“The dawning of a new art form... this is the future.”
- BBC Radio 4 Saturday Review



SUMMER SERIES WITH AMERICAN EXPRESS AND FILM4 SUMMER SCREEN

“One of London’s finest open-air venues.”
- i newspaper



SKATE WITH FORTNUM & MASON

“A glorious backdrop and special events help make a trip to this outdoor rink one of the capital’s most festive outings.”
- Time Out

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Other highlights from our cultural programme included **The Learned Society of Extraordinary Objects**, the annual festival of gaming **Now Play This** and **Game Changers** which continued this theme, and annual partnership projects **Photo London** and **1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair**.

RESIDENT COMMUNITY

Somerset House is one of the largest communities of arts and creative enterprises in the UK, consisting of more than **400 resident organisations** from the arts and cultural sectors and the wider creative economy.

Industries represented in the community include fashion, theatre, architecture, graphic design, film and television, publishing, digital development, music, media and communications, cultural education and sustainability. New residents in 2017/18 included Tall Stories Theatre, digital agency Amphio Ltd, sustainable textile developers Ananas Anam, production company Catsnake and Litro Magazine.

Over the past year, we expanded our programme of networking events, skills sharing schemes, talks and screenings, covering issues including GDPR, copyright issues and business planning. This programme has helped stimulate creative collaborations and create tangible business opportunities for residents, with **82%** having made valuable connections with others on site.

Residents have also contributed to our public programme, including Lizzie Ostrom who co-curated *Perfume*, Candlestar who produce *Photo London*, Dartmouth Films who present *Unorthodox*, the Saturday Club Trust whose annual showcase we host and the organisers of *1:54 African Art Fair* are also based here.



(Photos by Philip Vile)

“Somerset House is a fantastic place for a creative company to be based - the atmosphere of creativity is so conducive to our work and helps us stay in touch with the sector more generally”

- Somerset House Resident

“Tech businesses that could work from anywhere still prize the physical community on offer at Somerset House.”

- Financial Times

“Exciting pilots are happening with other residents which will make a significant difference to our organisation”

- Somerset House Resident



BOLD IDEAS, URGENT ISSUES, NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Since its launch in October 2016, [Somerset House Studios](#) has established itself as a game-changing incubator of creative talent, the number of artists working on site growing from 65 to 85 over the past year.

“If Somerset House Studios is a reflection of its time, it is of a creative economy that prioritises technology, enterprise, and the dismantling of traditional categories.”

– Financial Times

New residents in 2017/18 included experimental rapper and performance artist Gaika, artist and writer Laura Grace Ford, DJ and producer Nabihah Iqbal, and collaborative artists and filmmakers Iain Forsyth and Jayne Pollard.

“It makes sure that artists remain at the heart of our capital by ensuring that they have affordable studio space... a new model for regeneration has been invented and a cultural centre for the 21st century created”

– The Times

Public projects emerging from Somerset House Studios have included Nocturnal Cities, a series of events exploring the future of global club culture featuring a discussion with London’s Night Czar Amy Lame, Shutters Down! club nights in the Deadhouse curated by LoneLady with Graham Dunning, Superflux discussing the future of power with Brian Eno, and a series of pioneering inter-disciplinary collaborations with academics from King’s College London.



Top left images: Studios Maker Street (Photo by Luke Walker) | Bottom and right images: Dismantle Yourself, curated by Graham Dunning (Photos by Theo Cottle)

“Practical support, working in a community, having space to think and work through ideas has allowed new possibilities to flourish. I feel invigorated by the experience of working here as if I’m suddenly tuning into a circuit of live currents.”

– Laura Grace Ford

“Somerset House Studios is at heart a celebration of London as a creative nexus and a place where anything can happen.”

– Gareth Pugh

LEARNING & SKILLS

Alongside our cultural programme, we expanded our series of talks, events and workshops to connect participants to the artists, makers and thinkers behind our work, and collaborated with partners including London College of Communications, London College of Fashion and Westminster Kingsway College.

This year we launched the **Creative Careers Programme** a major new dual-strand initiative to boost young people's employability and make the creative sector's workforce more representative of our society.

The **Creative Job Studio** is a new space for young people from all backgrounds to meet regularly with employers from across the creative sector. Developed in partnership with resident youth employment charity The Creative Society, it is a space to discuss skills development and network with other creative professionals. The **Creative Careers Academy** is a new nine-month work placement, paid London Living Wage, for 18 to 25 year olds who are struggling to get their first break in the creative sector.

We aim to develop a sustainable talent pipeline which broadens cultural diversity and promotes social mobility amongst those entering the creative industries workforce (initially amongst Somerset House's 130 resident community.)



“This is exactly what is needed for new people trying to get into the industry.”

“The professionals were friendly and inspiring and spoke to the young people like equals.”

Photos by Jian Wei Lim for Somerset House



SUSTAINABILITY

We are working to test and implement sustainable practices across everything we do, visible in a wide range of ways.

We have collaborated with Somerset House resident Julie's Bicycle, a leader on how cultural organisations can operate sustainably, receiving a **4-star Creative Green rating**

63% of our energy is generated onsite with our combined cooling, heating and power plant and we have installed free public water fountains around the site, to help limit the need for single-use plastic bottles wherever possible.

Our site is free of plastic straws and our **Edible Utopia** programme promotes urban growing and on-site composting.

Through our cultural programme, we seek to raise awareness of a wide range of environmental issues, with projects including *Western Flag (Spindletop, Texas) 2017*, *John Gerrard*, commissioned by Channel 4 for Earth Day, and the UK premiere of Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Sequel* as part of Film4 Summer Screen.

Many of our resident enterprises are actively engaged in unpacking the consequences of how we live, interrogating and communicating the impact of our collective choices locally and globally, and our resident community includes designers and makers prototyping new environmentally friendly materials and sustainable design solutions.



Photos by Jian Wei Lim for Somerset House; Book cover: Larry Achiampong's Pan African Flag for the Relic Traveller's Alliance (photo Richard Thompson for Somerset House)

OUR SUPPORTERS

Somerset House is an entirely self-funded charity, receiving no regular public funding. We are grateful to everyone who has supported our public programme, our continued efforts to look after our historic site, the development of Somerset House Studios and our learning and skills programme.

Somerset House Supporters' Court Members

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 Brian Eno
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 Judy Gibbons
 Paul Goswell
 Sir Malcolm Grant
 Laurence Green (retired Dec 2017)
 Melanie Hall QC
 Jon Higgins
 James Lambert
 Marcus Lyon
 Caroline Michel
 Mark Pain (retired Dec 2017)
 Julien Sevaux

For more information on how you can make a difference to our work, please contact:
supportus@somersethouse.org.uk

Or visit:
[somersethouse.org.uk/support-us](https://www.somersethouse.org.uk/support-us)

* from 01.04.2018



somersehouse.org.uk

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