



## Upgrade Yourself Festival powered by Squarespace

4-5 November 2022

Free

Lancaster and River Rooms, New Wing



After the success of the first ever and sold-out **Upgrade Yourself Festival powered by Squarespace** in June, the festival will return in **November 2022** for the second time. Taking place across two days at **Somerset House**, the home of cultural innovators, the festival will grant **16-24-year-olds** aspiring to break into creative sectors exclusive access to trailblazing industry experts via talks, workshops, and mentoring sessions. Guest Speakers from Somerset House and Squarespace's creative communities will share the tools, hacks and skills to manage navigating the creative industries, from finances and building your brand online and off, to burnout and self-care.

At the heart of the festival will be the main stage, hosting talks and Q&As, hosted by Foundation FM and Sky Arts Presenter **Suprina**, from leading creative talent and industry heavyweights that are experts on industries ranging from publishing and social media to photography and television. Photographer **Ashley Verse** (4 November), whose clients include musicians Skepta and Mabel, as well as brands Nike, Levis and Adidas will discuss making the transition to being a fulltime freelance creative, whilst author, campaigner and founder of **F\*ck Being Humble**, **Stefanie Sword-Williams** (4 November), will offer insights into the art of self-promotion. Youth-led media platform dedicated to emerging and underrepresented creatives **GUAP** join the line-up with a panel talk on the topic of staying true to your community whilst embracing new clients and opportunities featuring **Jide Adetunji** (GUAP), **Clarice Metzger** (The Yard) and **Pip Jameison** (The Dots) (4 November). TikTok comedian and content creator whose built a following of over a million with his self-shot video sketches, **Kyron Hamilton**, will discuss the art of successful DIY content creation (4 November).

The festival will also host talks focused on more challenging, and sometimes taboo, aspects of navigating a creative career, including finance and mental health. **Run the Check** (5 November), the grassroots online platform dedicated to spotlighting paid opportunities in the creative industries will present a creative crash course in figuring it out whilst still paying the bills. **Camille Lesforis** from **The Black Wellbeing Collective** (4-5 November), a digital mental health and wellbeing service that prioritises the lived experiences of the Black community and graduate of the **Somerset House Black Business Incubator** (BBI), will discuss burn out and self-care. Financial adviser and TV presenter featured on BBC One, Channel 4 and ITV, **Emmanuel Asuquo** (4 November), will explore questions big and small about navigating the journey towards financial independence. Whilst money expert, finance coach and author signed to **Merky Books** (publishing house founded by Stormzy and Penguin Random House) **Bola Sol** (5 November) will discuss financial literacy and empowerment for emerging and aspiring creatives.

Alongside this the mainstage will feature audience Q&As with writer, artist, poet, visual storyteller and **Somerset House Studios'** resident **Tyreis Holder** (5 November), presenter, creative director and broadcaster **Zooey Gleaves/Lagoon Femshayma** (5 November), self-published, intersectional feminist fashion and culture publication **Polyester Zine** (5 November), and BBI graduate social platform that connects emerging creatives with industry experts in music **LOOP** (4 November).

In addition to live talks, 1:1 mentoring will be available throughout the festival from photography production and studio space **GAS Studios** (4-5 November), pioneering creative hub, streetwear brand and BBI alumni **Trashgxng** (4-5 November), former BBC head of photography **Jason Baron** (5 November) as well as artists and musicians including **INTALEKT** (4-5 November), **Enorê** (4-5 November), **Sam Williams** (4-5 November) and **Lucia Barsegian** (4-5 November). In addition, there will be the opportunity for mentoring sessions with main stage speakers including **Stef Sword Williams**, **Emmanuel Asuquo**, **Bola Sol**, **Camille Lesforis** and **Ashley Verse**.

Beyond the mainstage, a range of workshops will take place across the festival, including building your online brand with **Squarespace** (5 November), zine building with **Polyester Zine** (4-5 November) and funding personal creative practice with **Somerset House's fundraising team** (4 November).

Throughout the festival attendees will have the chance to have a professional head shot taken by London-based fashion photographer **Courtney Hugh Campbell** (4-5 November). There will also be a live jobs board displaying the latest paid opportunities in the creative sector, with drop-in sessions where attendees can get advice and support to help draft their own applications.

Delicious refreshments will be provided for free from buffalo chicken shop **Wingstop**, California and Hawaiian inspired restaurant **Poké House**, gourmet vegan sweet brand **Candy Kittens** and sustainable social enterprise and drinks brand **Karma Drinks**.

London based DJ and podcast presenter, **VERSATILE** will be soundtracking activities as resident festival DJ.

**Upgrade Yourself Festival** is part of the wider **Engagement and Skills** programme, which is designed in response to the specific challenges faced by young people entering the creative sectors. This includes London Living Wage paid **Industry Placements** hosted by creative enterprises based at Somerset House and **Upgrade Yourself Live**, a series of monthly interactive talks that unpick alternative career pathways in the creative industries taking place in front of a live audience and streamed live online.

Somerset House prioritises using its own distinctive creative ecosystem to nurture new talent from those who are underrepresented and underserved in the cultural sector. From the **Future Producers** and **Upgrade Yourself to Somerset House Studios Residencies**, the **Black Business Incubator** and **Exchange Bursaries**, the ambition is to develop the widest span of creative talent across community, sector, race, gender, age and stage, supporting people with the skills, networks, experience and inspiration to build sustainable creative careers.

For full schedule and booking details please visit: <https://www.somersethouse.org.uk/whats-on/upgrade-yourself-festival-nov>

*Powered by Squarespace* and supported by Warburg Pincus, The Kusuma Trust, Eranda Rothschild Foundation, The Mbili Charitable Trust, D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust, Nadezda Foundation & The John Thaw Foundation

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## **ABOUT SOMERSET HOUSE**

As the home of cultural innovators, Somerset House is a site of origination, with a cultural programme offering alternative perspectives on the biggest issues of our time. We are a place of joy and discovery, where everyone is invited to Step Inside and Think Outside.

From our historic site in the heart of London, we work globally across art, creativity, business, and non-profit, nurturing new talent, methods and technologies. Our resident community of creative enterprises, arts organisations, artists and makers, makes us a centre of ideas, with most of our programme home-grown.

We sit at the meeting point of artistic and social innovation, bringing worlds and minds together to create surprising and often magical results. Our spirit of constant curiosity and counter perspective is integral to our history and key to our future.

## **ABOUT SQUARESPACE**

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