

EARTH DAY 2020 AT SOMERSET HOUSE PRESS RELEASE

Wednesday 22 April – Wednesday 20 May 2020



As part of its **year-round commitment to environmental sustainability**, Somerset House celebrates the **50th anniversary of Earth Day**, a worldwide event on 22 April to champion transformative environmental action. Bringing together artists and designers who are contributing to the urgent effort to address the current ecological crisis, Somerset House invites visitors to experience **free interactive events online**, interrogating how art and culture can inspire positive change in society's relationship with nature.

Highlights include:

- **Specially designed online DIY workshops** created by **acclaimed British fashion designer Bethany Williams** invite audiences to create a flag using materials at home to share messages to future generations, drawing attention to the climate crisis as part of her **All Our Children** commission
- **Live Q&A** with **Bethany Williams** and Somerset House curator **Karishma Rafferty** explores how Williams' creative practice drives positive societal and environmental action
- A series of **live online sessions** presented by Somerset House and **Fashion Open Studio** explore the future of sustainable fashion with leading designers, forming part of **Fashion Revolution Week**
- **Family-friendly online workshops** celebrate the kingdom of fungi, inspired by the acclaimed exhibition ***Mushrooms: The Art, Design and Future of Fungi*** which Somerset House hopes to reopen to the public later this year

Somerset House and its public exhibitions and events are currently closed. Somerset House is working hard with artistic collaborators and producing partners to be able to share its cultural programme online, and over the coming weeks there will be opportunities for audiences to participate in a range of digital events, with *Earth Day 2020* as one of the highlights. Further details to be announced soon.

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All Our Children by Bethany Williams

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- **Flag DIY Workshops:** 22 April, 6 May, 20 May

- **Live Q&A:** 22 April, 12.00

- **Raise Your Flag:** 22 April

British fashion designer **Bethany Williams**, winner of the **2019 British Emerging Talent Menswear category at The Fashion Awards** and the **Queen Elizabeth II Award for Design**, joins Somerset House's Earth Day programme to

develop and launch a **new fashion collection** and **flag commission**, entitled ***All Our Children***. Ahead of the physical launch of the project at Somerset House (postponed, new date TBC), Williams has developed a **series of online DIY workshops** which audiences can follow at home at their leisure, drawing attention to how sustainable creative practices can drive positive societal and environmental action.

Launching on Earth Day (22 April) and running each fortnight until late May, visitors to the Somerset House website are invited to follow Williams' ***All Our Children*** blogs to discover how to create their own flag at home, alongside creative skills including embroidery and printmaking. As in all of the designer's acclaimed collections, which use recycled, organic or handmade materials, Williams encourages audiences to get creative with the clothes and fabrics they can find and reuse at home. Participants are invited to consider how they'd transform society's relationship with the planet to better protect it for future generations, who will be the worst affected by climate breakdown, using their flag as a platform to share their wishes or words of wisdom.

Somerset House also invites participants to share images of their sustainable creations and messages on Earth Day on social media with @somersethouse using the #AllOurChildren hashtag, in a collective **Raise Your Flag** moment, drawing attention to the climate crisis and reaching audiences across the world. Works shared by the public will inform Williams' research process, contributing towards her new ***All Our Children*** fashion collection, which will launch later in the year.

Audiences of all ages are also invited to a **special live Q&A with Bethany Williams** on Earth Day, led by Somerset House curator, **Karishma Rafferty**. The event investigates Williams' innovative and inclusive creative practice, which places both environmental justice and social responsibility at its core. Alongside instructions for flag-making at home, the event offers exclusive insight into the ***All Our Children*** commission and Williams' ongoing collaboration with the **Magpie Project**, a charity based in Newham providing safety and support for mothers and under-fives suffering in temporary or insecure accommodation. *Kindly supported by The Adonyeva Foundation.*

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[Mindful Mushrooms Collage Workshop](#)

Thursday 23 April

Artist and *Mushrooms* contributor, **Seana Gavin** invites families to **discover the art of collage** in an exclusive blog created for Earth Day 2020 at Somerset House. Inspired by her cut-and-paste creations which transform old magazines, newspapers, books and archive material into spectacularly surreal artworks, the online workshop features a range of instructive videos and images to help families create their own collage pieces, using a range of materials found at home, saved from the tip for imaginative, artistic reuse. *Kindly supported by the Gaia Art Foundation.*



[Grow Your Own Mushrooms](#)

Friday 24 April

Edible Utopia's Mycologist in Residence **Darren Springer** presents a special online workshop to equip participants with the skills needed to start their own mini mushroom farm. The family-friendly blog encourages audiences to get hands-on with the kingdom of fungi offering step-by-step instructions on how to grow their own fledgling fungi to nurture at home, including helpful videos and images. Suitable for all ages, Springer invites audiences

to celebrate the power of mushrooms and discover the integral role they play in the world's ecosystem. *Edible Utopia is kindly supported by the City Bridge Trust.*



[Fashion Open Studio x Somerset House](#)

14.00-16.00

Saturday 25 April

Somerset House and **Fashion Open Studio** present a series of inspiring talks and workshops from innovative designers including **Bethany Williams**, bold knitwear designer **Katie Jones**, anonymous collective **CONGREGATION design** and **Paolo Carzana**,

named as one of five designers leading the #PositiveFashion showroom at London Fashion Week 2019. Forming part of **Fashion Revolution Week's #whomademyclothes campaign** and Somerset House's **Creative Careers** initiative which supports young people looking to enter the creative sector, the online event invites those pursuing a career in fashion to discover how they can join a new generation of ethical, sustainable designers, led by fashion journalist and editor **Tamsin Blanchard** and Fashion Revolution co-founder **Orsola de Castro**.

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Sustainability at Somerset House

London's working arts centre, Somerset House is actively responding to environmental issues both through the practical management of the Grade I listed historical site and thematically as part of our year-round cultural programme. By working together with visitors and the 2600+ resident creative community, we are committed to collectively reducing our impact on the planet. Somerset House has been awarded a 4 star rating in recognition for its environmental commitment, understanding and improvement in the Julie's Bicycle Creative Green Awards. For more information, visit www.somersethouse.org.uk/sustainability

FOR PRESS ENQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT:

press@somersethouse.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.somersethouse.org.uk

Somerset House Facebook:

www.facebook.com/SomersetHouse

Somerset House Twitter: @SomersetHouse

Somerset House Instagram: @SomersetHouse

Hashtag: #EarthDaySH #AllOurChildren

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. somersethouse.org.uk

ABOUT *MUSHROOMS: THE ART, DESIGN AND FUTURE OF FUNGI*

PART OF THE CHARLES RUSSELL SPEECHLYS TERRACE ROOMS SERIES

Somerset House invites visitors to explore the fascinating world of mushrooms in a new exhibition from curator and writer, Francesca Gavin. Through the work of 35 artists, designers and musicians, *Mushrooms: The Art, Design and Future of Fungi* celebrates the rich legacy and incredible potential of the remarkable organism, the ideas it inspires in the poetic, spiritual and psychedelic, and the powerful promise it offers to reimagine society's relationship with the planet, inspiring new thinking around design and architecture.

ABOUT THE CHARLES RUSSELL SPEECHLYS TERRACE ROOM SERIES

The Charles Russell Speechlys Terrace Room Series of free exhibitions profiles the work of living artists in one of the most accessible spaces at Somerset House, bringing the public into contact with a diverse and engaging range of creative thinkers. The series provides a platform for artists to develop and amplify the messages within their practice and engage openly with Somerset House's visitors. Every exhibition in the Charles Russell Speechlys Terrace Room series is free and contributes to our on-going commitment to public access and engagement with arts and culture.

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***MUSHROOMS* IS SUPPORTED BY BEAUTY AND WELLNESS PARTNER ORIGINS**

Powered by nature and proven by science – Origins combines the highest-quality plant, earth and sea-based ingredients with non-toxic-to-skin alternatives and advanced science to create safe, high-performance skincare, bath & body and makeup products that deliver visible results. Origins believes it's the brand's responsibility to give back to nature and strives to make choices that help reduce our overall impact on the planet. Origins #GreenThePlanet campaign supports reforestation projects and greening initiatives around the world, whilst the 'Return to Origins' beauty recycling scheme recycles any beauty empties from any cosmetics brand, at select Origins counters nationwide. Learn more at origins.co.uk/origins-mission and join the conversation @OriginsUK.