

SOMERSET HOUSE PRESS RELEASE



Autumn-Winter 2016-17 at Somerset House

- ***Hair by Sam McKnight***, a major exhibition on the celebrated fashion hairstylist
- ***Skate at Somerset House with Fortnum & Mason***
- ***Björk Digital***, an immersive virtual reality experience from the Icelandic icon
- **UTOPIA 2016**, the year-long programme continues with the inaugural London Design Biennale

SEASONAL HIGHLIGHTS:



Hair by Sam McKnight [2 November 2016-12 March August 2017]

Embankment Galleries, £12.50, concessions £10

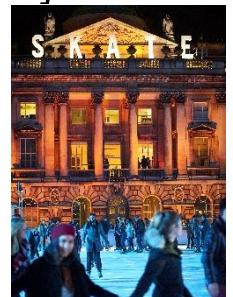
A major exhibition celebrating the remarkable 40-year career of the master hairstylist Sam McKnight, from the late 1970s to the current day. *Hair by Sam McKnight* will feature pieces from McKnight's extensive archive, including photography, magazines, catwalk and behind-the-scenes footage, private photographs and full outfit looks as well as commissioned wigs and hairpieces. An integral part of the fashion industry, Sam has been instrumental in helping to develop the images of Kate Moss, Naomi Campbell and Princess Diana, among many others. This exhibition will unveil the little-known creative process behind the craft of hair styling within fashion and explore the relationships between McKnight and key, long-term collaborators.

Skate at Somerset House with Fortnum & Mason [17 November 2016- 15 January 2017]

The Edmond J. Safra Fountain Court, Tickets start £7.50 (+booking fee)

On sale from 15 September: www.somerset-house.org.uk/Skate

Skate at Somerset House with Fortnum & Mason returns in November, signalling the start of the festive season. The courtyard at Somerset House will be transformed into the ultimate winter destination with stylish skating, lively late-night entertainment, gourmet food and drinks, and opportunities for Christmas shopping. On selected nights across the season, the ice-rink becomes a dancefloor after dark with top DJs from international music and festival scenes providing a soundtrack from a rink-side booth. For those eager to learn, weekend lessons are on offer at the Skate School. Off the ice, Fortnum & Mason will fill the West Wing of Somerset House with their one-stop shopping pop-up and cosy, alpine-themed lodge.



Björk Digital [until 23 October 2016]

New Wing, £15, concessions £12.50

Somerset House presents the European premiere of *Björk Digital*, an exhibition of digital and video works resulting from Björk's collaborations with some of the finest visual artists and programmers in the world. The exhibition invites visitors to engage with Björk's work through the latest in virtual reality (VR) technology. Björk believes that by offering a private theatrical experience, VR provides a unique way to connect with her audiences. Somerset House's edition of the *Björk Digital* exhibition includes never-before-seen work by Björk. There will also be an interactive educational space which showcases the innovative apps and custom-made musical instruments from *Biophilia*, an app created by Björk that explores music, nature and technology.



London Design Biennale [until 27 September 2016]

Site-wide, £15, concessions £9.50 (+booking fee)

The first London Design Biennale takes place at Somerset House, bringing design installations and exhibitions from 37 of the world's nations to the heart of the capital. Designers Edward Barber & Jay Osgerby have worked alongside the V&A to create *Forecast* - a wind powered installation which is displayed in the Edmond J. Safra Fountain Court as the UK's entry. *Forecast* responds to the inaugural Biennale's theme 'Utopia by Design'; a celebration of the 500th anniversary of the publication of Thomas More's inspirational text, as part of Somerset House's UTOPIA 2016 season.



ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS:

The Singing Bridge [9-25 September 2016]

New Wing, free

The Singing Bridge is a brand new work by composer and artist Claudia Molitor, created as part of the Totally Thames festival. The 40-minute musical experience features new compositions by Molitor, with contributions from drum and synth duo AK/DK, folk band Stick in the Wheel and poet SJ Fowler. Headsets will be available to collect from Somerset House, which guide visitors along Waterloo Bridge and its surrounding paths to discover the bridge's social history and give time to consider our relationship to the structure and its environs.



1:54 African Art Fair [6-9 October 2016]

East, West & South Galleries, £15, concessions £10

The leading international art fair dedicated to contemporary African art returns Somerset House for its fourth edition in London. 1:54 will showcase carefully selected and diverse presentations by 40 galleries from 18 countries, including 17 galleries who are exhibiting at the London fair for the first time in 2016. 1:54 London 2016 will be accompanied by an educational and artistic programme, FORUM, curated by Koyo Kouoh and will include lectures, film screenings and panel discussions with international curators, artists and art professionals.

Malick Sidibé: The Eye of Modern Mali [6 October 2016-15 January 2017]

South Wing, free

Somerset House and 1:54, in collaboration with MAGNIN-A Gallery, Paris, present *Malick Sidibé* the first major solo exhibition in the UK of the late Malian photographer. Sidibé is known for his black-and-white images chronicling the lives and culture of the Malian capital, Bamako, in the wake of the country's independence. His images capture the essence of joie de vivre – the energy and exuberance of young, newly independent Africans, experiencing an era of significant social and cultural change. The exhibition will present 45 original prints from the 1960s and 1970s.



Druids in the Deadhouse [28 October 2016]

The Deadhouse, £10

As winner of the Museums at Night 2016 'Connect!' competition, Somerset House will host an evening of druidic activity programmed by artist Bedwyr Williams. Activities will include an Iron-Age open mic night and stand-up, with pagan-inspired cocktails and nibbles available. Participants will get into the spirit by donning druidic robes and fake beards.

Utopia Treasury [year-round]

Great Arch Hall, free entry

The Utopia Treasury has been open throughout the year and continues to host a rolling programme of talks, workshops and salons as part of Somerset House's *UTOPIA 2016: A Year of Imagination and Possibility*. The Treasury includes a library of utopia-themed literature and a CD jukebox of songs charting the histories of progressive democratic movements and ideas.



LEARNING & PARTICIPATION:

Somerset House presents a diverse range of learning and participation events throughout the year aimed at all ages. The programme includes talks, screenings and workshops that often coincide with the rich cultural programme of exhibitions and public projects at Somerset House.

A Naked Mole Rat Eutopia

10–16 October 2016

Utopia Treasury, Great Arch Hall, free, drop-in

Naked mole-rats are eusocial animals living an altruistic and cooperative lifestyle, with all other community members help to raise the young, provide food and protect the home – arguably a utopian lifestyle. Artist Julie Freeman presents animations and artwork 'powered' by live data from a naked mole-rat colony that raise questions such as, "is our society becoming eusocial?", and "in a eusocial human society what would relationships, economics, religions and politics look like?."

Bjork Biophilia Educational Project – Student Sessions

Tuesday 18th- Saturday 22nd October

New Wing

Spaces Limited, booking essential: learningbookings@somersetshouse.org.uk

Student groups ages 14+ are invited to partake in interactive workshops exploring the cross curricular opportunities where music, technology and the natural sciences interact in innovative ways. Sessions will be guided by Bjork's Biophilia app technology, with an added opportunity to explore the visual, sound and VR experience of the exhibition.

Wild Life Drawing: Halloween Special - Wolves

Monday 24th October 2016, 11.00 – 13.00 & 14.00 – 16.00

New Wing, £30 (joint ticket for 1 adult + 1 child, 8 -12 years old to attend)

During October half-term, Wild Life Drawing will be hosting a special Halloween drawing event for families at Somerset House, where the models will be wolves. Drawing tutor Jennie Webber will be leading the class and offering artistic guidance. Expert animal handlers will also be teaching the class about their unique characteristics, their origins and the current conservation issues facing wolves in the wild.

How to Change the World with John-Paul Flintoff

Tuesday, 25 October 2016, 19.00- 20.30

The Screening Room, £5

This interactive talk, led by The School of Life faculty member John-Paul Flintoff, discusses the commonly-held desire to lead a meaningful life and aims to provide inspiration, a healthy dose of realism and the practical tools to make a difference.

Wild Life Drawing: Druidic Special

Thursday 27 October 2016, 18.30 - 20.30

New Wing, £25

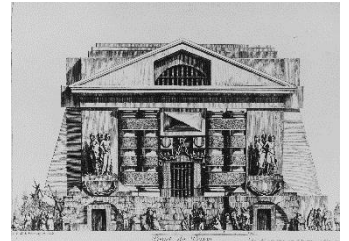
Coinciding with the 'Druids in the Deadhouse' event, Wild Life Drawing will be hosting a Druidic special drawing class with hawks, owls and snakes.

FROM OUR NEIGHBOURS:

A Civic Utopia: France, 1760 - 1840 [8 October 2016-8 January 2017]

The Courtauld Gallery

This display considers the place of architecture in establishing the notion of public life, bringing together an outstanding selection of architectural drawings of public buildings and spaces. If utopia is defined as the imagining of a comprehensive ideal system or pattern of civil organisation, then we can see this French vision as utopian, with public places and buildings functioning to encourage the moral character of society.



ENDS

For press enquiries please contact press@somersetshouse.org.uk or 0207 845 4624

Notes to Editors:

Opening Hours: 10am – 6pm daily. Select late night openings – see website for details.

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

Transport: ☉ Temple, Embankment ➡ Charing Cross, Waterloo, Blackfriars

Website: www.somersetshouse.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/SomersetHouse

Twitter: @SomersetHouse

Instagram: @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 probably 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.