

Assembly Residency Application Guidelines

All applicants must read the guidelines below carefully before applying. By applying, you are confirming that you understand and agree to these points.

Please email studios@somerset-house.org.uk for an Audio Recording of the Application Guidelines and Application Form

WHAT IS THE ASSEMBLY RESIDENCY?

This residency is a 12-month programme developed to support music and sound artists who are interested in experimenting and curious about working across other disciplines. The residency is shaped with mentorship from artists Mark Leckey, Beatrice Dillon and Elaine Mitchener. Participating artists will develop a new live work over the 12-month programme to be presented at Assembly, the studio's bi-annual series of experimental music and performance, in Spring 2026. The programme offers studio space in central London, a bespoke artist development programme, and a project budget to develop new work, with support and mentoring throughout.

WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE RESIDENCY

- Free, dedicated studio space at Somerset House.
- £3,000 project budget (including artist fee).
- Mentorship programme: You'll be paired with a primary mentor, with access to other mentors as needed throughout the residency.

- Production support, including access to recording studio and rehearsal spaces.
- A bespoke Artist Development Programme featuring critical rehearsals and listening sessions.
- Dedicated time with a sound engineer.
- Editorial advice through sessions with The Wire magazine.
- Access to the artist community-based at Somerset House Studios, with opportunities for networking, social events, and peer collaboration.
- Support from the Somerset House Studios Team to help develop and realise your project.
- An artist profile on the Somerset House website will increase your practice's visibility.
- Support for reasonable adjustments to assist with access requirements.

CRITERIA

- Artists are interested in experimentation and open to new ideas across sound and music.
- Early to mid-career artists with up to six years of experience producing music or sound-based projects that have been shared with the public (e.g., live performances, installations, public releases). Artists returning to music or sound after an extended time away are also encouraged to apply.
- Artist based in London and over 18 years of age.
- Artists who want to engage with Somerset House Studios' artist community are eager to collaborate, share ideas, and explore new directions in their work.

Applicants must be able to:

- Share three examples of public presentation/sharing of their work (live performance, installation, sharing of a project).
- Outline a theme or idea they would like to explore and develop for Assembly 2026.
- Clearly demonstrate how this opportunity could meaningfully impact your practice.

Somerset House is committed to being actively anti-racist across all areas of our work, ensuring all programmes are inclusive and representative, and paying particular attention to those under-represented* in the culture sector. We are committed to embedding inclusion and representation into our overall selection.

*By under-represented, we mean People who are under-represented within the creative sector workforce and audiences, specifically in terms of LGBTQIA+ and/or non-binary, having a migrant or refugee experience, from African Diaspora, from South, East and South East Asian diaspora, and/or ethnically diverse, neurodivergent, disabled, affected by a health condition or impairment, affected by homelessness, care-leaver, carer, unemployed and/or have received welfare benefits, working class and/or first in their immediate family to go to university.

WHAT'S EXPECTED OF RESIDENCY PARTICIPANTS

- Active engagement in the artist development programme, including participation in critical feedback sessions, social events, and collaborative discussions.

- Commitment to the mentorship programme, staying in regular contact with your mentor and taking part in the wider mentoring network.
- Use the studio space as a primary workspace throughout the residency.
- An openness to collaboration and a desire to contribute to and benefit from the wider Studios community.

WHAT IS ASSEMBLY?

Somerset House Studios' Assembly is a bi-annual event series presenting experimental live sound and performance work, foregrounding new cross-disciplinary commissions and premieres over the duration of several days. Since its inaugural edition in 2018, Assembly has featured artists such as Beatrice Dillon, Bríghde Chaimbeul, Christian Marclay, Chuquimamani-Condori, Dis Fig, Elaine Mitchener, Jenna Sutela, Jennifer Walshe, Klein, Lawrence Lek, Lucy Railton, Mark Leckey, Nkisi, Prem Sahib, Zadie Xa, plus many more.

WHO ARE THE MENTORS?

The residency is shaped with mentorship from artists Beatrice Dillon and Elaine Mitchener.

Beatrice Dillon is a London-based artist and music producer, known for her innovative work in sound, performance, and installation. She's presented her work at major arts institutions worldwide. Her album 'Workaround' (PAN, 2020) was named Album of the Year by The Wire magazine. Recent multi-channel sound

commissions include: Ina GRM Paris (2024), Haus der Kunst, Munich (2022) and Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art, Porto (2022). In 2023, Dillon composed the film soundtrack for Turner-Prize artist Helen Marten's exhibition at Greene Naftali, NYC and was album producer for Norwegian saxophonist Bendik Giske (Smalltown Supersound). Dillon's first orchestral work, 'Sift: Piano, Vibraphone, Other...' (2024) co-commissioned by BBC Radio 3 and Nonclassical premiered with the London Symphony Orchestra in October 2024. Her latest record 'Seven Reorganisations' (2024) features new acoustic compositions written for classical sextet, Explore Ensemble and is the inaugural release on Dillon's record label, HI.

Elaine Mitchener is a British Afro-Caribbean vocalist, movement artist and composer working between contemporary/experimental new music, free improvisation and visual art. She is currently a Wigmore Hall Associate Artist, an Artist Associate with ENSEMBLE KLANG, and was a DAAD Artist-in-Berlin Fellow (2022) and an exhibiting artist in the British Art Show 9 (2021-22). In February 2022 Mitchener was awarded an MBE for Services to Music. Her debut album SOLO THROAT was released in May 2024 under Café Oto's OTORUKO label. Composers and artists she has worked and collaborated with include: George E Lewis, Jennifer Walshe, Tansy Davies, Rolf Hind, Laure M Hiendl, Matana Roberts; visual artists Sonia Boyce, Christian Marclay and The Otolith Group; chamber ensembles Apartment House, London Sinfonietta, Ensemble MAM, Ensemble Klang, Ekmeles Vocal Ensemble and Klangforum Wien; choreographer Dam van Huynh and experimental musicians such as Moor Mother, Joelle Leandre, Saul Williams, Pat Thomas and David Toop. Elaine is founder of the collective electroacoustic unit The Rolling Calf.

WHAT IS THE TIMELINE?

- November 2024: Open call for applications.
- The deadline for applications is 23:59 on Tuesday, 31 December 2024
- February 2025: Artist meetings and selection process.
- April 2025 - March 2026: Residency period.
- Spring 2026: Presentation of new works at Assembly.

IS THERE ANOTHER WAY TO APPLY?

It's possible to submit your application in writing, audio or video format. We ask you to answer the same questions in whichever format you choose.

Written applications should be submitted via the online form as outlined. Video/Audio Applications should be emailed to studios@somersethouse.org.uk

No assessment will be made of the production quality of audio or video recordings.

All applications, regardless of format, should be submitted no later than 23:59 on Tuesday, 31 December 2024

WHAT ACCESS SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE?

We are committed to making our opportunities accessible and the application experience as user-friendly as we can. This is part of our ongoing work to welcome and encourage applicants facing barriers to apply. You can access this application guidance and the application form in a number of accessible formats at the top of this page. Please note the downloadable application forms above are provided to help you draft your answers offline before submitting via the online application form or the formats outlined.

ACCESS SUPPORT WORKER

We can contribute up to £200 towards a fee for an Access Support Worker for applicants who need one. Please email Harry Leek at studios@somersethouse.org.uk at least one working week before the deadline to discuss how we can help.

ACCESS RIDER

We are committed to ensuring that the programme is accessible to the selected artists. Selected artists will have the chance to share an access rider with the Studios team, and the team can also provide an access rider template at the start of their residency, to ensure participants can let us know what they need to fully participate in the programme, including communication methods and engagement in both digital and real-life elements.

ACCESS BUDGET

There is a budget to support with reasonable adjustments to assist with access requirements for this residency programme. We will work with individuals to understand their specific needs.

ARE ALL STUDIOS AREAS ACCESSIBLE?

The shared studio space is located on the ground floor of the New Wing of Somerset House, which is wheelchair accessible. The Paint Room and Snooker Room social areas and all Somerset House Studios project spaces (including the recording studio) are wheelchair accessible via the lifts. Somerset House is a Grade I listed building, so there may be times when we need to look at specific requirements. We will work with individuals to understand their specific needs and how to navigate access challenges if they arise.

WILL I RECEIVE CONFIRMATION OF RECEIPT OF MY APPLICATION?

Yes, confirmation of all applications will be emailed.

WHAT IS THE SELECTION PROCESS?

Each application will be reviewed by a minimum of two members of the Somerset House Studios team and assessed against the opportunity criteria. If the candidate meets the minimum criteria, the application will be scored against interest in the artist and their work, proposed idea and its alignment with the Studios' remit to push bold ideas, engage with urgent issues and pioneer new technologies, as well as the context of the Assembly programme, and the strength of the case made for a benefit to the artist's practice. A long list of artists will be shared with the mentors and panel to arrive at a shortlist for an interview. Three artists will be offered this opportunity.

WHAT EXAMPLES OF WORK SHOULD I SHARE?

Please submit no more than three specific examples of work that you would like the panel to review. Due to the volume of applications, it is not always possible to review all examples of work in full. Where there are longer pieces, please indicate a particular section that should be reviewed. Please ensure all answers in your application are within the word count guidelines provided and ensure that passwords are provided for any links or websites that are not public.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I'M SHORTLISTED?

Shortlisted candidates will be invited for an in-person meeting at Somerset House in January 2025 to discuss their application in more detail.

CAN I VIEW THE STUDIO AND FACILITIES BEFOREHAND?

All shortlisted candidates will have a tour of Somerset House Studios and will be able to view the studio and facilities at this stage.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I'M SELECTED?

Selected artists will be offered this residency in January 2025 and issued with an agreement and residency pack. Participating artists will be expected to use Somerset House Studios as their main place of work for the residency period of April 2025 – March 2026, and artists will be expected to participate in all elements of the residency programme, including mentorship meetings, artist development opportunities and other programme elements which will be outlined in more detail in your residency pack.

WHAT IS THE PROJECT BUDGET FOR?

Selected artists will also receive a £3,000 project budget to develop a new work to be presented at Somerset House as part of Assembly in March 2026 at the end of the residency. This £3,000 project budget should include an artist fee as well as material or production costs for the development of the work. Additional in-kind support may be allocated by Somerset House Studios where feasible. This will be discussed with the assembly programme producer early on during the residency timeline.

CAN I APPLY IN A GROUP?

We are unable to accommodate group applications but will consider applications from duos (please note that the project budget would need to be split in this case).

WHAT ARE THE WIDER DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL PROGRAMMES AT SOMERSET HOUSE STUDIOS?

Over 60 artists and their teams are resident at Somerset House Studios, with Somerset House more broadly being home to the UK's largest and most exciting creative community. Somerset House Studios hosts year-round artist development and community programmes, which residency recipients will have full access to. These programmes include regular socials to connect with other artists, one-to-one meetings, parties, opening events, artist-led workshops and tailored advice sessions. Artists will also have access to the wider Somerset House support programme, which includes legal advice clinics, networking opportunities and creative industry-focused events.

APPLICATION QUERIES

Please email Harry Leek at studios@somersetshouse.org.uk. We will aim to respond to emails within three working days. Please ensure you have read the Application Guidelines carefully before getting in touch, as you may find your answers in this information. Please note that the advice we give will be on the eligibility and suitability of you making an application and will have no bearing on its assessment. You do not need to have spoken to a member of staff before applying.

CAN I RECEIVE FEEDBACK ON MY APPLICATION IF I'M NOT SUCCESSFUL?

Due to the anticipated volume of applications, we will not be able to offer feedback to unsuccessful applicants. Please note that the panel decision is final, and there is no appeal or reconsideration process.

The deadline for applications is 23:59 on Tuesday, 31 December 2024