



MEET OUR MENTEES

Since launching in 2018, Soho House's dedicated mentorship programme has been committed to supporting a new generation of creative talents in cities around the world, providing everything from guidance and community to real-life opportunities. Here, some of our past and current mentees share their experiences.

The photographs accompanying their interviews were shot by photographer Hannah Norton in locations that are personal to each mentee and their creative journey so far. Norton is currently in residence at the late fashion designer Lee Alexander McQueen's Sarabande Foundation, which is a partner in our Soho Fellowship programme.

Soho Mentorship is run in partnership with Creative Mentor Network, Creative Futures Collective, Routes In and OWN Academy.



Nyasha Ngondonga, London



The creative industries are notoriously difficult to break into: class, ethnicity, disability and more have long been barriers to entry – something Soho Mentorship aims to address. Our 16-week Soho Futures social impact programme pairs established Soho House members with young, aspiring creatives from underrepresented backgrounds to help them hone in on their passion, grow their confidence and experience, and provide them with a route into their chosen creative field.

Each of our mentees is given a Soho House membership to help grow their network, while members who choose to participate in the mentorship programme receive training on how to deliver advice and coaching. The programme currently runs in 18 cities globally, with new launches in Manchester, Barcelona, Stockholm and Bangkok scheduled for 2024. To date, along with Soho Fellowship, it has offered over 2,000 young people the support they need to excel as creative innovators.

“In 2023, 98% of UK mentors reported they had a good understanding of the barriers to access for young people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds as a result of the programme,” says Min Shrimpton, Director of House Foundations at Soho House, “At the beginning of their programme, 55% of UK mentees felt able to build positive relationships and make industry connections. This had risen to 85% by the end. Meanwhile, 100% of mentees in the Americas would recommend Soho Mentorship, and 92% of mentees in Asia said it has helped them feel more confident.” Soho Mentorship currently runs in 18 cities globally with new launches in Manchester, Barcelona, Stockholm and Bangkok by the end of 2024.

The programme supports our 2030 ESG goal to have 5% of Soho House membership intake part of a creative access programme. As of 2023, this stands at 2.8%, with our largest cohort of mentees to date. The full Soho House 2023 ESG report is now live and can be read [here](#).



‘The mentorship programme paired me with legendary British composer David Lowe,’ says Ngondonga. ‘Having a mentor who is in the industry and knows what it’s like has been so impactful for me.’

London-based Soho House mentee Nyasha Ngondonga (pictured on page 1) has been a part of the programme since 2019. Passionate about music and culture, his dream was to work in the music industry and eventually become an entrepreneur, but with no direct contacts and little experience, getting his foot in the door proved difficult.

In 2020, a year after joining the programme, Ngondonga set up his music production company, Plus TRBE Productions, with guidance from Lowe, who acted as a consultant for the launch. ‘We create music for films and TV shows that are rooted in Black culture,’ he explains, ‘Since launching, we have signed deals with the BBC and Sky to produce Library music for them, which has been featured on shows including Black Ops, The Rap Game UK and Nail Bar Boys, among others.’

On his shoot location: ‘I picked my local cafe near my team’s studio – it’s a place where we often meet, talk and have lunch.’



‘Soho House helped my career move forwards when I was booked for an in-House event. That led to the opportunity to perform for an international brand at Copenhagen Fashion Week.’

Being flown out to another country for work was so fulfilling; it made me realise that my work is worthy of being showcased internationally.’

Singer-songwriter Yael Daila joined Soho Mentorship in Amsterdam in September 2022, with the aim to build a network in the music industry and ultimately growing her passion into a career. ‘I needed some guidance for my brand, so being matched with a branding manager as my mentor was perfect for me,’ she says. ‘I was also eager to connect with people who share similar interests and ambitions as myself.’

The mentorship programme played a crucial role in helping Daila overcome various barriers, including stage fright. ‘Not only was I inspired by my mentor and the other aspiring creatives in the programme, but I also got the opportunity to perform my first gig,’ she says.

On her shoot location: ‘I decided to do the shoot at home. Last year I moved into an apartment within a creative community, which means my building is filled with people from the creative industry. It’s become my safe haven for both work and relaxation.’



‘I cannot emphasise enough the invaluable guidance provided by my mentor, Liz Hershfield. I appreciate and treasure everything she has taught me so far. Over time, she has become not just a mentor but a friend.’

Having spent most of 2020 and 2021 in isolation, New York mentee Jericka Handie joined Soho Mentorship in 2023 with the aim of finding new ways to tap into her creativity and develop her business SwiftEnough – a lifestyle brand focused on advancing equity within the mental health industry through purposeful merch, action, and resources. ‘Meeting my sustainability goals for my business posed challenges that required someone who could listen attentively and help to tactically address our needs.’

On her shoot location:

‘I chose BedStuy, Brooklyn, for my photo shoot because it holds a deep significance for me. This neighbourhood embodies an entrepreneurial spirit that resonates with my roots and upbringing in Tulsa, Oklahoma; particularly the historic Greenwood District where Black Wall Street is located. BedStuy’s collective unity and shared Black experience are palpable in its streets, local markets, and community events. The interactions I’ve had there remind me of the resilience and strength of our communities, both past and present.’



‘One of the barriers I’ve faced as an advertising creative is not seeing myself reflected in the industry. When I applied to the Soho House mentorship, I was at a low point with my relationship to creativity and so close to quitting. All I knew was that I wanted to make things and be around other creatives.’

Jeng Au joined the London cohort in 2020. A creative director and graphic designer, Au had spent years perfecting their craft but the lack of diversity in the industry had been challenging to navigate as a queer person of colour. Since becoming a mentee, Au, who is currently an art director at Amazon, has launched various creative ventures with the support of their mentors. ‘My mentor encouraged me to develop my gourmet mushroom-growing hobby into a branding project,’ they say. ‘As a result, I created SPAWN, a fungi project that explores and shares the mighty world of mycology through growth, education, community, and experimentation projects. I also began exploring ways to express my trans identity, which led to myself and some friends starting an all-trans+ arts and camping festival called Camp Trans CIC.’

On their shoot location:

‘A House For Artists is a project in Barking, east London, set up to provide flexible live-work spaces for resident artists who in turn offer free or low-cost creative programming to the neighbourhood, such as ceramic courses, film screenings and photography lessons.’



‘I knew I needed some creative direction and guidance to kickstart my company and having a mentor from Soho House seemed like the missing piece of the puzzle.’

London mentee Tele Lawal was introduced to Soho Mentorship through a friend in 2021, at a time in which she was looking for support on how to take her business to the next stage.

During the programme, Lawal was mentored by Charlie Beeson from FutureBrand, who she credits for helping her successfully navigate the challenges of running a creative business. ‘Charlie provided invaluable support for me,’ she says. ‘He helped me refine the brand identity, craft the value proposition, and frame my ideas.’

Armed with new tools and an expanded network, Lawal was able to leave her day job in consultancy to focus her energies on building her experiential e-commerce platform Kouture Paradisé alongside her second business, Faith Book Club, in 2023.

On her shoot location: ‘I chose Fulham Library. It holds a special place in my heart and shooting there brought back a flood of nostalgia. I made the move to Fulham in 2022 after spending my entire life outside London, in Noak Hill. Transitioning from a small town to the city was quite daunting; the library provided a sanctuary for me.’

‘I definitely have a different perspective on how I view myself as an artist. Usually I hide my creative process (and I sometimes still do), but the end-of-programme showcase really helped me come out of my shell and share the journey to the final product. Being a Soho House mentee has changed my life in so many ways.’



New York-based mentee Justice Rossman had never heard of Soho House or the mentorship programme when it came across their suggested posts on Instagram in 2023, shortly after completing a degree in creative writing at Columbia University. ‘What drew me to apply was wanting to be in a space where I could share art without feeling like I was in a classroom,’ they said. ‘It sounded like the cohort was super close-knit and as someone who was reluctant to share their work publicly, I thought it would be the perfect opportunity to be vulnerable in a smaller circle.’

For Rossman, the ways in which the mentorship changed their self-perception has been an invaluable part of the process.

On their shoot location: ‘I chose to do the shoot at my home in NYC because most of my memories were made here. My home has also played a big part in my creative process. I wrote some of my favourite songs while walking to the deli and watching the sunlight hit the water on the train ride home.’



‘The programme has ignited a hunger within me to seize every opportunity that comes my way and to embrace whatever serves my path and journey. Connecting with other mentors and mentees has provided me with a network of like-minded individuals, which I hope to continue to grow.’

Ammar Bader joined the Soho House mentorship programme in the summer of 2023, just after emigrating to the Netherlands from Syria on his own. ‘At the time, Amsterdam felt overwhelming yet full of potential,’ he says. ‘I was surrounded by opportunities but lacked direction. I needed guidance to navigate this new chapter of my life.’

Becoming a mentee helped Bader through some of those barriers, while inspiring him to actively pursue his passions. ‘Being paired with my mentor Ajay provided me with invaluable guidance and support, helping me to navigate challenges and build my confidence,’ he says.

On his shoot location: ‘More than just a physical space, my home in Amsterdam symbolises resilience, perseverance, and the beginning of a new chapter in my life after enduring a challenging period of living in refugee centres for over a year. It’s the first place I can truly call home.’



‘The programme has been incredibly impactful on my life in so many ways,’ she says. It connected with me an amazing mentor – Miriam from Brighton-based creative agency Designate – who gave me the confidence and support to fully push for what it was that I wanted.’

Brighton-based mentee Shauna Pentony was on a gap year from her music course at the Open University when she applied for the Soho House Mentorship. As a young woman from a lower socio-economic background without any contacts, and knowing how brutal the music industry can be, Pentony knew she needed some support to pursue her ambitions.

‘[My mentor] arranged for me to perform on local radio station 1BTN a few times.’ That experience connected Pentony with a fellow mentee, Jack Watson, who went on to Pentony’s 2023 debut EP, S.W.A.L.K.

On her shoot location: ‘For the photoshoot I chose the living room and balcony at my flat. It’s where I wrote my entire debut EP over many late nights.’



New York artist Adina Farinango uses art as an act of resistance, healing and self-expression. Her work is informed by her lived experiences as an Indigenous woman. 'As a Kichwa-Otavalo woman, my art is an extension of myself and my entire being,' she says. 'Through it, I express myself unapologetically, whether it's with digital illustrations or mixed media, such as embroidery in photography.'

Farinango joined Soho Mentorship in 2023 to not only connect with a mentor but to also engage with fellow creatives from different boroughs. Aware of the challenges she faced within the art world, both as a self-taught artist and an Indigenous woman, Farinango was looking for guidance to help navigate what – from the outside – appears to be a very closed shop.

On her shoot location: 'I chose Union Square because it's my favourite place in the city. It holds deep significance for me beyond just being a park. It's a place where artists have always sold their creations as a means of survival. It also brings back memories from my childhood.'

'The Soho House mentorship programme has created a safe environment for young creatives from lower-income and marginalised backgrounds to connect and learn from one another. 'This space has empowered me to fully embrace my artistic journey as an integral part of who I am. Interacting with fellow mentees in different fields and hearing about their experiences working with their mentors has been inspiring and informative.'

'I have been a musician for the past 15 years, though my career feels like it is just now starting to move forwards towards that. I applied for the Soho House mentorship programme to connect with someone who would understand my vision and support me in my creative goals.'



When Mika Zembic joined Soho Mentorship three years ago, they were building out an art media company while working as a film director and editor. Despite this, their real passion was always music.

It paid off. One of the most challenging aspects of pursuing a music career for Zembic had always been about getting paid for the music they create – since completing the programme, they have toured across North America with Arlo Parks and Zembic continues to benefit from the doors opened and opportunities that being a mentee has led to. 'Soho House has connected me with so many incredible friends, and it's been an honour to learn and grow alongside them,' they say.

On their shoot location: 'My home studio means so much to me. I'm so grateful to have a dedicated space in my home where I can work on music and creative projects. I've lived in my space for about five years, and it's gone through so many iterations. But the place it's at now – I feel like I'll be creating my best work yet.'



‘My mentor really challenged me by holding me accountable for my biggest and boldest dreams,’ she says. When I made the video, it was displayed in the Van Gogh Museum and from that moment onwards, I realised that my big, crazy dreams were not as crazy as I thought.’

Creative marketer Kadigia Farah joined Soho Mentorship in September 2022 after being introduced to the programme through our partnership with Amsterdam’s Van Gogh Museum, where she was working at the time. ‘I was immediately interested as I had just finished my first job and I was looking for a bigger challenge, more meaningful work,’ she says. ‘The Soho House mentorship programme was an opportunity to broaden my network and to learn how to brand myself as a creative.’

One of the big goals Farah set for herself was to create a video for annual late-night cultural festival Museumnacht Amsterdam – a milestone she hit with the support of her mentor.

On her shoot location: ‘The photo was taken at my home – a creative hub filled with photo books, doodles, notes and things that inspire me. It’s a place for me to refuel and get inspired. My work is mostly online, so I’m able to travel and work as much as I like. But my house is still my creative haven.’



‘The university route wasn’t for me. When I got the opportunity to join the mentorship programme, I immediately accepted with the goal of getting into work instead.’

‘The connections I’ve made at Soho House are so valuable and the advice I’ve received from the community there has been incredible. I’ve had a couple of really cool opportunities through past mentees too.’

Cyrus Jarvis was an 18-year-old fashion communications student at Central Saint Martins in London when he joined the 2022 cohort of the Soho House Mentorship programme. ‘I was unhappy at the time,’ he says. Jarvis was paired with a mentor who helped him secure a full-time job at a creative agency. ‘Not only did I learn so much at that job, but I learned so much from my mentor, and I continue to learn from other mentees too,’ he says. Jarvis has since pursued a career in journalism, contributing to titles such as Mission Magazine – where he is currently working on a project with Donatella Versace – and TPM (aka The Persian Magazine), a youth culture magazine based in Tehran, Iran.

On his shoot location: ‘I used to hang out in this sports complex a lot. It was opened by Prince Philip in the 1950s and abandoned in the 1980s. I discovered it in 2016 when I was 13, after jumping the fence behind a petrol station and coming across it in the middle of the woods; it felt like this private space where I could do whatever I wanted.’



‘At our mentee showcase in 2021, I presented photographs from my collection, *Look What You Left Me With*, to a room full of esteemed creatives. Needless to say, I was nervous but the reception my work received warms my heart to this day. I hope to continue to build community through mentorship. I’ve met tons of great people with rich stories and as iron sharpens iron, I hope we can grow together through collaboration and conversation.’

Soho Mentorship came just at the right time for New York mentee Nat Magloire – after working in the film and TV world for a few years, in 2021 he was gearing up to shift the focus of his career into art. ‘My creative passion lies in the visual arts, particularly in photography and videography,’ he says. ‘The programme seemed like a great space to make that pivot.’

Alongside growing his creative knowledge, learning the power of community has been among Magloire’s biggest takeaways from his time as a mentee. ‘I’ve gained a lot of valuable insight on the media and fine-arts spaces and had some impactful moments that confirm I’m doing what I’m meant to,’ he says.

On his shoot location: ‘I’ve chosen the Unisphere in Flushing Meadows Park. I’ve always found it cool and futuristic. Growing up in Queens, my friend and I would often take our cameras out and walk. We’d end up there, chatting and photographing whatever caught our eye.’

Photos by [Hannah Norton](#)

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