

PRESS RELEASE

GET UP, STAND UP!

Generations of Black Creative Pioneers

12 June – 15 September 2019



WEST WING GALLERIES, SOMERSET HOUSE, LONDON

£12.50/£9.50 CONCESSIONS

This summer, Somerset House celebrates the past **50 years of Black creativity** in Britain and beyond, in a major new exhibition spanning art, film, photography, music, literature, design and fashion. Beginning with the radical Black film maker **Horace Ové** and his dynamic circle of Windrush generation creative peers, and extending to today's brilliant young Black talent globally, a group of around **100 interdisciplinary artists** will showcase work together for the first time, exploring Black experience and influence, from the post-war era to the present day. Whether established or emerging, all contributors have been specially selected for actively shaping cultural life in Britain and beyond. In this multi-sensory experience, historic works and new commissions will sit alongside items from personal archives, much of which has never been seen by the public before, tracing more than half a century of collective history.

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Curated by artist **Zak Ové**, *Get Up, Stand Up!* starts with the work of his father, Horace Ové, creator of the first feature film by a Black British director, and his creative circle who were part of what is now known as the Windrush generation. Together they spearheaded a new cultural wave in 1960s and 1970s Britain, which drew on their African-Caribbean heritage and their experiences in their new home. Their work created ripples of change, inspiring successive generations, who, as a result, have articulated their truths in challenging and innovative ways. Through cultural exchanges and collaborations across the African diaspora, these trailblazing creatives continue to change the consciousness of British society today. Curator Zak Ové has invited each artist to exhibit for becoming a true groundbreaker of their generation and their genre.

Numerous works will be created especially for the exhibition, championing the wealth of contemporary Black creative talent. Highlights confirmed include an original soundtrack by Trinidadian DJ, producer and member of Major Lazer, **Jillionaire**, which will be streamed throughout the exhibition space. Participating Somerset House Studios residents, including artist **Larry Achiampong**, musician **Gaika** and film maker **Jenn Nkiru** (who worked on Jay Z's and Beyoncé's APESH*T), will also present new pieces for the show.

Somerset House is extremely proud to have unprecedented access to the archives of key contributors to post-war Black culture, such as photographers **Charlie Phillips**, **Armet Francis** and **Vanley Burke**, and artist **Aubrey Williams**, a founding member of the Caribbean Artists Movement. With original photographs, letters, films and audio clips, the exhibition unearths the creative, the personal and the political in their lives, and charts the climate of their times. Much of this material has never previously been shared with the public.

Contributing artist Jillionaire said: "Caribbean people have always been storytellers, whether through film, dance, visual arts, music or literature. Their stories have had formative - and transformative - impact on UK culture, from the calypsos of the 50s and 60s heralding the birth of British Black Music to Horace's 'Pressure' cementing him in history as the first Black British filmmaker, to the unique visual language of Zak's beautiful statues.

"We now have the unique opportunity of bringing the past and present together in a single frame, allowing us not just to compare and contrast the work of father and son, but to walk the bridge that connects their work. From the past to the present, from the Caribbean to the Motherland, from the old to the new, from film to sculpture to music, I am excited to participate in this journey of cultural exploration."

Get Up, Stand Up! forms a focal point for an incredible summer at Somerset House celebrating the contribution of different cultures on our country. These themes will extend out from the galleries into the courtyard, through the stand-out *Summer Series with American Express* and *Film4 Summer Screen* line-ups, and through the exhibition *Kaleidoscope*. Curated by Ekow Eshun and Darrell Vydellingum, this free show in the Terrace Rooms reveals stories of immigration and identity in modern Britain.

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An extensive talks and events programme will further illustrate how much there is still to learn, share and connect. Highlights include the launch of 100 Great Black Britons, a public poll to recognise history's most influential Black people, on Windrush Day on 22 June. Initially set up in 2004, the vote was organised by Patrick Vernon in response to the absence of Black people in the top 100 of the BBC's Greatest Briton list. At *Get Up, Stand Up!*, exhibition visitors will be able to cast their vote for the first time in 15 years. In addition, Somerset House's Creative Careers Academy – an initiative to provide London Living Wage work placements to talented young people who are under-represented in the creative and cultural sector – will be offering a placement connected to *Get Up, Stand Up!*, giving insight into production, education and curation.

FOR PRESS ENQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT:
press@somersetshouse.org.uk/0207 845 4624

NOTES TO EDITORS

Dates: 12 June – 15 September 2019

Opening Hours: Sat – Tues, 10.00 – 18.00. Wed – Fri, 11.00 – 20.00, except for 11 – 21 July and 8 – 21 August, when daily opening hours are 10.00 – 18.00.

Tickets: £12.50/£9.50 concessions, available at www.somersetshouse.org.uk

ADDITIONAL LISTINGS INFORMATION

Address: Somerset House, Strand, London, WC2R 1LA

Transport: Underground: Temple, Embankment / Rail: Charing Cross, Waterloo, Blackfriars

Website: www.somersetshouse.org.uk

Somerset House Facebook:

www.facebook.com/SomersetHouse

Somerset House Twitter: @SomersetHouse

Somerset House Instagram: @SomersetHouse

Hashtag: #GetUpStandUp

ARTISTS INCLUDE:

Althea McNish, Armet Francis, Aubrey Williams, Barbara Walker, Black Audio Film Collective, Bradford Young, Campbell Addy, Charlie Phillips, Che Lovelace, Cosmo Whyte, Deborah Roberts, Dennis Bovell, Denzil Forrester, Ebony G. Patterson, Errol Lloyd, Gaika, Gary Simmons, Glenn Ligon, Gordon Parks, Hank Willis Thomas, Hassan Hajjaj, Hew Locke, Horace Ové, Hurvin Anderson, Jenn Nkiru, Kehinde Wiley, Larry Achiampong, Lavar Munroe, Libita Clayton, Lisa Brice, Margaret Busby, Mowalola Owgunlesi, Nari Ward, Nick Cave, Normski, Paul Maheke, Rhea Storr, Richard Rawlins, Ronald Moody, Ronan McKenzie, Sanford Biggers, Satch Hoyt, Shabaka Hutchings, Vanley Burke, Yinka Shonibare, with a specially-commissioned soundtrack by Jillionaire of Major Lazer.

The full list of artists and cultural collaborators will be announced in March.

Alongside the participating artists, Somerset House has assembled a group of Ambassadors to act as a sounding board during the exhibition's development. Ambassadors include Baroness Valerie Amos, Director of SOAS; President of Island Records, Darcus Beese; Chairman of the Conduit and Founder of The Arts Africa Trust, Robert Devereux; photographic agent Camilla Lowther, and co-author of "*Windrush: The Irresistible Rise of Multi-Racial Britain*", Trevor Phillips.

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ABOUT SOMERSET HOUSE

Inspiring contemporary culture

One of the city's most spectacular and well-loved spaces, Somerset House is a new kind of arts centre in the heart of London, designed for today's audiences, artists and creatives – an inspirational community where contemporary culture is imagined, created and experienced.

From its 18th Century origins, Somerset House has played a central role in our society as a place where our culture and collective understanding of the world is shaped and defined. In 2000, it began its reinvention as a cultural powerhouse and home for arts and culture today, creating unique and stimulating experiences for the public, bringing them into direct contact with ideas from the greatest artists, makers and thinkers of our time. Our distinctive and dynamic year-round programme spans the contemporary arts in all its forms, from cutting-edge exhibitions and installations to annual festivals, seasonal events in the courtyard including Film4 Summer Screen, Summer Series and Skate, and an extensive learning and engagement programme.

As well as welcoming over 3million visitors annually, Somerset House houses the largest and most diverse creative communities in the country – from one-person start-ups to successful creative enterprises including MOBO, British Fashion Council, Dance Umbrella, Improbable Theatre, Hofesh Shechter Company, and Dartmouth Films.

In 2016 we launched Somerset House Studios – a new experimental workspace connecting artists, makers and thinkers with audiences. Currently housing over 80 artists and Makerversity (a community of over 250 emergent makers), the Studios are a platform for the development of new creative projects and collaboration, promoting work that pushes bold ideas, engages with urgent issues and pioneers new technologies. www.somersethouse.org.uk

ABOUT ZAK OVÉ

Zak Ové is a London based multi-disciplinary artist working in film, sculpture and photography to reclaim old world mythologies in new world source materials and technologies. His fascination with the interplay between antiquity and the future is inspired by masking rituals and traditions of Trinidadian carnival that is itself rooted in a struggle for emancipation. Ové's work is in celebration of the power of play, the juxtaposition of parody and sacred ritual and the blurring of edges between reality and fantasy, flesh and spirit. His use of non-traditional materials: copper, wood, Victoriana and other found materials, situates the work in the metropolises of Europe and the Americas where they merge and mutate into endless possibilities and unexpected identities. Ové has presented solo installations at San Fransisco Civic Centre, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Somerset House and the British Museum. His work has also appeared in group exhibitions including: Stephen Friedman Gallery, David Roberts Art Foundation, all London; Prospect 4 Biennial, New Orleans; MAAT Museum, Lisbon. Ové is included in the collections of: Beth de Woody Collection, British Museum, Levett Collection, Pizzuti Collection, among others.

ABOUT HORACE OVÉ

Horace Ové, CBE is internationally known as one of the leading Black independent filmmakers to emerge in Britain since the post-war period. His 1976 film *Pressure* is cited in the film Guinness Book of Records as the first Black feature-length film made in the UK.

Ové's film career has produced such diverse films as *Baldwin's Nigger* (1969); *Reggae* (1970) and *The Mangrove Nine* (1973), directed by Franco Rosso. He has done much innovatory work in television. He directed various episodes of the groundbreaking series *Empire Road* (1978-9), which for the first time addressed Britain's multicultural society and *The Latchkey Children* (1978-9), the first multiracial children's drama.

Ové has also directed drama on stage, including Lindsay Barrett's *Blackblast* (the first Black play performed at the ICA), *The Swamp Dwellers* by Nobel Prize-winner Wole Soyinka and *The Lion* by Michael Abbensetts (starring Madge Sinclair, Stefan Kalipha and Danny Sapani).

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Alongside a film career, Horace Ové has worked extensively as a photographer, and over the years has exhibited across the world as well as having retrospectives at UCLA, the British Film Institute and the University of Tuebingen in Germany. His “Breaking Loose” was the first exhibition of a Black photographer at the Photographers’ Gallery. He also had an exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery in 2005, work exhibited at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, the Tate Liverpool, and the Whitechapel, and a retrospective of his film and photographic work was held at the Barbican in London.

Horace Ové has won many awards. He was named Best Director for Independent Film and Television by the British Film Institute in 1986. In June 2007 he was honoured by Her Majesty the Queen, being made a Commander of the British Empire (CBE) for his services to the film industry in the UK.

Horace Ové’s work, characterised by innovative treatment of sometimes controversial subject matter, makes him a model for emerging film makers. As the British Film Institute states in *100 Years of Cinema*: “Horace Ové is undoubtedly a pioneer in Black British history and his work provides a perspective on the Black experience in Britain.”