# Black British LGBTQ+s make a 'rukus' at Somerset House



Somerset House in London is set to host an evocative new exhibition that delves into the vibrant and resilient Black LGBTQ+ culture in Britain, dating back to the 1970s. Titled Making a Rukus! Black Queer Histories Through Love and Resistance, the exhibition will open its doors this October, promising visitors an immersive journey that combines elements of art, history, and activism.

The exhibition has been curated by the renowned artist and filmmaker Topher Campbell, who is also the co-founder of The Rukus! Federation. This organisation, known for its thought-provoking and lively art initiatives, was established in 2000 by Campbell alongside photographer Ajamu X. Making a Rukus! aspires to highlight the history and ongoing resistance of Black LGBTQ+ communities in Britain through a diverse range of artefacts.

The exhibit features over 200 pieces, including a rich tapestry of archival materials, contemporary artworks, and several newly commissioned works. It's presented not as a static historical documentation but rather as a dynamic showcase of the political and artistic movements that have shaped and been shaped by Black LGBTQ+ individuals in Britain.

Upon entering the exhibition, visitors are greeted by a projection of one of Campbell's most acclaimed film projects, The Homecoming: A Short Film About Ajamu. This film juxtaposes the gritty urban landscape of Brixton with the burgeoning gay scene of the 1980s and ’90s. Serving as an introduction to the overarching themes of the exhibition, the film explores the interplay of art, activism, and the role of friendships in the formation of The Rukus! Federation.

The installation itself is a vivid tapestry, with archival newspapers, photographs, and clippings adorned on the ceiling, evoking a sense of nightclub nostalgia. There are flickering film footages that capture oral histories through a series of intimate interviews, giving visitors personal insights into the experiences of Black LGBTQ+ individuals across generations. Flyers advertising raves and materials for HIV prevention cast colours and lights across a mirrored dancefloor, creating an atmosphere that is both reflective and celebratory.

This ambitious exhibition serves as an expansive exploration of the multifaceted histories of Black queer communities in the UK, celebrating their resilience, creativity, and the continued struggle for recognition and equality in society. These vibrant narratives echo throughout the halls of Somerset House, inviting audiences to explore, understand, and appreciate the rich history and culture of a community that has continuously thrived against the odds.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2024/oct/11/making-a-rukus-review-rousing-and-emotional-celebration-of-black-lgbtq-culture> - Corroborates the exhibition's title, curator, and the historical context of the rukus Federation, as well as the exhibition's themes and content.
* <https://10magazine.com/tens-to-see-making-a-rukus-black-queer-histories-through-love-and-resistance-at-somerset-house/> - Confirms the exhibition's title, location, and the variety of objects and artworks included.
* <https://www.somersethouse.org.uk/press/making-rukus-black-queer-histories-through-love-and-resistance> - Provides details on the exhibition's dates, location, and the curatorial work by Topher Campbell, as well as the dynamic nature of the rukus archive.
* <https://www.somersethouse.org.uk/whats-on/making-a-rukus> - Supports the information about the exhibition's curator, the founding of the rukus Federation, and the immersive nature of the exhibition.
* <https://www.attitude.co.uk/culture/rukus-somerset-house-london-473796/> - Details the history of the rukus Federation, the significance of the archive, and the personal involvement of Topher Campbell and Ajamu X.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2024/oct/11/making-a-rukus-review-rousing-and-emotional-celebration-of-black-lgbtq-culture> - Describes the exhibition's layout, including the initial rooms and the film 'The Homecoming: A Short Film About Ajamu'.
* <https://www.somersethouse.org.uk/press/making-rukus-black-queer-histories-through-love-and-resistance> - Explains the different sections of the exhibition, such as 'The Founders', 'The Icons', and 'We Dance We Sweat'.
* <https://10magazine.com/tens-to-see-making-a-rukus-black-queer-histories-through-love-and-resistance-at-somerset-house/> - Mentions the inclusion of over 200 objects and the celebration of Black LGBTQ+ pioneers and artists.
* <https://www.somersethouse.org.uk/whats-on/making-a-rukus> - Details the interactive installation by Evan Ifekoya and the overall immersive and celebratory atmosphere of the exhibition.
* <https://www.attitude.co.uk/culture/rukus-somerset-house-london-473796/> - Highlights the historical context of Black queer life in Britain, the role of social media, and the strategic navigation of Black LGBTQ+ individuals.