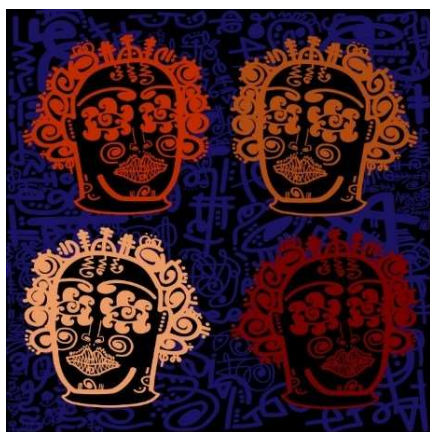


SOMERSET HOUSE'S YOUNG PRODUCERS COLLECTIVE LAUNCHES ITS INAUGURAL PROJECT CELEBRATING BLACK BRITISH ART AT SOMERSET HOUSE IN COLLABORATION WITH INNOVATIVE DESIGN STUDIO COMUZI AND PINTEREST



YOUNG PRODUCERS X COMUZI: DECENTRALISE

Launching 16 March 2021

Available to access for free via: somersethouse.org.uk/engagement-and-skills/young-producers/comuzi

Somerset House's **Young Producers** collective presents its inaugural project, **DECENTRALISE**, a **new interactive digital platform exploring the history of Black British art at Somerset House**, in collaboration with **innovative design studio and Somerset House Studios resident COMUZI** and project partners **Pinterest**, with support from **Art Fund**.

The Young Producers collective launched in October 2020 as part of Somerset House's Engagement and Skills programme and offers development and support to young creatives who are underrepresented in the cultural sector. It comprised of six London-based emerging creatives aged 18-30 who have worked closely with COMUZI to co-produce a **digital resource which seeks to re-centre Black people in the cultural history at Somerset House**.

Forming part of Somerset House's recent Anti-Racism Pledge which commits to conducting, and making available, new research into what is currently understood of Somerset House's social history, *DECENTRALISE* will allow users to **engage virtually with over 16 key objects from, and inspired by, Somerset House's exhibition past**, the themes of which span **Afro-Nowism, Afrofuturism, Political and Disobedient art**, through design, interaction and play.

Launching this March, the platform, which will be available to access via a dedicated online site,

SOMERSET HOUSE'S YOUNG PRODUCERS COLLECTIVE LAUNCHES ITS INAUGURAL PROJECT *DECENTRALISE*

dives into Somerset House's exhibition archive, from the celebrated *Get Up, Stand Up Now* (2019) and *Return of the Rude Boy* (2014) to *2026: Utopian Voices Here & Now* (2016), to host illustrated objects inspired by some of today's most pioneering contemporary Black artists and creators including **GAIKA, Richard Rawlins, Althea McNish and David Hammons**. By using these objects as materials, users are encouraged to **create and build their own artistic creations within the site**, as well as explore how the themes of each work relate to the personal and collective experiences of what it means to be Black and British.

Once these interactions begin, the public will have the opportunity for their works which celebrate Black cultural appreciation to be contributed to the *DECENTRALISE* archive, as well as have the chance for their creations be shared by the Young Producers via Somerset House's social media channels. The archive and its public works will in turn contribute to the documentation of Black British cultural history at Somerset House, and offer a fresh perspective on how events, artistic responses, and personal stories, tie in intrinsically to the telling of this history.

The Young Producers have been using visual discovery platform Pinterest to plot the journey from inspiration to action since their exploratory work began in November 2020. The public can explore their creative journey to date by visiting their dedicated Pinterest boards, for example [here](#).

The next project from the Young Producers programme in 2021 will be co-produced with experimental design studio and Somerset House Studios resident **Superflux** and will explore visions of hopeful futures in a climate-altered world.

LAUNCH EVENT:

A series of events will accompany the platforms' launch exploring the process, inspiration and journey behind its creation. Full details to be announced.

Young Producers in conversation with COMUZI

16 March 2021, 13.00, Streamed event online, Free

To mark the launch of *DECENTRALISE*, the Young Producers join COMUZI in conversation for a streamed Q&A, giving viewers the chance to meet the Young Producers virtually, as well as hear the inspiration and collaborative journey behind creating the platform throughout lockdown. The event will also demonstrate how users can create their own works using the site.

MORE FROM ENGAGEMENT AND SKILLS:

Upgrade Yourself: Creative Careers at Somerset House

Somerset House has relaunched its innovative creative careers programme under the new umbrella of **Upgrade Yourself**. The newly revised programme offers support to both young talent aged 18-25, who are looking for access routes into the cultural sector, and Somerset House's resident arts and creative enterprises in finding fresh perspectives to contribute to their output.

SOMERSET HOUSE'S YOUNG PRODUCERS COLLECTIVE LAUNCHES ITS INAUGURAL PROJECT DECENTRALISE

There are now multiple ways to take part in the programme, including **Upgrade Yourself: Online**, a series of fortnightly virtual talks and workshops delivered by seasoned creative professionals which centre on a different corner of the creative industries each month, as well as **Upgrade Yourself: IRL**, offering networking and mentoring opportunities alongside Somerset House's pioneering London Living Wage work placements across Somerset House Trust and Somerset House's resident community of over 400 businesses. In conjunction with **Upgrade Yourself's launch**, Somerset House has released a resource guide for colleagues in the cultural sector, entitled **Upgrade Yourself: Playbook**, and one-off podcast **Upgrade Yourself: Audio** in which Somerset House's Engagement and Skills team chart the journey of creating the programme.

For more information visit: somersethouse.org.uk/engagement-and-skills/upgrade-yourself

The Somerset House Young Producers programme is supported by Art Fund, with additional support for this programme from Pinterest

Upgrade Yourself: Online is supported by the Maria Bjornson Memorial Fund

Upgrade Yourself: IRL is supported by the Blavatnik Family Foundation, Frelands Foundation and John Lyon's Charity

FOR PRESS ENQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT:
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NOTES TO EDITORS

YOUNG PRODUCERS X COMUZI: DECENTRALISE

- Launching 16 March 2021
- Visit somersethouse.org.uk/engagement-and-skills/young-producers/comuzi for more information

ABOUT SOMERSET HOUSE YOUNG PRODUCERS

Somerset House's new **Young Producers programme offers** training, development and London Living Wage paid opportunities to nurture the next generation of emerging cultural producers. The arts organisation has selected **six people, aged 18-30, from over 250 applicants that** represents the diversity of London, to join the programme, which invites them to produce new work to be presented at Somerset House and across its digital channels.

The programme has been made possible with thanks to **Art Fund**, with additional support from **Pinterest** for the first project. Somerset House will provide the public platform for their work, facilitate introductions to collaborators and mentors, and meet regularly with the group to support and advise on all areas of successfully launching new cultural events. The programme intends to expand to incorporate further members in the coming year to work on future collaborative projects. Young Producers will stay with Somerset House for a maximum of two years, with the organisation hoping to recruit new members each year.

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ABOUT COMUZI

COMUZI is a design studio based in London that works with companies, charities and governments to explore, imagine, prototype & invent radical products, services, experiences & different ways of thinking.

Our creative process spans design research, interaction design, advanced prototyping, ideation workshops, and immersive future scenarios.

Some of the inventors we have worked with includes the likes of Nike, Uber, Morrama, doteveryone, University of Arts London, ASOS, NHS, EY, Waltham Forest Council, Southwark Council, Wellcome Trust, BBC R&D, Ustwo, M&C SAATCHI, Samsung, Mozilla Foundation, Ada Lovelace Institute & Projects by If.

ABOUT ART FUND

Art Fund is the national fundraising charity for art. It provides millions of pounds every year to help museums to acquire and share works of art across the UK, further the professional development of their curators, and inspire more people to visit and enjoy their public programmes. In response to Covid-19 Art Fund has made £2 million in adapted funding available to support museums through reopening and beyond, including Respond and Reimagine grants to help meet immediate need and reimagine future ways of working. Art Fund is independently funded, supported by the 159,000 members who buy the National Art Pass, who enjoy free entry to over 240 museums, galleries and historic places, 50% off major exhibitions, and receive Art Quarterly magazine. Art Fund also supports museums through its annual prize, Art Fund Museum of the Year. In a unique edition of the prize for 2020, Art Fund responded to the unprecedented challenges that all museums are facing by selecting five winners and increasing the prize money to £200,000. The winners are Aberdeen Art Gallery; Gairloch Museum; Science Museum; South London Gallery; and Towner Eastbourne www.artfund.org

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.

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. somersethouse.org.uk