



SUMMER AT SOMERSET HOUSE: JUNE – AUGUST 2023 PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

PRESS RELEASE



Somerset House presents a summer season of new perspectives and joyful shared experience, featuring exhibitions, installations, performances, talks, music and more. From a major showcase of design-led innovation from across the globe with London Design Biennale in June, to spellbinding dance performance from the renowned choreographer Shobana Jeyasingh this August, Somerset House welcomes visitors to engage, experience and find inspiration in new and unexpected ways this season.

Highlights include:

- Free exhibition and installations including **BLACK VENUS**, an exhibition examining the historical representation and shifting legacy of Black women in visual culture (20 Jul – 24 Sept) and new site-specific installation by artist **Theresa Weber, Cycles of Unmasking** (21 Jun – 30 Nov)
- Special programming across weekends in August including an **unmissable open-air Vogue Ball** presented by **London's vogue mini-ball and music collective Vogue Rites**, supported by **adidas Originals** (12 Aug) and the reprise of **Shobana Jeyasingh's** compelling dance performance, **Counterpoint**, specially devised for the fountains (19 & 20 Aug)
- After-hours access to Somerset House, The Courtauld and London Design Biennale, with live performance from **The PappyShow, Theresa Weber** and sound artist **Nathanael Amadou Kliebhan**, and DJ sets from **Zaleel** (NTS, Foundation FM) as part of **Morgan Stanley Lates at Somerset House with The Courtauld** (21 Jun)
- **Somerset House Summer Series** celebrates its 20th year with eleven nights of unmissable gigs in the courtyard (6 – 16 Jul)
- **London Design Biennale** returns for its fourth edition, with over 40 countries and exhibitors showcasing world-leading design, featuring public outdoor installations from Malta, India and Turkey (1 - 25 Jun)

ON-SITE CULTURAL PROGRAMME

London Design Biennale & Eureka 2023

Site-wide

1 – 25 June 2023

General admission from £23

Tickets available via somersethouse.org.uk



Opening on 1 June, **London Design Biennale** will bring together over 40 exhibitors from across the world to the heart of London in an interactive, musical and kinetic exhibition of design and design-led innovation.

The theme of this year's Biennale, *The Global Game: Remapping Collaborations*, will see exhibitors explore new forms of international cooperation and participation through design across the entirety of Somerset House. From the evocation of an Indian chowk on the River Terrace and an exploration of the humanitarian collaboration between Poland and Ukraine, to a reimagination of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's national collection in virtual reality, the Biennale will demonstrate how design can better the world we inhabit.

New to this year's Biennale, **EUREKA** will exhibit cutting edge design research from universities and research centres across the UK, tackling topics from ageing to the central role of amusement arcades in British culture.

Theresa Weber: Cycles of Unmasking

21 June – 30 November 2023

Stamp Stair, South Wing

Free

Somerset House presents a new commission by London-based artist Theresa Weber. For her first public commission in the UK, Weber has produced a site-specific installation responding to the history and architecture of Somerset House.



Cycles of Unmasking aims to connect the building's levels in new ways and stands as a counterpoint to the hierarchical and complex relations drawn from Somerset House's centuries-long history. Suspended within the stairwell of the historic Stamp Stair at Somerset House, the sculptural work takes the form of a hanging entanglement of fabrics and synthetic materials. The installation serves as a non-hierarchical connector between the ornate upper-level banister of the staircase and its lower levels, which are starkly plain by comparison.

Responding to the social histories encoded in the vertical passageway of the building, Weber's commission draws on a variety of critical perspectives and mythological references including Caribbean Carnival, Poseidon, and medicinal plants to form an anti-monumental, installation that branches out across the stairwell. Weber's intervention also features a wall-based artwork made of resin that incorporates these thematic elements and symbols.

Sponsored by Morgan Stanley.

Morgan Stanley Lates at Somerset House with The

Courtauld

Site-wide

Wed 21 June 2023, 18.00-22.00

Full ticket and line-up details available via

somersethouse.org.uk



On Wednesday 21 June, visitors can enjoy after-hours access to both Somerset House and The Courtauld, with a long summer night of live performances, activities hosted by artists and curators, DJ sets and food & drink pop-ups, as part of **Morgan Stanley Lates at Somerset House with The Courtauld**.

The second Lates event of the year takes inspiration from **London Design Biennale 2023's** theme of *The Global Game: Remapping Collaborations*, imagining new forms of international co-operation through design. At the heart of the courtyard, visitors can weave among the Biennale's interactive installations. *Urban Fabric*, presented by Malta, uses traditionally dyed natural fabrics to form a 'street-like' square, echoing the layout of ancient villages, and

encouraging chance encounters. Turkey's *OpenWork / Açık Yapıt* brings a monumental arrangement of gateways to the courtyard, blurring the line between visitors and the installation as they pass through each threshold.

Further exploring ideas of multiculturalism and connectivity, multidisciplinary and playful ensemble theatre company **The PappyShow** present a spectacular live performance, held twice throughout the evening. Combining music, spoken word and dance, The PappyShow will celebrate the joy of life in a 10-minute performance, which will unfold amongst the courtyard's installation in a flood of expressive moves and vibrant colour inspiring kindness, connection and love.

Zaleel (NTS, Foundation FM) joins the evening's line-up, bringing his mixes of world music, pop & dance to the courtyard until the sun goes down. **Toum and Tahini** will be on hand serving up Middle Eastern comfort food, with their take on classic Syrian and Iranian dishes.

To mark the opening of **Theresa Weber's** new site-specific installation, **Cycles of Unmasking**, sponsored by **Morgan Stanley**, Theresa will present a collaborative performance, held twice throughout the evening, in the stairwell of the Stamp Stair in the South Wing, featuring an original score by sound artist **Nathanael Amadou Kliebhan**.

In The Courtauld Gallery, latest display **Art and Artifice: Fakes from the Collection** will be open alongside a selection of lesser-known works from its world-renowned collection of Post-Impressionist art and a display curated by The Courtauld's MA in Curating the Art Museum students. The Lates event will also host a special display of photographs by **Alistair Morrison**, inspired and aligning to the Impressionist masterpieces in The Courtauld's collection, with pop-up talks and hands on activities.

All courtyard activities are free of charge to everyone, whilst after-hours exhibition entry to The Courtauld Gallery and London Design Biennale 2023 is free to those aged 25 and under. Entrance to exhibitions for those over 25 comes at an entry cost.

Somerset House Summer Series with American Express 6 - 16 July 2023

Edmond J. Safra Fountain Court

Tickets available via somersethouse.org.uk

The unparalleled festival experience in the heart of London, **Somerset House Summer Series**, returns this July with eleven nights of electrifying gigs.



The series, which began in 2003 and celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, offers music fans the chance to experience a trailblazing line-up of breakthrough music artists and established acts from across the globe in the intimate setting of Somerset House's spectacular courtyard.

An incredible set of headline acts for this year's series have been announced, with **La Femme, Gabriels, Greentea Peng, Alison Goldfrapp, Interpol, Olivia Dean, beabadoobee, Tinariwen, The Comet is Coming, Young Fathers** and **Gabzy** taking to the stage this July.

National Saturday Club Summer Show

Public dates: 15 - 18 July 2023

Free

Embankment Galleries



The National Saturday Club's annual Summer Show returns to Embankment Galleries, Somerset House from 15 - 18 July 2023. The exhibition presents the work of more than 1,500 13-16-year-olds who have been attending free, weekly Saturday Clubs at universities, colleges and museums across the country. The exhibition showcases the ideas, creativity and innovation of the nation's next generation.

BLACK VENUS

20 July - 24 September 2023

Terrace Rooms & Courtyard Rooms

Pay What You Can

This Summer, Somerset House is proud to present **BLACK VENUS**, an exhibition which examines the historical representation and shifting legacy of Black women in visual culture. Curated by **Aindrea Emelife**, *BLACK VENUS* brings together the work of 18 Black women and non-binary artists to explore the othering, fetishisation and reclamation of narratives around Black femininity.



BLACK VENUS pairs over 40 contemporary and primarily photographic artworks with a selection of archival imagery, dated between 1793 to 1930, illustrating historical depictions of Black women and the caricaturing of the Black body. Exploring the many faces of Black femininity, the show's contemporary works offer a riotous affront to a centuries-long dynamic of objectification, showcasing all that Black womanhood can be and has always been.

The exhibition mines the complex narratives of Black womanhood through the influences of three perceived archetypes: the Hottentot Venus, the Sable Venus, and the Jezebel. Through the use of these three thematic pillars, *BLACK VENUS* examines the shifting image of the Black woman in visual culture and the complex lived experience that informs the work of cross-generational women and non-binary artists today.

Friday 21 July sees curator **Aindrea Emelife in conversation with Sharmadean Reid**, founder and CEO of The Stack World: a media platform for connecting mission-driven women with the goal of moving the needle on gender equality and increasing the global GDP of women's economy. Drawing on Reid's work advancing gender equity and social empowerment, Emelife and Reid discuss how depictions of Black women and socio-economic understandings of Blackness intersect with women's access to leadership. The two embark on a discussion of the legacies and shifting perceptions of Black women throughout history and through to present day.

Held in the intimate environment of Somerset House's Portico Rooms, **BLACK VENUS: Aindrea Emelife in Conversation with Sharmadean Reid** is also shared online exclusively with members of The Stack World community. Launched in 2021, The Stack World powers communities inside and outside of the workplace to support women on their leadership journey.

Summer in the Courtyard

1 - 28 August 2023

Edmond J. Safra Fountain Court

For latest programme updates visit

somersehouse.org.uk

Weekdays in August

Somerset House's courtyard is one of the capital's most beautiful public spaces, free for all to access and enjoy. For the month of August, the courtyard offers an unparalleled location to relax and soak up the sunshine away from the bustle of the city, alongside food and drink pop-ups plus our magnificent



fountains. A series of live events and performances from established creatives and grassroots communities will also take place across each weekend.

Popular with visitors across the year, the Edmond J. Safra Fountain Court centres around **55 magnificent fountains**, which rise and splash in a choreographed sequence, forming not only a delightful spectacle at the heart of the courtyard, but also a fun area for children to play, especially in the heat of summer. The fountains will be on daily from 10.00 - 19.00, excluding 7-17 August inclusive.

Chila Kumari Singh Burman's much-loved ice cream van installation will also be available for visitors to view throughout the month. Paying homage to her Punjabi heritage, the installation is inspired by Chila's father, who sold ice cream in her hometown of Liverpool. The van will be brought to life by one of Chila's iconic neon tigers and will point the way to exciting ice cream offers elsewhere on-site* (*Free*)

Following successful pop-ups in Carnaby Street and Covent Garden, **My Runway Group** will be taking up residency in the East Wing, from **Friday 11 August – 24 September** with a curated range of products from their roster of over 200 Black-owned businesses.

Food and drink pop-ups will also be available in the courtyard from **Thursday 3 August**, including **E8 fish**, plus churros and soft serve ice cream, with a fully stocked bar to cater for all the family. Taking the **Oatly soft serve truck** on a summer tour, Oatly will be parking up in the courtyard on **11, 12 & 13 August, serving free soft serve ice cream and fries for visitors.**

Weekend Events

Special programming will take place across weekends this August.

Pxssy Palace's Queer Family Picnic

Friday 11 August

12.00 – 17.00

Free

The month begins with a weekend celebrating queer and trans* communities, kickstarted by **Pxssy Palace** presenting **Queer Family Picnic** on **Friday 11 August**, a daytime intergenerational gathering for queer families in all forms and those who support them. Celebrated for their events providing intentional spaces for Black, indigenous and people of colour who are women, queer, intersex, trans* or non-binary, Pxssy Palace bring their signature style of music and expression of authentic selves. Expect live music, talks, performances and more; suitable for all ages.

Vogue Rites presents The Power Ball supported by adidas Originals

Saturday 12 August

17.00 – 22.30

Tickets £5-£15, available via [somersethouse.org.uk](https://www.somersethouse.org.uk)

Making a spectacular return to Somerset House on **Saturday 12 August**, London's vogue mini-ball and music collective, **Vogue Rites** present an unmissable open-air Vogue Ball in the courtyard. This special evening event, supported by **adidas Originals**, will see performers and house members compete for trophies in an outdoor extravaganza of dance, fashion and music, with a host of international Ballroom talent walking the runway.

Trans* Day of Joy

Saturday 13 August

From 12pm

Free

Following the runaway success of last summer's event, **Trans* Day of Joy** also makes a return to Somerset House on **Sunday 13 August**. Founded by trans* collective and mutual aid group We Exist, Trans* Day of Joy presents a full-day programme of talks and workshops, live performances and DJ sets, celebrating the rich breadth of trans* art and creative expression. **Sephora UK** will host a backstage beauty space for attendees to discover tips, tricks, and some special surprises along the way.

Noir Fever: A Love Letter to Black Dance Music

Friday 18 August

18.00 – 22.30

Tickets £15, available via somersethouse.org.uk

On **Friday 18 August**, UK-born and LA-based dance/electronic artist **Aluna** (one half of AlunaGeorge) presents **Aluna's Noir Fever**, a night focused on platforming Black & LGBTQI+ dance/electronic music makers, presented in association with Primary Talent. Honouring dance music's heritage and giving a taste of what's to come, Noir Fever creates space for people to come together, express themselves and dance their hearts out. Aluna will be performing, with her set celebrating the release of her new solo album MYCELIUM (out 7 July).

Counterpoint by Shobana Jeyasingh Dance

Saturday 19 & Sunday 20 August

Sat 11.00, 12.00, 15.00 & 16.00, Sun 15.00, 16.00, 18.00 & 19.00

Free

On **19 and 20 August**, award-winning dance company and Somerset House resident **Shobana Jeyasingh Dance** presents **Counterpoint**, a 2010 work created especially for the courtyard fountains and a cast of twenty dancers. Framed by the neo-classical surroundings of the courtyard, Jeyasingh's fluid choreography, set to a pulsating score by **Cassiel**, takes its audience on a dramatic ten-minute journey of changing speeds, contrasting textures and shifting dynamics.

The Brighter Vibes R.A.P Party with Inua Ellams

Saturday 26 August

14.00 – 17.00

Free

For the final **Saturday 26 August** of the month, cross-disciplinary artist, curator and poet **Inua Ellams**, brings his **Rhythm and Poetry Party** to the courtyard, for an afternoon of hip-hop inspired poems and music. The afternoon's line-up includes **Jeremiah Brown, Ollie O'Neill, Jess Murrain, Bridget Minamore, Kareem Parkins-Brown, Ben Norris, Asim the Poet, Lola Oh** and **Chika Jones**.

**The ice cream van installation was created by Chila Kumari Singh Burman for the GREAT Britain & Northern Ireland campaign, as part of a project during the FIFA World Cup in Qatar, celebrating the UK's diversity and creativity.*

MORE AT SOMERSET HOUSE

Black Girl Fest

5 – 6 August 2023

West Wing, Ticketed

For more information visit blackgirlfest.com/festival



BLACK GIRL FESTIVAL returns this Summer, and for first time will take place across two days at Somerset House. The fourth installation focuses on driving its overall mission of curating experiences that place the community at the core and celebrate Black women, girls, and non-binary people. 1000 guests throughout the weekend will be invited to

explore what joy means to them as the festival will gently guide guests through spaces, memories and the identities that spark Black joy. Carefully curated talks, workshops and digital experiences alongside live performances, screenings and a marketplace supporting Black women-owned businesses will also take place.

Somerset House Terrace Bar with San Miguel

Until October 2023

Reservations via somersethouse.org.uk

River Terrace (access via Waterloo Bridge)

With its stunning riverside location and view of the iconic London skyline, the

Somerset House Terrace Bar with San Miguel is the perfect spot to while away a summer afternoon or evening whilst enjoying a beer, cocktail and tapas dishes with friends.



Having returned for its fourth season, this summer San Miguel has partnered with

Founder of Tapas Revolution **Omar Allibhoy** to create a brand-new tapas menu that pairs perfectly with an ice-cold San Miguel beer. Visitors can expect delicious sharing boards, an assortment of delicious pinchos and stone baked flatbreads from the regions of Valencia and Catalonia, which are topped full of Spanish flavours.

Taking inspiration from its Spanish origins, on the last Friday of each month, San Miguel will host live Saxophonist sundowner sets, transporting visitors to a truly Ibiza experience. Welcoming internationally recognised musician and performer **The SaxMan** (Ben Barnett) and his team of artists, the Terrace Bar will come alive to create vibrant golden hours to remember.

San Miguel is also the official beer partner of *Somerset House Summer Series with American Express*. Guests will be able to enjoy the brand's wide range of beers including Especial, 0,0% and Gluten Free in the courtyard throughout the evening, and at the Terrace bar pre-gig.

NOTES TO EDITORS

ABOUT SOMERSET HOUSE

Step Inside, Think Outside

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 ADIDAS ORIGINALS

Inspired by the rich sporting heritage of adidas – one of the world's leading sports brands and a global designer and developer of athletic footwear and apparel – adidas Originals is a lifestyle brand founded in 2001. With the adidas archive at its foundation, adidas Originals continues to evolve the brand's legacy through its commitment to product innovation and its ability to filter the creativity and courage found on courts and sporting arenas through the lens of contemporary youth culture. Marked by the iconic Trefoil logo that was first used in 1972 and championed by those that

continue to shape and define creative culture, adidas Originals continues to lead the way as the pioneering sportswear brand for the street.

ABOUT SEPHORA

Sephora is the world's leading global prestige beauty retail brand. With 46,000 passionate employees operating in 35 markets, Sephora connects customers and beauty brands within the world's most trusted and dynamic beauty community.

We serve a highly engaged community of hundreds of millions of beauty followers across our global omnichannel network of more than 2 700 stores and iconic flagships, and our e-commerce and digital platforms, offering personalized and immersive seamless experiences across every touchpoint. With our curation of close to 300 brands and our own label, Sephora Collection, we offer the most unique and diverse range of prestige beauty products, tailored to our customers' needs from fragrance to make-up, haircare, skincare and beyond, as we constantly reimagine the world of prestige beauty. Since our inception in 1969 in Limoges, France, and as part of the LVMH Group since 1997, we have been disrupting the prestige beauty retail industry. Today, we continue to break with convention to drive our mission to expand the way the world sees beauty and empower the extraordinary in each of us.