

**SOMERSET  
HOUSE**

step inside think outside



# SOMERSET HOUSE

IMPACT REPORT - 2021/22

## INTRODUCTION

I joined as Chair of Somerset House in January 2022, and I have witnessed first-hand the remarkable agility, commitment and resilience of Somerset House's staff and creative community as we emerged from the challenges of COVID. In the spirit of encouraging everyone – audience, residents and staff – to “**step inside, think outside**”, our programmes have brought people together, providing the opportunity for chance encounters once more and making best use of our open-air space.

Highlights include Es Devlin's magical **Forest for Change** (part of the **London Design Biennale**) as visitors were able to re-engage with culture in-person in June 2021, and friends and families got together after a prolonged separation for **Skate** with Moët & Chandon. The intergenerational joy of Somerset House's programme was also very much in evidence throughout our riotous winter exhibition **Beano: The Art of Breaking The Rules**.

Somerset House is dedicated to nurturing creative talent, and in our focus on rebuilding, we have sought to provide support and space in new ways. As **the home of cultural innovators**, our creative resident community is key to who we are, hence we introduced additional flexibility, revised membership packages and new bursaries in order to support our community to rebuild. Our commitment to innovation and backing new talent has seen us establish the **Black Business Incubator**, in partnership with Mentor Black Business and sponsored by Morgan Stanley, as well as relaunching our **Upgrade Yourself** Industry Placements.

Despite the difficulties of reviving our site after enforced closure and returning many staff from furlough, our financial results were better than planned, benefitting from new initiatives and a cautious management and financial approach. This allowed the organisation to regain momentum as the year progressed and to designate funds, which will certainly be needed to help us navigate the latest challenges.

Backing **Studios** artists Gareth Pugh and Carson McColl to transform the courtyard into **This Bright Land** this summer was a great reminder of what we can achieve with our creative community and how the matchless Edmond J. Safran Fountain Court can continue to surprise and amaze. Another major milestone developed in 2021/22 which has recently come to fruition is the launch of our new digital platform, the **Somerset House Channel**, giving audiences everywhere the opportunity to engage with artists, ideas and artistic process beyond in-person experiences at Somerset House.

### Gail Rebuck

Chair of Somerset House Trust



'Alphabetti Spaghetti' by Alex Chinneck in Beano: The Art of Breaking the Rules. Photo by Stephen Chung

## THE HOME OF CULTURAL INNOVATORS

As **the home of cultural innovators**, Somerset House connects creativity and the arts with wider society.

We host a collision of worlds and harness the power of our people, programme and place to drive artistic and social innovation, develop the widest possible span of talent and leverage the power of arts to make change across the whole of society.

Today, as host to the UK's largest creative community working globally across art, technology, business and social enterprise, we continually draw in fresh ideas and new talent. This approach enables surprising alliances, convergences and chance encounters, which move people and disciplines outside of themselves.

### 2021/22 AT A GLANCE

- **1.5m** visitors to site
- **75** Somerset House Studios artists and their teams in over 15,000 sq. ft of studio space
- **261** creative-tech and maker members from 77 different organisations at Makerversity which provides workspaces and specialist workshops
- **400** members of the creative co-working space Somerset House Exchange
- **50** Black Business Incubator businesses
- **117** enterprises occupying 19+ offices across c 72,000 sq. ft

**"Somerset House has been reborn as a palace of culture, home to a revived Courtauld Institute, blockbuster exhibitions and art fairs, public events and a range of subsidised studios for more than 300 makers, artists and designers, all in this grandest of buildings. The way these offices were built (and they were built as offices) lent itself to appropriation and radical changes in use."**

- Financial Times



## EXTRAORDINARY EXPERIENCES FOR ALL

We are 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 both in person and digitally.



### LONDON DESIGN BIENNALE

**"400 trees arrayed in the neoclassical courtyard of Somerset House...the effect is wonderfully disorienting"**

- Guardian



### NO COMPLY: SKATE CULTURE & COMMUNITY

**"This exciting and dynamic, in-depth examination of British skateboard culture"**

- Time Out



### DODGE

**"It is a scene of unrestrained collective joy"**

- Financial Times



### WE ARE HISTORY

**Time Out London's 2021 Best of the City Winner**

- Sustainable Event of the Year

**"Confronts the climate emergency through a global art lens"** - Wallpaper



### BEANO: THE ART OF BREAKING THE RULES

★★★★★ **"It is a riot in there"** - Guardian

**"Far and away the greatest and most joyous comics exhibition that I have ever attended"**

- The New Statesman

Photo by Stephen Chung



### SKATE AT SOMERSET HOUSE WITH MOËT & CHANDON

**"Somerset House makes for a wonderful backdrop at any time of the year - but when you factor in skating around its Neoclassical courtyard surrounded by an imposing 40ft Christmas tree, it is truly magical"**

- Evening Standard



### GALLERY 31: TEMPORARY COMPOSITIONS

**"An intimate exhibition space dedicated to platforming the experimental practice of Somerset House Studios' residents"**

- FAD Magazine



### LEEROY NEW: THE ARKS OF GIMOKUDAN

**"An important piece of work... loaded with history and meaning"**

- Metro

Photo by Ben Queenborough



### PROCESS - PODCAST SERIES

**"Somerset House is doing a series that dives deep into creativity"**

- BBC Podcast Radio Hour

## BACKING NEW TALENT, NEW METHODS AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES

The interaction between artists, creatives and wider society is the most vital part of Somerset House.

In October 2021, we marked the fifth anniversary of **Somerset House Studios**, which brings together artists making innovative, urgent work from different backgrounds and disciplines, to experiment and build sustainable longer-term practice.

- **93%** of artists state their Studios residency is important or essential to their practice
- **84%** of artists say being part of the Studios has had a significant impact on their professional profile and external opportunities.

We actively create opportunities for funding and creative collaboration, from which emerges a rich programme of ground-breaking work. In 2021/22, in partnership with **King's College London**, we supported six new collaborations between Studios artists and King's academics. We are also working with UAL Creative Computing Institute and The Alan Turing Institute on the new **PATH-AI residency programme**. This is an opportunity for 3 international artists to create new works engaging with intercultural ideas of privacy, agency, and trust in relation to artificial intelligence.

We were delighted to once again welcome artists to Somerset House on shorter term residencies, from international artists such as Juliana Huxtable and Artor Jesus Inkerö to UK artists Rene Matić, Abbas Zahedi and Ocean Baulcombe-Toppin, who were with us for a defined period to create new work. Working with the British Council, we were able to continue our **Amplify** programme with an online residency for 30 female-identifying artists working in digital art and sound from Canada, Latin America, and the UK.

Looking ahead, the future ambitions for Somerset House Studios include increasing the scale and ambition of cross-disciplinary projects that we commission from the Studios community, as exemplified by Gareth Pugh and Carson McColl's **This Bright Land**, in August 2022. We are also looking at how we further strengthen the Studios' already distinctive reputation at the forefront of critical thinking and dialogue, whilst increasing national and international reach.

"The opportunities provided by the Studios have facilitated a new trajectory in my research. The One-to-One funding programme has always allowed me to keep practising in a year when my financial situation was increasingly precarious. Having the Studios has been a huge support, not only professionally, producing community and friendship"

- Somerset House Studios Artist



ACM 2021, photo by Anne Tetzloff

## OUR WIDER RESIDENT COMMUNITY

Elsewhere in our community, we saw considerable expansion in our shared workspace, **Somerset House Exchange**, and rebuilt our creative enterprise resident base, increasing the number of resident organisations by **23%** and reducing void space from **31%** to **17%** over the year.

We have also signed a new 7-year agreement with **Makerversity** who continue to provide a start-up maker space as a key component of our creative community.

"The Somerset House community has helped us create innovative products that have been integral in our development. Meeting other residents is helping us to continually push boundaries and learn new approaches"

- Somerset House Resident

## INTENSIFYING CREATIVITY AND MULTIPLYING OPPORTUNITY

Our work to address representation in the sector moved forward significantly during the year with the re-launch of our young people's programmes in person and the creation of the **Black Business Incubator**.

Developed in partnership with Mentor Black Business and sponsored by Morgan Stanley with additional support from Stride, the Black Business Incubator supports early-stage Black-led creative enterprises to grow sustainably and realise their potential. The hybrid programme provides participants with monthly expert-led masterclasses, mentorship from industry specialists, free access to a co-working space, as well as a variety of community events, reflecting our belief that entrepreneurial success is enhanced by being part of a supportive and inclusive creative community.

Halfway through the first 12-month programme, **81%** of participants felt they have gained new skills, **81%** saw an increase in revenue and **69%** had access to new opportunities as a result of participating in the programme while **100%** wanted to remain in Somerset House workspaces after the programme concludes.

This year also saw us expand **Upgrade Yourself** – our industry-leading multi-strand programme of engagement opportunities for people aged 16-25.

We re-launched Upgrade Yourself Industry Placements, working closely with Westminster City Council as part of the government's Kickstart programme. As a result, eight young people were employed and paid London Living wage to work for different creative enterprises based at Somerset House, as well as receiving wrap-around support, mentoring and professional development.

In total, the Engagement & Skills team delivered **225 hours of engagement** through our online Upgrade Yourself sessions and Future Producer workshops, **reaching 1,131 people aged 18-30 through online sessions** and smaller group sessions, and **sharing opportunities with over 80,000** young people through our regular newsletters.



Over the coming year we are looking at how we can extend the impact of our work further and strengthen pathways by harmonising common elements of our inclusive talent programmes.



Black Business Incubator event

**"It's impossible to go a day without encountering someone who is an expert of a different discipline. The eco-system of Somerset House is extremely friendly, with office teams and individuals all feeling part of the family"**

– Upgrade Yourself Industry Placements participant

## HISTORY & RENEWAL

Our spirit of constant curiosity and counter perspective is integral to our history and key to our future. We are constantly looking at how we continue to renew our historic site, ensuring that it is fit for purpose and welcoming for our creative residents and visitors.

Actions over the last year have made our invitation to “step inside” even more resonant. We have continued to work closely with Westminster City Council on the pedestrianisation of Strand/Aldwych, due for completion at the end of 2022, which will make the approach to Somerset House much more open. We experimented with how our programme could spill out into the Strand when we were able to stage a temporary skate park there, linked to our **No Comply** skateboarding exhibition. And in October, Studios artists performed in St Mary Le Strand church for the first time as part of the **Studios AGM**, which we hope will be the start of continued use of the church for our programming.

Perhaps most significantly of all, **The Courtauld Gallery** reopened its doors after its major capital redevelopment and we are delighted to have **Courtauld** visitors back at Somerset House. Thanks to sponsorship from Morgan Stanley, we also collaborated with the Courtauld to launch a joint series of **Lates** events, opening the entire site to younger audiences.



Stamp Stair photo by Philip Vile

In terms of the physical fabric of the site, major projects have included the restoration of the Stamp Stair and of Sir John Bacon’s statue of George III, as well as commencing the site-wide replacement of our ageing CCTV system and new banners on Lancaster Place.

We have renewed our efforts to make Somerset House’s extraordinary history more accessible to visitors and ensuring we are telling a more nuanced story. Supported by new historical research commissioned as part of our **Anti-Racism Pledge**, we have refreshed our **Historical Highlights** tours and have also commissioned our first ever self-guided audio tour.

Getting back to full estate operations post-lockdown meant we were not able to dedicate as much time to sustainability as we had hoped and this will be a renewed priority in 2022/23. In terms of public engagement, Filipino artist Leroy New’s residency in the run up to his spring courtyard commission was a brilliant opportunity to rekindle dialogue with staff, residents and the public about how we best use and re-use materials.



John Bacon’s statue of George III, photo by Philip Vile

## BEYOND SOMERSET HOUSE

The community at Somerset House works globally across art, creativity, business and non-profit sectors, to extend innovation far and wide. Here are some examples of their world-class work.



Lawrence Lek was awarded the Grand Prix VH AWARD



Ilona Sagar was a recipient of a 2021 Stanley Picker Fellowship



Sonya Dyer was an Arts Foundation Futures award finalist



Filmmaker SOMAYEH was signed to Ridley Scott's Black Dog films



Superflux were announced as Design Studio of the Year at the Dezeen Awards



Tom Scutt was nominated for two Olivier Awards for Cabaret



The Unmistakables were named in Campaign Magazine's list of Best Places to Work 2022



Lifescaped exhibited the Brightest colours ever to have been created at Kew Gardens



Rhea Storr was a finalist of the Circa x Dazed Class of 2021 filmmakers



GoodFind won the Social Impact Hero category at the Hustle Awards



Maeve Brennan and Imran Perretta both received Paul Hamlyn awards



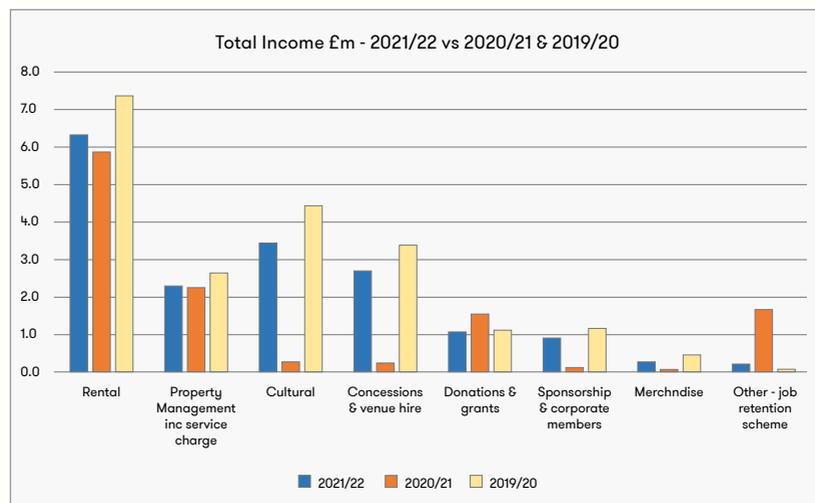
Factory 42 collaborated with Studios' resident Nick Ryan on Lost Origins

## FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT 2021/2022

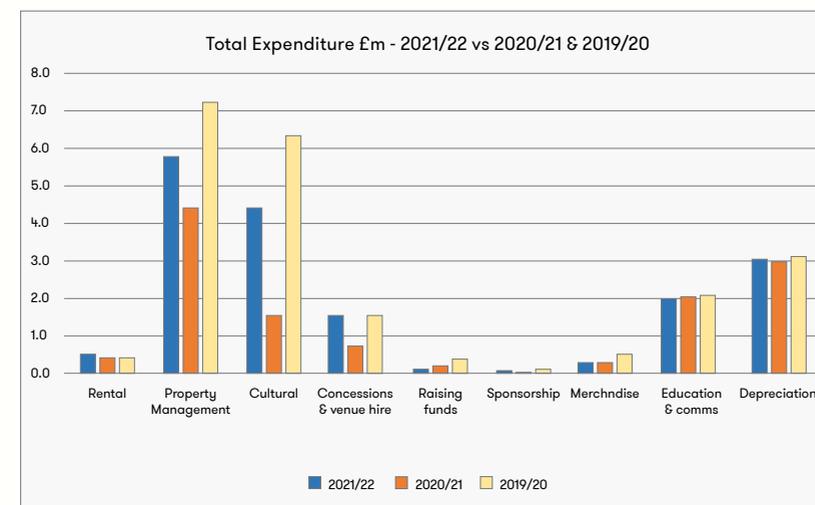
We ended 2021/22 with a flourish due to a successful **Skate** run and significant success in securing new residents, which meant income rebounded faster than expected. We had budgeted cautiously, being uncertain as to how long COVID effects would continue to impact our operations. As a result, we overperformed vs our budget, delivering a surplus of **£2.2m** and increasing the level of above-target free reserves to **£5.3m**. At the end of the financial year, Trustees took the decision to designate **£2m** of reserves for **heritage, sustainability, and visitor experience improvements**.

For 2022/23 we have budgeted a deficit, with expectations that reserves will fall back in line with our target range within two years. This reflects significant investment in people and charitable activity ahead of income fully recovering, including utilisation of the designated reserve. The energy crisis, and uncertainty around government support, means we may have to reassess our expenditure plans, including delays on some projects and reallocation of funds.

### Total Income and Expenditure (unrestricted & restricted)



Total income for the year was **£17m**. Underlying unrestricted income (exc government support) increased by **81%** year on year. Despite this significant improvement, rental and service charge income remained below pre-COVID levels, as did venue hire income. Cultural programme income was also behind, largely due to the replacement of both **Summer Series** and **Summer Screen** with **Dodge**. Both donations and grants and other income were bolstered during 2020/21 by government COVID support, falling back into line with pre-pandemic levels during 2021/22.



Expenditure for the year, excluding depreciation, was **£14.7m**, up by over **50%** year on year. Property management costs climbed back towards pre-COVID levels, with continued caution around committing to major projects until financial outcomes were more certain. Concessions and venue hire spend returned to pre-COVID levels faster than income, reflecting short-term support offered to major programme partners to enable projects to go ahead in an uncertain period.

Figures taken from draft accounts for 2021/22.

## THANK YOU

Somerset House is grateful to everyone who makes our work possible - staff, volunteers, artists, programming partners and collaborators. As an independent charity that does not receive any regular public funding, we are particularly grateful to the following:

### CULTURAL PROGRAMME AND CAPITAL SUPPORTERS

Art Fund	Jerwood Arts	The J P Marland Charitable Trust
Arts Council England - Culture Recovery Fund	John Lyon's Charity	The London Community Foundation
Blavatnik Family Foundation	Kusuma Trust	The Rothschild Foundation
British Council	Maria Bjornson Memorial Fund	The Mbili Charitable Trust
Cockayne - Grants for the Arts	Nadezda Foundation	Westminster City Council
Eranda Rothschild Foundation	National Lottery Community Fund	As well as those who wish to remain anonymous.
Fidelity UK Foundation	Outset Contemporary Art Fund	
Finnish Institute	P F Charitable Trust	
Freelands Foundation	The Adonyeva Foundation	
Goethe Institute	The Headley Trust	
GRow@Annenberg	The Foyle Foundation	

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### SUPPORTERS' COURT MEMBER AND INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTERS

Brendan Finucane	Judy Gibbons	William Sieghart
Carol Fairweather	Julien Sevaux	Wol and Kerry Kolade
Caroline Boseley	Kanika Kumar	Yini Zhang
Carolyn and Matthew Addison	Melanie Hall	To all supporters of the Young Talent Fund
Charles Hoare Nairne	Mercedes Zobel	And all those who prefer to remain anonymous
Georgia Oetker	Monica Monajem	
James Lambert OBE	Mr and Mrs Antonio M Lagdameo	
James and Felicia Brocklebank	Paul Goswell	
Jeremy and Kirsty Hardie	Rob and Vanessa Enserro	
Jonathan and Ronnie Newhouse	Sir Peter Bazalgette and Lady Hilary Bazalgette	

### TRUSTEES

Baroness Gail Rebusk DBE Chair of the Board of Trustees - from 1 January 2022	Alix Burge	Monica Monajem
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	Wol Kolade	

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[somersethouse.org.uk](https://somersethouse.org.uk)

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