



**SOMERSET  
HOUSE**

# **SOMERSET HOUSE TRUST**

**DIRECTOR OF EXHIBITIONS  
JOB INFORMATION**

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<b>Role:</b>	Director of Exhibitions
<b>Department:</b>	Exhibitions
<b>Reports to:</b>	Director of Somerset House Trust
<b>Responsible for:</b>	Exhibitions Team (Direct reports include: Head of Exhibition Management; Senior Curator)
<b>Contract type:</b>	Permanent, full-time (37.5 hours per week) (possibility of reduced or flexible hours)
<b>Salary:</b>	Competitive, plus 8% pension contribution
<b>Please note that this role was advertised previously but we were unable to proceed because of the pandemic. If you applied before we would be grateful if would re-submit your application.</b>	

## Somerset House

Somerset House is London's working arts centre built on historic foundations around one of the most beautiful courtyards in Europe. Situated at the very heart of the capital, we are home to the UK's largest and most exciting creative community and are overflowing with new ideas, young businesses and fresh perspectives.

Dedicated to backing progress, championing openness, nurturing creativity and empowering ideas we aim to:

- be a dynamic and relevant space for culture in the 21st century, providing a centre for the exploration of contemporary creative and social practice across all artistic disciplines, bringing our historic building alive.
- offer audiences excellent, original, accessible cultural experiences incorporating new formats and connecting them with the creative process.
- embrace the biggest issues of our times, though we are as keen on entertainment as enrichment.
- find, back, develop and invest in a much wider span of talent and minds, across community, sector, race, gender, age and stage

Add in nearly 100 resident artists, Makerversity, our shared workspace Exchange, a business community made up of over 200 independent creative enterprises a newly established Black Business Incubator, inclusive talent development programmes for young people including Upgrade Yourself and Future Producers and our neighbours, The Courtauld Institute and King's College, and you start to understand who we are and what we do.

Before Covid we would welcome 3 million annual visitors to share this unique combination of public events, creative enterprise, and artistic practice. It is this mix that informs and powers a cultural programme that is created by four teams: Exhibitions, Live Events, Studios, and Engagement & Skills.

### Exhibitions and Installations at Somerset House

Exhibitions and installations are a key component of our cultural programme, aiming to reflect our overall vision and aims (above) and offer something distinctive from our competitors. The core part of the annual programme generated by the exhibitions team are 3 free Terrace Room shows (in 2019/20 *English as a Second Language*; *Kaleidoscope - Immigration in Modern Britain*; *Mary Sibande – I Came Apart at the Seams*; *Mushrooms – the art, design and future of fungi*) and a major winter Embankment Galleries exhibition (recently *Good Grief, Charlie Brown!*; *24/7 – a wake up call for our non-stop world*). We also mount exhibitions in the East Wing and West Wing Galleries (eg: *Daydreaming with Stanley Kubrick* 2016; *Perfume – a journey through contemporary scent* 2017; *Get-Up, Stand Up Now! – Generations of Black creative pioneers* 2019) There are courtyard and smaller installations around the site (eg: our annual Earth Day Season). 2021 includes: *We are History* curated by Ekow Eshun, about the environment, colonialism and race; *Beano, the art of breaking the rules*, curated by Andy Holden.

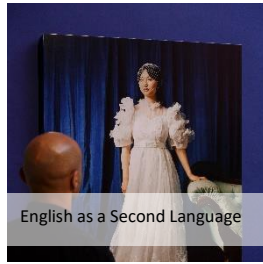
Our ambition is to continue to build the contribution of Somerset House Studios' artists to our overall programme. We also have Gallery 31 dedicated to showcasing their work.

We receive no regular funding, so our business model includes having a number of regular partnership cultural projects that bring many other visitors to the site - Photo London; 1:54 African Art Fair, Collect Craft Fair, Now Play This (part of London Games Week), London Design Biennale - sometimes offering opportunities for collaborations, spin-off exhibitions and installations, and there are a limited number of purely commercial hires such as Sony World Photography Awards.

The in-house curatorial team is small and currently only includes a Senior Curator and Public Programmes Curator so we regularly use external freelance curators, helping us keep our programme broad and diverse. We would work with the Director of Exhibitions to agree different models for growing capacity in the future, subject to artistic priorities, investment and fundraising parameters.

### Audiences

Our audience profile is relatively young with 32% of our cultural visitors being 35 years old and under. We believe that we attract a younger audience because we do things differently. We continually strive for audiences that are representative of our city and the way we programme is key to this.



## Effect of Covid

Inevitably Covid has had a major impact on Somerset House. In the face of uncertainty on the pace of financial recovery, we reduced and de-risked the cultural programme. We now need to rebuild our pipeline of future projects.

One positive of Covid was an increased online presence. We have commissioned a new digital content platform, to be launched in early 2022.

## The Role

We are seeking an exceptional individual who will lead the shaping and delivery of Somerset House's exhibition programme, as well as forming a vital part of the organisation's senior management team. Working at a strategic level, with an international outlook but able to get involved in detail, this role is demanding, challenging and offers the successful candidate an opportunity to initiate, manage, curate and deliver ambitious work across Somerset House.

The overarching programme strategy and objectives are overseen by the Director of Somerset House. The Director of Exhibitions, the Director of Studios & Producing and the Head of Engagement & Skills work closely with the Director to develop and shape the future direction, each leading on the delivery of a different strand of the programme.

The role will build the reputation of Somerset House as an innovative cross-disciplinary contemporary cultural space, drawing on work generated by its creative community. The Director of Exhibitions will develop the exhibition and installation strands of the cultural programme, working collaboratively with in-house teams along with external curators and partners, to generate work produced on site, maximizing the cultural assets of Somerset House. The role will also require a committed and agile approach to developing UK and international partnerships that can bring financial and cultural benefits, helping to set a new bar for quality exhibitions and other formats in the London cultural landscape.

### Artistic leadership

- Play a major part in shaping the artistic vision for Somerset House, ensuring the distinctive profile, reputation and success of the organisation continues to grow in London, nationally and internationally;
- Complement and expand the existing programme across exhibitions, talks and other future initiatives to develop the scope, character and distinctive quality of Somerset House;



- Actively explore new creative opportunities, taking artistic risk where appropriate to build Somerset House's profile as a world-class venue that attracts critical acclaim and reaches new audiences;
- Ensure that Somerset House's goals around audiences, access, diversity, community engagement are integral across all of our cultural offering;
- Be at the forefront of innovative creative practice with a clear sense of what lies on the international artistic horizon;
- Maintain a strong track record of working with artists to develop and deliver ambitious projects which break boundaries both in terms of artistic practice but also audience experience.

## Programming

- Lead the creation of an exhibitions, installation and related events programme across Somerset House that will reach a wide audience throughout the year;
- Create a calendar that is distinctive, relevant and responds to the context of the UK and international cultural scene;
- Build a pipeline of projects, researching and developing new ideas, ensuring that plans are far enough ahead for effective planning;
- Ensure the programme builds on the idea of Somerset House as a place where projects are researched and developed, as well as presented in their finished form;
- Collaborate with resident artists, other programming teams, organisations and external partners to develop the cultural offering, ensuring that quality remains high and that Somerset House maintains its distinctive identity.

## Collaboration, Partnerships and Network

- Cultivate a broad network of relationships with artists and creative practitioners, both emerging and established;
- Work with our existing partners and develop a range of national and international partner cultural organisations to co-commission, enhance our programme and increase touring opportunities;
- Develop and support an external network of curators and producers to help deliver elements of our programme.

## Audience Development

- Work with the Director of Marketing & Audiences, Head of PR and Head of Engagement & Skills, to shape and support the audience development strategy.

## Commercial Acumen & Philanthropic Experience

- Manage the commercial balance of cultural activity, mixing exciting work that attracts good income with riskier activity requiring subsidy and additional investment.
- Work with colleagues to engage and secure funders, brand partnerships and donors; initiate development opportunities and contribute to funding applications.



## The Person

### Skills and Experience

- Extensive curatorial experience in developing and delivering exhibitions across disciplines
- An excellent strategist, international in outlook, able to draw on multiple programme strands to form a coherent and distinctive programme
- A reputation for artistic vision and flair demonstrating both innovation and a measured amount of risk taking
- The ability to challenge, excite and energise your team and the wider organisation through inspirational leadership
- Experience of developing talent and diversity where inclusion is at the core of both programming and your team
- Experience of working collaboratively to build constructive partnerships and develop professional networks with external stakeholders
- A proven track record of working collaboratively across departments
- Ability to balance being commercially astute, including previous experience of accountability for financial success, with a flair for maintaining innovation within the constraints of a tight budget
- Experience driving organisational and creative change including technology
- Track-record and demonstrable interest in using cultural programme to ensure attracting and retaining a diverse audience, including young people.

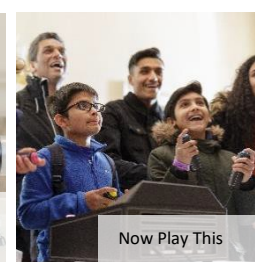
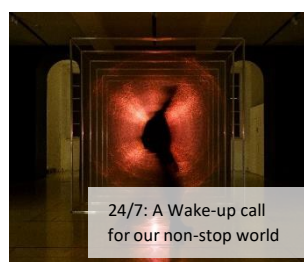
### Somerset House's Commitment To Anti-Racism, Diversity & Inclusion

Somerset House is open to all and we value the unique skills of everyone. Somerset House Trust is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to championing equality, diversity and inclusion in our workplace, so if you're a suitably qualified applicant we encourage your application whatever your age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation or socio-economic background.

Somerset House is actively anti-racist, you can read about its Anti-Racism Pledge and the action we're taking [here](#).

### Accessibility

If you require any adjustments or would like to discuss submitting your application in a different format, please contact Gerda through [jobs@somersetshouse.org.uk](mailto:jobs@somersetshouse.org.uk).



## How to Apply

Please submit a CV and cover letter via our online application form by 10am on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2021.

To access the form please visit: <https://www.somersetshouse.org.uk/jobs>

If you applied when we previously advertised the role, we would be grateful if you would re-submit

