

**SOMERSET
HOUSE**

PRESS RELEASE

**SOMERSET
HOUSE
STUDIOS**

SOMERSET HOUSE STUDIOS WINTER SEASON

The winter season now includes:

- **Victoria Sin will be in conversation with curator Taylor Le Melle for Grounding Practice - a series exploring the sustainability of artistic practices**
- **Hyper Functional, Ultra Healthy returns with Florence Peake, Leah Clements, Natasha Trotman, Rowdy SS, Stine Deja and Vivienne Griffin exploring the concept and practice of wellness**
- **Gallery 31: I Should Be Doing Something Else Right Now is the title of the second series for the permanent on site gallery space that platforms the creators and makers who have been working within the buildings walls. Maeve Brennan, Vivienne Griffin, rkss and Laura Fox, Rhea Storr, Sam Williams & Roly Porter will exhibit work from 23 January 2020 – 31 May 2020**
- **Somerset House Studios announce their new collaboration with Abandon Normal Devices Festival for a new co-commissioned audio-visual performance to premiere next May**
- **The Studios welcome new residents: Call & Response, Col Self, Comuzi, Akinola Davies Jr., Seth Pimlott, rkss and Sam Williams release information on their new rolling application process for upcoming studio spaces**



Grounding Practice: Victoria Sin
10 Dec 2019
18.45 - 20.30
£10.00

Grounding Practice is a new series of artists talks, exploring the sustainability of artistic practices and for the second edition, the Studios will welcome Victoria Sin in conversation with curator Taylor Le Melle.

This series is born from the understanding that while artistic practice is part of an art ecosystem tied to the rules of the competitive art market, artistic development is reflective and investigative. In this series, invited artists discuss the sustainability of their practices, their inspiration and how they navigate, negotiate and contribute to the contemporary contexts in which they're making work.

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Victoria Sin is an artist using speculative fiction within performance, moving image, writing, and print to interrupt normative processes of desire, identification, and objectification. Drawing from close personal encounters of looking and wanting, their work presents heavily constructed fantasy narratives on the often unsettling experience of the physical within the social body.

In 2019 alone Sin has presented works as part of the following work: *Age of You*, MOCA, Toronto; *Kiss My Genders*, Hayward Gallery, London; *Meetings on Art*, Venice Biennale, Venice; *BCE*, Whitechapel Gallery, London; *Art Basel*, Hong Kong.

Taylor Le Melle is a curator and writer. Recent writing has been published in *Art Monthly*, *Flash Art*, *Sad Sack Che si può fare*, and *Gender:Space*. As PSS, Taylor has co-published *Dream Babes Zine 1 & 2* (Victoria Sin), *Tongues* (Rehana Zaman) and *Subversive Economies* (Daniella Valz Gen). Taylor is a member of artist workers' cooperative not/nowhere, and was 2019 Curator-In-Residence at Wysing Arts Centre, where they have organised an exhibition, *Boundary + Gesture*, opening October 2019.



Hyper Functional, Ultra Healthy
Florence Peake, Leah Clements, Natasha Trotman, Rowdy SS, Stine Deja, Vivienne Griffin

13 Jan - 09 Feb 2020

Events ticketed individually / Pay What You Can

Hyper Functional, Ultra Healthy is a programme of six newly commissioned artworks that respond to the idea of wellness, described as the optimization of mental and physical wellbeing.

Time and again we find we cannot measure up to impossible demands, frustrating ourselves. Those who do not or cannot conform to wellness culture risk the contempt of those on its tyrannical treadmill.

Hyper Functional, Ultra Healthy takes place during January and February to coincide with the final weeks of Somerset House's landmark exhibition *24/7* and to quell pressures around any New Year's resolutions. The programme asks us to reconsider well-being in new and unexpected ways, a refreshing antidote to the vast wellness industry that has fuelled societal pressures to conform, often creating an unrealistic and anxiety-inducing desire to be healthy, happy and productive.

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PROGRAMME

Vivienne Griffin: UN-NOW

16 January 2020

18.45 – 20.00

Workshop - Pay What You Can (Spaces Limited)

UN-NOW is a group workshop where voices are digitally modified in unison to explore dissonance, vocal fry, polyphonic harmonies, speaking in tongues, drone, noise and fake laughter. Echo effects, vocal harmony pedals and auto-tune will be used as methods for transcending the self to merge with the other.

Florence Peake: CAVE

30 January 2020

19:00 - 20.30

Pay What You Can

There is a tidal cave on the Jurassic Coast, South West England. It is a site of retreat and refuge from the world for only 3 hours before it is again submerged by the Atlantic. A place of dark, wet sanctuary, Peake considers the cave a lover. This intimate performance recalls her encounters with the cave and the existential immersion it offers her.

Leah Clements: Hyperbaric

04 February 2020

19:00 - 20.30

Pay What You Can

Leah Clements presents a performance developed from research at a hyperbaric chamber to think about the psychological architecture of spaces of care. Taking this as its basis, Clements will develop the performance by working with people who have spent time living in a confined environment with other people for medical reasons, to think about care and consent, unchosen community, and the environments in which these are sited.

Natasha Trotman: Subset/Reset

13 January - 9 February 2020

Online

Subset/Reset unpacks and reframes the sensorial world from neuro-divergent perspectives. Neuro-divergence is used to describe non-pathological variation in the human brain that can affect sociability, learning, attention, mood and other mental functions.

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Using everyday lived experiences, the film reveals neuro-normative bias in everyday life and asks what we might learn about our behaviour from other neuro types than our own.

Rowdy SS

G16

13 January – 09 February 2020

Pay What You Can

A sound installation that synthesises the ceaseless urban noise of London to create a new soundscape of refuge and respite.

London is noisy; sirens, drilling, honking, shouting, the endless grind of traffic. The Tube. From stress, to heart disease to type 2 diabetes, research suggests noise pollution creates problems for people's health.

For 10 years Rowdy SS has been recording London's damaging noise, in this new work he remixes this archive to create a soundscape for healing.



Stine Deja: Untitled

New Wing Screen

13 January – 09 February 2020

FREE

It's the year 21020 and a mysterious archaeological site has been uncovered. A communal space dedicated purely to the expending of calories. We would recognise it as a gym, our descendants however, are baffled.

By framing the western 21st century obsession with physical fitness as a mysterious practice that requires decoding, Deja's 'documentary' film reveals the absurdities of our preoccupation with ourselves.

Makerversity: Re-Wiring Wellness

22 & 23 February 2019

Ticketed/FREE

Makerversity, a pioneering community of maker businesses at Somerset House, explores how we can challenge technology's social impact on health, wellness and human interaction and will seek to answer questions such as how can we co-make collaborative and inclusive tech which solves these issues. The weekend programme will explore ethics and solutions related to smart health tech through a range of showcases, debates and workshops exploring themes of wellbeing, education, sexual health and how we can change the health-tech narrative for the better.

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Contributors will include [Feeliom](#), [Troglo](#), [Hetco](#), [Studio Lära](#) and [Shelley James](#). Full programme to be announced.

The Body Series: To the UNKNOWN

28 March 2020

14:00 – 17:30

£8.00

The Body Series is a new programme of four events focused on the exploration of feminism, sexuality and expression through text, movement and sound.

For this edition of The Body Series, A--Z an exploratory curatorial platform produced by Anne Duffau, examines the gaze on the 'other' and its representation, its definition for new possibilities through sci-fi narratives and alternative technologies. To the UNKNOWN will unfold through discussions, performances, and screenings that aim to challenge imperialistic and biased histories – asking how we create a platform to question and defy the norm.

Taking the formula of the alphabet, A--Z uses words related to the idea of decay as a starting point to map out and test various unstable potentials. one Letter, one experiment, twenty-six times.



Gallery 31: I Should Be Doing Something Else Right Now

Maeve Brennan, Vivienne Griffin, rkss & Laura Fox, Rhea Storr, Sam Williams & Roly Porter

G31, New Wing

23 January 2020 – 31 May 2020

Mon, Tue, Sat & Sun 10.00-18.00

Wed - Fri 11.00-20.00

FREE

Gallery 31 is a new permanent exhibition space dedicated to profiling the Somerset House Studios community and work developed through residencies. With a rolling programme and a different theme each season, Gallery 31 presents a curated selection of new commissions alongside existing and in-progress works.

Entitled *I Should Be Doing Something Else Right Now*, Somerset House Studios presents the second season of its new permanent exhibition space, Gallery 31. In our current state of acceleration, change seems to have become the very basis of existence and an operational model for modern life.

Bringing together digital collage, print material, sound and sculpture *I Should Be Doing Something Else Right Now* explores the idea of change and its transformative or violent power through dynamic layered compositions.

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In **Sam Williams'** and **Roly Porter's** newly commissioned film *Salvage Rhythms*, they pick up where their AGM performance left off. The film collages together sound and movement from the performance of the same title with original and found footage; animation and photography to create a dense and decaying compost of human and non-human entanglement.

This commission is supported by The Adonyeva Foundation.

Vivienne Griffin's sculptural compositions look at the power in changing oneself; playing with the superficiality of self-obsession through self-reflection, whilst also looking towards it as a powerful tool, as a solution.

rkss and **Laura Fox** use their sad girl remixes and AR to specifically explore the relationship to gender identity as a complex set of experiences and systems that interrelate, while questioning how we uphold and benefit from the gender binary.

Works from **Rhea Storr** and **Maeve Brennan** talk to each other about the relation between images and structural change: is the ritual of editing images and layering or replicating publicly accessible content an act of power and resistance or an act of violence?



Abandon Normal Devices x Somerset House Studios Open Call

Deadline: 11 December 2019, 12.00

<https://www.somerset-house.org.uk/somerset-house-studios/abandon-normal-devices-x-somerset-house-studios-open-call>

Abandon Normal Devices (AND) and Somerset House Studios are excited to work together in commissioning a new live audio-visual performance responding to the site and themes of AND Festival 2020. For the 9th edition, AND takes to the water exploring the global trade gateway of the Manchester Ship Canal and River Mersey and the rich themes of the site related to water, industry, global trade and the intersection between climate change and feminism.

This resulting work will be a flagship AND Festival 2020 commission presented as part of an evening programme of sound and visual performances in May 2020 and will also be presented at Somerset House Studios in London as part of a programme exploring image, sound and digital art in June 2020.

Somerset House Studios and Abandon Normal Devices share a joint ambition to support experimental work across disciplines, and to connect a network of artists beyond the duration of any residency or festival. Together they co-commissioned [Taut Line](#), a multi-channel sound installation created by electronic composer and artist Beatrice Dillon in a residency in Peak

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Cavern during AND Festival 2017 which was performed at the Deadhouse at Somerset House later that year.

Rolling Applications for Somerset House Studios

<https://www.somerset-house.org.uk/somerset-house-studios-apply>

Following a full refurbishment of Somerset House Studios, studio space will become available on a more ad hoc basis with residencies ending at different stages. Complete our brief expression of interest application if you are interested in joining the Somerset House Studios community and would like to be contacted when a particular space becomes available.

New Somerset House Studios Residents

Call & Response

An agency interested in the power of immersive sound to realise emotionally compelling music, sound art and design, Call & Response work with multimedia artists, designers, musicians and architects to create a sense of presence through sonic immersivity.

Col Self

Col is completing the work for her PhD; Rituals of the Capitalocene: Navigating the Contemporary Moment Through Emergent Material Practices. This is led by her practice, which uses ritual as a means to imagine lines of flight through the present neoliberal condition.

Comuzi

Comuzi is a design invention studio who work with inventive companies to explore, imagine and prototype future-forward creative concepts for human-centered technology.

Akinola Davies Jr.

Akinola Davies Jr. is a moving images artist living and working in London. His practices centre around the foundation of community and inclusivity, establishing a necessity for clear intent in concepts whilst experimenting with form.

Seth Pimlott

Seth Pimlott is an artist and filmmaker and recent RCA graduate making experimental narrative films that he develops through a workshop process.

rkss

rkss aka Robin Buckley, is a London based producer, performer and DJ. Their work explores the politics and aesthetics of club culture, technology and queerness.

Sam Williams

Sam Williams is a visual artist working in moving image, installation and performance.

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FULL EVENT LISTINGS

NOVEMBER

Gallery 31: BONDS - Featuring Laura Grace Ford, Anna Mikkola, Imran Perretta, Hannah Perry, Nick Ryan and Flora Yin-Wong.
06 Sep 2019 - 05 Jan 2020
Mon, Tue, Sat & Sun 10.00-18.00
Wed - Fri 11.00-20.00
FREE

Bonds is the title of the first season of the permanent gallery space dedicated to showcasing the Studios community and work developed through our residencies.

24/7
31 Oct 2019 - 23 Feb 2020
Mon, Tue, Sat & Sun 10.00-18.00
Wed - Fri 11.00-20.00
£14.00 / £11.00 CONCESSIONS

A major exhibition exploring the non-stop nature of modern lives.

The Body Series: New Suns
16 Nov 2019
14.00 - 17.30
£8

The Body Series is a new programme of four events focused on the exploration of feminism, sexuality and expression through text, movement and sound. The first event in the series will be in collaboration with New Suns, a feminist curatorial and storytelling project founded by Sarah Shin.

DECEMBER

Grounding Practice: Victoria Sin
18.45 - 20.30
10 Dec 2019, £10

The second in the series invites artist Victoria Sin in conversation with Taylor Le Melle.

JANUARY

Hyper Functional, Ultra Healthy
Florence Peake, Leah Clements, Natasha Trotman, Rowdy SS, Stine Deja, Vivienne Griffin
13 Jan - 09 Feb 2020
Events ticketed individually / Pay What You Can

Hyper Functional, Ultra Healthy is a programme of six specially commissioned artworks that will explore the concept and practice of wellness.

GALLERY 31: I SHOULD BE DOING SOMETHING ELSE RIGHT NOW
Maeve Brennan, Vivienne Griffin, rkss & Laura Fox, Rhea Storr, Sam Williams & Roly Porter
G31, New Wing
23 January 2020 - 31 May 2020
Mon, Tue, Sat & Sun 10.00-18.00
Wed - Fri 11.00-20.00
FREE

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MARCH

The Body Series: To the UNKNOWN

28 March 2020

14.00 - 17.30

£8.00

The Body Series is a new programme of four events focused on the exploration of feminism, sexuality and expression through text, movement and sound curated by A--Z.

FOR PRESS ENQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT:

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

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

Somerset House Studios Twitter: @sh_studios_

Somerset House Studios Instagram:

@somersethousestudios

NOTES TO EDITORS

Note to editors - please find the biographies of the artists [here](#).

ABOUT SOMERSET HOUSE

London's working arts centre

Somerset House is London's working arts centre and home to the UK's largest creative community. Built on historic foundations, we are situated in the very heart of the capital.

Dedicated to backing progress, championing openness, nurturing creativity and empowering ideas, our cultural programme is ambitious in scope. We insist on relevance, but aren't afraid of irreverence, and are as keen on entertainment as enrichment. We embrace the biggest issues of our times and are committed to oxygenating new work by emerging artists. Where else can you spend an hour ice-skating while listening to a specially commissioned sound piece by a cutting-edge artist?

It is this creative tension—the way we harness our heritage, put the too-often overlooked on our central stage and use our neo-classical backdrop to showcase ground-breaking contemporary culture—that inspires our programme. Old and new, history and disruption, art and entertainment, high-tech and homemade, combined with the fact that we are home to a constantly shape-shifting working creative community: this is our point of difference. It is what we are proud of. And it is what makes the experience of visiting or working in Somerset House inspiring and energizing, urgent and exciting.