

SOMERSET HOUSE APPOINTS DR CLIFF LAUSON AS ITS NEW DIRECTOR OF EXHIBITIONS PRESS RELEASE



Image credit: Cesare De Giglio

Somerset House is delighted to announce that **Dr Cliff Lauson** has been appointed **Director of Exhibitions**, taking up his role in **March 2022**.

Lauson is currently Senior Curator at Hayward Gallery, Southbank Centre. Since arriving as Curator in 2009, he has organised major exhibitions of work by Bridget Riley, Matthew Barney, Martin Creed, Ernesto Neto, Tracey Emin, and David Shrigley, and the group exhibitions *Light Show* and *Space Shifters*. He has also curated numerous exhibitions in the HENI Project Space including *End User*, *Adapt to Survive: Notes from the Future*, *Dineo Seshee Bopape*, *Emmanuelle Lainé*, *Kate Cooper*, and *Nevin Aladağ*, as well as commissioned artworks and projects across the wider Southbank Centre site.

Lauson has previously held positions at Tate Modern and the UBC Museum of Anthropology in Vancouver. He currently serves on the British Council Collection Acquisitions Advisory Committee, is a Trustee of Film and Video Umbrella, and a Fellow of the Royal Society of the Arts. He is also Curator of Rana Begum's solo exhibition *Dappled Light* currently on view at Mead Gallery, Warwick Arts Centre, and touring to Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery this summer.

Among Lauson's responsibilities will be the development and delivery of a major winter Embankment Galleries exhibition (which is currently hosting the critically-acclaimed *Beano: The Art of Breaking the Rules*, curated by Andy Holden) and three free Terrace Rooms shows, as well as exhibitions in the East Wing and West Wing Galleries and installations in its courtyard and around the site.

Jonathan Reekie, Director of Somerset House Trust said: "We are thrilled that Cliff has chosen to join Somerset House at an exciting moment for us, as we look positively to the future and focus on being at the forefront of innovative creative practice, commissioning and curating new and transformative work for all to experience.

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“The Director of Exhibitions will play a major part in shaping the artistic vision for Somerset House, ensuring that our distinctive profile as a world-class venue that attracts critical acclaim and reaches new audiences continues to grow in London, nationally and internationally.

“We have no doubt that Cliff will contribute significantly to our future success, as his extensive curatorial experience, reputation for artistic flair and international outlook speaks for itself.”

Cliff Lauson said: “Somerset House is a brilliant and vibrant cultural hub, with a range of compelling spaces and a plethora of in-house artistic talent. More than ever, we need empowering artistic connections to inspire and question society, and I very much look forward to working with the team and numerous creative collaborators to produce an open, innovative, and relevant cultural programme.”

FOR PRESS ENQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT:
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ABOUT SOMERSET HOUSE

London's working arts centre

Somerset House is London's working arts centre and home to the UK's largest creative community. Built on historic foundations, we are situated in the very heart of the capital.

Dedicated to backing progress, championing openness, nurturing creativity and empowering ideas, our cultural programme is ambitious in scope. We insist on relevance, but aren't afraid of irreverence, and are as keen on entertainment as enrichment. We embrace the biggest issues of our times and are committed to oxygenating new work by emerging artists. Where else can you spend an hour ice-skating while listening to a specially commissioned sound piece by a cutting-edge artist?

It is this creative tension—the way we harness our heritage, put the too-often overlooked on our central stage and use our neo-classical backdrop to showcase ground-breaking contemporary culture—that inspires our programme. Old and new, history and disruption, art and entertainment, high-tech and homemade, combined with the fact that we are home to a constantly shape-shifting working creative community: this is our point of difference. It is what we are proud of. And it is what makes the experience of visiting or working in Somerset House inspiring and energising, urgent and exciting.