

SOMERSET HOUSE PRESS RELEASE



Somerset House Studios

The first series of public events from Somerset House Studios

December 2016 – March 2017

- **Somerset House Studios – a new experimental workspace for multi-disciplinary artists at Somerset House – launches its first public programme**
- **A new strand to Somerset House's exhibitions and events led by resident artists**
- **Programme includes late night events, guest curations, performance, critical discussion and a series of artist-led day trips to unusual sites**

Somerset House Studios is proud to present the first of an ongoing series of public programmes, launching in December with a series of performance interventions from Fuel Theatre and Forest Fringe, and continuing throughout 2017.

In October, Somerset House launched their Studios by transforming former Inland Revenue offices into new affordable workspace for artists pushing bold ideas, engaging with urgent issues, pioneering new technologies, and collaborating as part of the multi-disciplinary community within the Studios.

As well as creating spaces which support the practice of today's most exciting artistic voices, Somerset House Studios also provides a public platform for their work and ideas. A more experimental strand to Somerset House's cultural programme, the Studios' public events will be driven by the artists in residence and the themes emerging from the work that they are making on site.

This December 2016 – March 2017 series is the first of many public programmes which will enable audiences to engage directly with this new generation of artists. Highlights include:

The Situation Room: Prejudice and Perception by Fuel, Thursday 8 December

Fuel Theatre, acclaimed artistic producers who have been based in Somerset House's West Wing since 2013, open *The Situation Room* on 8 December. Responding to a year of seismic events, *The Situation Room* will be a space for entertainment, debate and discussion where artists, musicians and academics can engage with urgent issues.

Hosted by **Nic Green**, best-known for *Trilogy*, audiences are invited to see short demonstrations and performances, share experiences and view art as it is created. The line-up includes **Jess Thom**, co-founder of Tourette's Hero, **Chardine Taylor-Stone**, drummer for Big Joanie, founder of Black Girl's Picnic and feminist activist who made Diva Magazine's LGBT Power List, visual artist **Phoebe Davis**, live scribing (illustrating the conversation as it happens) from **Hawk & Mouse**, plus conversations with academics in the field of psychology, neuroscience and sociology.

Forest Fringe at Somerset House Studios, Friday 9 – Sunday 11 December

Forest Fringe - pioneers of experimental performance at the Edinburgh Festival and beyond - will continue to mark their 10th anniversary with a weekend of performance, workshops and conversations in association with Somerset House Studios.

This weekend festival will invite participants to consider changes over the past decade since Forest Fringe began, and explore the themes of today. The programme includes **Liberate Tate**, the activist art collective, **Rima Najdi**, the Lebanese artist who dressed as a bomb on the streets of Beirut, **Season Butler**, the American performance artist who recently presented *Happiness Forgets*, a solo re-enactment of opening dances from all eight seasons of *The Cosby Show*, and Palestinian dancer and choreographer **Farah Saleh**. Run collaboratively by three artists including founder and Studios resident Deborah Pearson, Forest Fringe support a large and diverse community of independent artists working across theatre, dance and live art.

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Jennifer Walshe: Sound Salon, from Wednesday 18 January

Building on the online database of sound and music works launched with **Holly Herndon** in 2015, Somerset House Studios Associate Artist **Jennifer Walshe** will host a series of salons discussing music, sound, the internet and digital technologies. Co-curated by Infinite Music author **Adam Harper** and academic **Michael Waugh**, these monthly salons aim to fuel critical discussion, new vocabulary and analysis in sound and music, supporting communities and practitioners in these fields to understand how the internet, and new technology more broadly, is shaping the field. These events are produced in collaboration with Brunel University, London.

Anabasis to Dora – A series of excursions curated by Eloise Hawser, from Friday 27 January

Eloise Hawser, visual artist and Studios resident, will curate a series of excursions to unusual, industrial sites, museums and collections around the UK, many of which are rarely open to the public and, despite their pivotal roles in shaping both landscape and economy, are now largely forgotten spaces.

The first will take in two very different properties in South London - the **British Vintage Wireless and Television Museum** in Dulwich, the home of enthusiast Gerry Wells, who transformed his house into the UK's largest collection of vintage radios, televisions and radiograms dating back to the late 19th century, followed by the National Trust Property, **575 Wandsworth Road**. Its rich and striking interiors created by Kenyan-born polymath and British civil servant Khadambi Asalache, transform the house into something between home and a museum. Further trips in the series will be announced early 2017.

Shutters Down! curated by Warp Record's artist LoneLady, Saturday 25 February

As part of her residency in Somerset House Studios' Rifle Range, **LoneLady** brings the second edition of *Shutters Down!* from Manchester to London. An experimental club night celebrating urban wilderness and the repurposing of derelict space, *Shutters Down!* explores the inspiration and influences behind LoneLady's music, curated by the artist and with the line up to be announced. The event will take place in The Deadhouse at Somerset House, which is rarely accessible to the public. It is a subterranean space beneath the courtyard that houses a number of 17th-century gravestones from a former chapel located on the site.

Nocturnal City: The State of London Club Life, Saturday 11 March

From illegal warehouse parties and London's first queer Jewish club to algarave and the return of Leigh Bowery-style club kids with their audacious fashion, the city's underground scenes have always been progressive, pushing boundaries and challenging expectations. *Nocturnal City: The State of London Club Life* will celebrate London's club culture through a day of panel discussions, performances and partying. London club scenes continue to thrive and survive despite spiralling rents, stringent noise restrictions and the continuing drive for residential homes in the capital, proving its importance within contemporary culture.

Somerset House Studios, Artist-Led Workshops

Somerset House's Learning & Participation Team is working closely with resident artists to develop an ongoing programme of artist-led workshops designed to engage and inspire young people. Following a successful workshop for 16-21 year olds with a lesser exposure to the arts and cultural opportunities with digital studio **Werkflow**, Somerset House will run another series with **Eloise Hawser** in parallel to her *Anabasis to Dora* project. Eloise will work with participants to explore object, identity, and processes of manufacture and production, as well as planning exclusive off-site trip for them.

Ends

For press enquiries, please contact:

Stephanie Lilley, Acting Head of PR, on press@somersethouse.org.uk / 0207 845 4624

To view a film of the Somerset House Studios launch event: <https://youtu.be/74CnTS0u8Lk>

LISTINGS INFORMATION

Address: New Wing, 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

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Somerset House Instagram: @SomersetHouseLondon

Somerset House Studios Twitter: @SHStudiosLondon

Somerset House Studios Instagram: @somersethousestudios

Exhibition hashtag: #SomersetHouseStudios

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 one of 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.somersethouse.org.uk