

PRESS RELEASE

KALEIDOSCOPE: IMMIGRATION AND MODERN BRITAIN

12 June – 8 September 2019



**PART OF THE CHARLES RUSSELL SPEECHLYS TERRACE ROOMS SERIES
TERRACE ROOMS, SOMERSET HOUSE, LONDON
FREE**

At a time when Britain's relationship with the rest of the world is increasingly complex and uncertain, Somerset House presents **Kaleidoscope**, a new photography exhibition that explores identity and immigration in modern Britain. Featuring stills and moving image, *Kaleidoscope* showcases the works of ten photographers born or based in Britain, many with family origins abroad including Hong Kong, India, Jamaica and Russia, and explores what it means and how it feels to live as an immigrant, or a descendent of immigrants, in Britain today. Co-curated by writer, **Ekow Eshun** and Creative Director, **Darrell Vydelingum** the exhibition forms a celebration of immigration in everyday life.

Reflecting the multiplicity of voices that together form modern Britain, the exhibition takes individual and often intensely personal experiences to encourage a wider appreciation of the nation's multiculturalism. Each artist interrogates the charged issue of immigration from different perspectives, often informed by their own experiences or of their families, offering a composite insight into immigrant journeys, from the struggles of those seeking asylum to those of successive generations and their communities who have made the UK their home.

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Portraiture forms a primary focus of the exhibition, which opens with works from **Seba Kurtis**. Informed by his own history as an illegal immigrant, Kurtis presents *Heartbeat*, a series of portraits of migrants held at UK detention centres, inspired by the British police's use of heartbeat detectors to locate people hiding amongst cargo. Documenting the experiences of recent arrivals, Kurtis makes the hidden migrant journey visible, combining long exposure photography with innovative use of Photoshop.

Kaleidoscope continues to follow the journey of immigrants through works focusing on successive generations, offering intimate insight into their lives in Britain. **Chris Steele-Perkins'** large-scale *The New Londoners* studies families from each of the 200 UN-recognised countries of the world now living in London; the stories of their origins, and the reasons why they chose to settle in the city. Focusing on a city which voted to remain part of the European Union in the 2016 referendum, the project gains new poignancy, forming a celebration of multiculturalism in the capital through these individual testimonies. In *Dalston Anatomy*, **Lorenzo Vitturi** similarly captures the energy in the convergence of different cultures at Ridley Road Market in East London. Combining portrait photography with abstract sculpture comprised of objects collected from the market, Vitturi reflects on the cultural evolution of Ridley Road and its unique combination of international influences.

In *The Quiet Town of Tipton*, **Mahtab Hussain** collaborates with the local South Asian community to capture life in the Sandwell borough following a racist attack on the Kanzul Iman mosque in 2013, offering a voice to those othered by xenophobic attitudes. This complex theme of belonging is also explored by **Teresa Eng** whose documentation of people and places in Elephant & Castle, her home borough in London, offers a first-hand perspective of how second and third generation families view their local community. Challenging the notion that immigrants disrupt existing communities, each of these artists celebrate Britain's evolution into a modern multicultural nation.

Further contemporary works draw on archival sources, offering new perspectives on the landscape of British society from those with dual identities. **Kurt Tong's** photo series *The Queen, The Chairman and I* is a personal documentation of his family's journey from Hong Kong to the UK over the last 100 years whilst **Rhianne Clarke's** *Many Rivers to Cross* forms a retrospective of her father's photography of his Caribbean community in 1970s-80s London, discovered only following his death in 2014.

Three video works complete the exhibition including **Hetaim Patel's** *The Jump*. Bringing a playful touch to immigration discourse in his film work, Patel gathers 17 British Indian family members in his grandmother's home in Bolton, where he and his relatives have lived since 1967. Patel is captured leaping in the foreground, complete in a homemade Spider-Man replica costume, connecting his family's marginalised identity with the Hollywood mainstream.

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Ghanaian-Russian photographer **Liz Johnson Artur** focuses on the capital in ***Real...Times***, which premiered at the 10th Berlin Biennale 2018, weaving narratives from London's African diaspora, from the Black Lives Matter activist rallies to sequences from Black female collective, Born N Bread. **Billy Dosanjh's *Year Zero: Black Country*** transports viewers to 1960s West Midlands. His video work compiles archive newsreel footage with personal testimonies from economic migrants in his hometown of Smethwick, forming a platform for a community underrepresented in mainstream culture.

Following his successful **Processions** mass-participation artwork and **Fashion & Freedom** exhibition, both commissioned as part of the UK arts programme for the First World War centenary **14-18 NOW**, **Darrell Vydelingum** will curate a participative project to run alongside *Kaleidoscope*. Produced in collaboration with the Somerset House Learning and Skills team, this project will encourage visitors to contribute to the national conversation surrounding immigration in Britain today. In conjunction with *Kaleidoscope*, visitors will have an opportunity to gain deeper insights into exhibition themes through a public programme including gallery talks, a panel discussion and a practical workshop.

Kaleidoscope forms part of Somerset House's summer programme exploring issues of identity, representation and perception in British society. This season includes the major exhibition, **Get Up, Stand Up Now**, celebrating the past 50 years of Black creative pioneers in Britain and beyond curated by Zak Ové, and stand-out line-ups for **Somerset House Summer Series with American Express** and **Film4 Summer Screen**.

Kaleidoscope is the next exhibition in the **Charles Russell Speechlys Terrace Room Series**, an ongoing partnership with the leading law firm to present a wide range of free exhibitions reflecting the broad interests of both organisations.

FOR PRESS ENQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT:

press@somerset-house.org.uk/0207 845 4624

NOTES TO EDITORS

Dates: 12 June – 8 September 2019

Opening Hours: Sat – Tues, 10.00 – 18.00. Wed – Fri, 11.00 – 20.00, except for 11 – 21 July and 8 – 21 August, when daily opening hours are 10.00 – 18.00.

Tickets: Free available at www.somerset-house.org.uk

ADDITIONAL LISTINGS INFORMATION

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

Transport: Underground: Temple, Embankment / Rail: Charing Cross, Waterloo, Blackfriars

Website: www.somerset-house.org.uk

Somerset House Facebook:

www.facebook.com/SomersetHouse

Somerset House Twitter: @SomersetHouse

Somerset House Instagram: @SomersetHouse

Hashtag: #Kaleidoscope

KALEIDOSCOPE: IMMIGRATION AND MODERN BRITAIN

12 June– 8 September 2019

ABOUT EKOW ESHUN

Ekow Eshun is a writer, critic and curator. He is Chairman of the Fourth Plinth Commissioning Group and Creative Director of Calvert 22 Foundation, an arts organisation dedicated to the contemporary culture of Eastern Europe.

He is the former Director of the ICA and a frequent contributor to TV and radio shows including *Saturday Review* and *Front Row* on BBC Radio 4. His writing has appeared in publications including the *New York Times*, *The Financial Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Observer*, *Granta*, *Vogue*, *Aperture* and *Wired*. He is the author of *Black Gold of the Sun*, which was nominated for the Orwell prize, and the editor of *Africa Modern: creating the contemporary art of a continent*.

He is the recipient of an honorary doctorate from London Metropolitan University and has been listed by the *Evening Standard* as one of London's 1000 Most Influential People. Portraits of him, by photographers Jillian Edelstein and Simon Fredericks, are held in the permanent collection of the National Portrait Gallery.

ABOUT DARRELL VYDELINGUM

Darrell Vydelingum is a Creative Director based in London. His work spans fashion, design, exhibition curation, creative production and major public events.

For over a decade Vydelingum was Director at Blow PR in London, finding and nurturing many young fashion designers at the very start of their careers and producing their fashion shows. Many of these designers are now well established, show at London and Paris fashion weeks and are stocked in major stores around the globe, for example Ashish, Peter Pilotto and Manish Arora. Vydelingum also established Blow Presents, the first platform for emerging talent and post graduates in London. Over the course of his career he has produced over 300 fashion shows for London Fashion Week.

In 2016, Vydelingum was commissioned by the UK government's 14-18NOW festival to conceive a project about fashion and the First World War. His *Fashion & Freedom* exhibition examined the relationship between women's rights, fashion and war, featuring designers such as Vivienne Westwood and Roksanda.

Vydelingum also spearheaded *Processions 2018*, an initiative marking 100 years since the first women got the right to vote, formed of four mass-participation processions in London, Edinburgh, Belfast and Cardiff. Working with renowned producers Artichoke Trust, Vydelingum worked with hundreds of community groups, galleries, arts organisations, leading female fashion designers, artists, illustrators and writers to make beautiful hand-made banners to celebrate women's achievements and promote equality. Darrel continues to create new work focusing on stories that are both challenging and have a narrative that need to be heard and seen.

ABOUT SOMERSET HOUSE

Inspiring contemporary culture

One of the city's most spectacular and well-loved spaces, Somerset House is a new kind of arts centre in the heart of London, designed for today's audiences, artists and creatives – an inspirational community where contemporary culture is imagined, created and experienced.

From its 18th Century origins, Somerset House has played a central role in our society as a place where our culture and collective understanding of the world is shaped and defined. In 2000, it began its reinvention as a cultural powerhouse and home for arts and culture today, creating unique and stimulating experiences for the public, bringing them into direct contact with ideas from the greatest artists, makers and thinkers of our time. Our distinctive and dynamic year-round programme spans the contemporary arts in all its forms, from cutting-edge exhibitions and installations to annual festivals, seasonal events in the courtyard including Film4 Summer Screen, Summer Series and Skate, and an extensive learning and engagement programme.

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12 June– 8 September 2019

As well as welcoming over 3million visitors annually, Somerset House houses the largest and most diverse creative communities in the country – from one-person start-ups to successful creative enterprises including MOBO, British Fashion Council, Dance Umbrella, Improbable Theatre, Hofesh Shechter Company, and Dartmouth Films.

In 2016 we launched Somerset House Studios – a new experimental workspace connecting artists, makers and thinkers with audiences. Currently housing over 80 artists and Makerversity (a community of over 250 emergent makers), the Studios are a platform for the development of new creative projects and collaboration, promoting work that pushes bold ideas, engages with urgent issues and pioneers new technologies. www.somersethouse.org.uk

ABOUT CHARLES RUSSELL SPEECHLYS

Charles Russell Speechlys works with clients in the UK and throughout the world. Our lawyers are based in 11 locations across the UK, Europe, Asia and the Middle East and through each of these locations clients are able to access the full range of the firm's skills and expertise.

We have a broad range of skills and experience across the full spectrum of business and personal needs. This gives us a wider perspective, clear insight and a strongly commercial long-term view.

It has made us a leader in the world of dynamic growth and family businesses, and among the world's leading creators and owners of private wealth and their families. Major corporates and institutions find our more considered and personal approach a refreshing alternative to conventional business law firms.