



# Somerset House Creative Community Programmes Summer 2023



Somerset House uses its own creative community to nurture new talent from those who are underrepresented and underserved in the cultural sector. Across the Somerset House community there are programmes supporting people with the skills, networks, experience and inspiration to build sustainable creative careers.

## **Upgrade Yourself Festival Friday 2 - Saturday 3 June**

**Free**

**For ticketing information sign up to the [Upgrade Yourself Newsletter](#)**

**Lancaster and River Rooms**

Returning for the third time in 2023, Upgrade Yourself Festival empowers young people to pursue creative careers on their own terms. Running across two days, the festival will connect 16–24-year-olds aspiring to break into the creative sector with trailblazing industry experts via talks, workshops, and bespoke mentoring sessions. Guest speakers from **The Black Wellbeing Collective, Polyester Zine, Asher Glean, Run the Check, School of Bop, The Yard** and **F\*ck Being Humble** will share tools and skills to help navigate the creative industries, such as financial literacy, DIY content creation, wellbeing, and self-care.

*Presented with support from Westminster City Council Culture and Community Programme, Warburg Pincus and the John Thaw Foundation.*

## **BLACK VENUS x Upgrade Yourself Takeover Date to be announced**

The **BLACK VENUS x Upgrade Yourself Takeover** sees the return of Somerset House's after-hours exhibition access for young emerging and aspiring creatives. This free event, specifically designed for 18-30-year-olds looking to break into the creative industry, offers access to the newly

launched BLACK VENUS exhibition, interactive talks from exhibition contributors and opportunities to network with peers and professionals in a post-show social.

### **Upgrade Yourself: Creative Industry Placements**

**For information about creative industry placements at Somerset House sign up to the [Upgrade Yourself Newsletter](#)**

In 2023, a new cohort of young people joined Somerset House for **Upgrade Yourself Creative Industry Placements**. The placements provide paid year-long opportunities for people aged 18-24 within Somerset House's vibrant resident community, in industries ranging from marketing and events to music and publishing. As well as providing practical experience on the job, the placements offer mentoring, development, and training opportunities for participants. Created to support and benefit young people who identify as belonging to communities and backgrounds that are currently underrepresented within the cultural sector, and are looking to gain access into the arts, applicants are not required to have previous experience and are paid the London Living Wage.

*Supported by Warburg Pincus, John Lyon's Charity and D'oily Carte Charitable Trust.*

### **Somerset House Studios Residencies**

**Somerset House Studios** is an experimental workspace connecting artists, makers and thinkers with audiences, offering subsidised studio space and the support of a dynamic cross-disciplinary community to artists pushing bold ideas, engaging with urgent issues and pioneering new technologies.

In addition, Studios offers fully funded residencies and bursaries to a wide range of artists, including those in early career, those whose practice fits into a specific residency theme and those seeking to develop and present new work. Recent examples include the **Music and Sound Residency** – a 15-month residency and mentorship programme for artists working with experimental music and sound; the **Jerwood Somerset House Studios Residency** - supporting early career visual artists over an 18-month programme of tailored resources; and the **Experimental Technology Fellowship** in partnership with **UAL Creative Computing Institute** - a 5-month funded programme which includes access to workspace, labs, and creative and technical support across two sites which culminates in a commission presented on **Channel**, Somerset House's curated online platform. Studios also work to support its artists via the **One-to-One Programme**, pairing donors with interested artists for a 12-month period.

### **Makerversity**

**Makerversity** is a pioneering community of over 300 entrepreneurs and innovators working at the intersection of design, engineering and digital practice, developing ground-breaking solutions for the world's biggest societal challenges, including climate change, health and inequality. Members gain access to affordable desk space, workshops, specialist prototyping and other facilities as well as a thriving creative community, support events and the opportunity to showcase work to the public through the Makerversity events programme.

As well as ensuring membership is affordable, Makerversity offers two free memberships that accept application on a rolling basis, **Makers with a Mission**- a six-month residency for emerging talent and new businesses taking their first steps into the world- and **Under 25s**- a 3-month placement for creative designers under the age of 25.

### **Black Business Incubator Sponsored by Morgan Stanley**

In March 2023, the **Black Business Incubator** at Somerset House opened applications for the fourth time, with the new cohort starting in June. The free programme produced in partnership with **Mentor Black Business** and sponsored by **Morgan Stanley**, aims to help early-stage Black-led creative businesses unlock their full potential and enable their creative enterprises to thrive.

Current and previous alumni of the Black Business Incubator include entrepreneurs pursuing innovation and pushing boundaries in industries across the creative sector, from the performing arts, fashion and food to publishing, technology and social media.

Bringing together the different skills and networks of Somerset House and Mentor Black Business, the twelve-month programme provides participants with a series of expert-led workshops and mentorship from industry specialists. Members are given free access to Somerset House's shared workspace **The Exchange** and are integrated into Somerset House's vibrant resident community programme.

In connection to Somerset House's major autumn exhibition, **The Missing Thread**, recruitment for the fourth cohort will see several places allocated specifically for applicants with fashion-related businesses. The exhibition, also sponsored by Morgan Stanley, charts the shifting landscape of Black British culture and the unique contribution it has made to fashion design, spanning from the 1970s to present day.

### **Somerset House Exchange Bursaries**

In 2023 Somerset House's co-working space, **Somerset House Exchange**, continues to bring together a wide variety of freelancers and small businesses working across the creative sector. Putting connection and collaboration at the centre of its community of members, The Exchange hosts a regular programme of socials and advice clinics for its members.

With multiple affordable membership options, as well as being home to **Somerset House's Black Business Incubator**, the Exchange intentionally works to break down barriers of access in the cultural and creative industries by offering bursaries of up to 75% off membership rates. Bursaries are specifically designed for people who are under-represented within the cultural sector and applications are open all year round on a rolling basis.

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

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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.

<https://www.somersethouse.org.uk/>