

acme

35 years supporting art & artists

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100% affordable mixed-use development to open Spring 2008

The U.K.'s first-ever development combining affordable housing **and** affordable studios is now under construction and due for completion in Spring 2008. This pioneering project in Leven Road, Poplar, London, is a partnership between Swan

Housing Association and Acme Studios. Swan Housing Association, part of the Swan Housing Group, builds and manages quality homes at rents that people can afford throughout Essex and East London.

Visualisation of Leven Road development, bptw partnership.

Consisting of 66 affordable housing units for rent and shared ownership and 21 affordable studios, the four to eight storey scheme received planning consent in April. The studios, located on the ground floor, are being built to our design and specification and will be purchased from Swan at a price that guarantees affordable rent levels for artists in perpetuity.

Having had the opportunity to talk to artists we realised the magnitude of the shortage of affordable workspace of this nature and the intense demand for studio space in East London especially.

Steve Eccles Development Manager, Swan Housing Association

The previous building on the site which Swan acquired was used for warehousing, but had been vacant for some time and had fallen into disrepair. The local authority, the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, wanted to see no job losses as a result of the new development – it is thought that 14 people were originally employed on the site – and was also keen to promote employment growth and the needs of the local workforce.

However, building business units speculatively is a high risk activity. Not only is there the worry that the units will not be let or sold for some time, threatening project viability, but that vacant boarded-up units will detract from the area, increase the risk of vandalism and crime and become harder to let. What we at Acme are able to guarantee, given the demand from artists on our waiting list, is a known outcome – 100 per cent continuous occupation and activity from day one.

Steve Eccles, Swan's Development Manager, was fully aware of the problem: "A high proportion of housing development in East London now requires an element of mixed use through re-provision of commercial or retail space.

All too often housing developers give little thought to how this space can be best used. It has been common to see retail units boarded up in the hope that the developer can return in future and obtain a change of use to what they see as a more profitable residential use."

"From the outset Swan refused to take this approach. We see ourselves as having a long-term commitment to the area and the early involvement of Acme meant that we could jointly plan the development to ensure its successful integration into an established community."

What we at Acme were able to demonstrate, apart from a viable proposal, was huge demand. We have 720 artists currently registered on our studio waiting list, 540 of them seeking space in Tower Hamlets and many of them local residents. This means most of the artists who will be allocated space already have strong local links, both in their professional and personal lives. Leven Road will create 21 studios, but as some spaces are shared this will create and sustain at least 28 new jobs, twice the number previously employed.

Despite the fact the price we can pay for the studios only covers their construction cost, for Swan the guarantee of a known outcome was a very persuasive factor in agreeing to work together.

For Steve Eccles working with an artists' organisation and artists is a new experience: "We certainly had preconceptions about what artists' studios would offer to the development and we had some initial concerns over whether there would be enough demand to make it sustainable in the long term. But we were soon put at

ease and convinced of the potential of the scheme, having met with the Directors of Acme and having seen the fantastic work being undertaken by artists at their Galleria studios in Peckham."

"Having talked to artists we realised the magnitude of the shortage of affordable workspace of this nature and the intense demand for studio space in East London especially."

But the scheme goes far beyond just guaranteeing sustainable low-cost employment space. Swan soon became aware of the wider benefits of the partnership: "Having seen the work undertaken at The Galleria we were certain that the presence of artists within our development would bring added life to the area and would help to bring existing and future residents together through ongoing community projects," Mr Eccles said.

Following the establishment of a successful studio residency programme at our Galleria Studios in Peckham, one of the studios at Leven Road will also be set aside as a community

Having seen the work undertaken at the Galleria we were certain that the presence of artists within our development would bring added life to the area and would help to bring existing and future residents together through ongoing community projects.

Steve Eccles, Development Manager, Swan Housing Association

resource, providing selected artists with a free studio and grant. As our experience in Peckham clearly demonstrates, such programmes not only provide significant career development opportunities for artists but also long-term benefits for the local community through projects which naturally evolve from artists' socially-engaged work.

With the addition of the 21 new studios, nearly half of Acme's studio units will be owned by the charity – 190 units out of a total of 404 across 11 sites. With other major schemes in the pipeline we are making significant progress towards our long-term goal of creating a permanent network of affordable, high-quality and accessible studios for the benefit of art and artists in

perpetuity. Our long-term capital development programme is supported by Arts Council England and we will be drawing down further funding from our £2 million allocation from their Grants for the arts – capital programme towards this scheme.

Swan and Acme see the development as an important and ground-breaking model. Steve Eccles is clear about the merits of the project: "Swan's desire to provide a scheme of high quality affordable homes for either rent or shared ownership, is perfectly complemented by Acme's mission to provide affordable artists' studios. We believe that Leven Road will be the first development of its kind in the U.K. and will bring investment and life to a previously neglected corner of East London. We truly hope that

the unquestionable success of the Leven Road development can be replicated on future schemes and that this will be the start of a long-term working relationship between Swan and Acme."

At a time when so many studio buildings across the country are at risk, either because leases are coming to an end or through the impact of high rent reviews, we hope that by promoting this model other affordable studio providers will be able to benefit from similar partnerships. The partners in this scheme are confident that this mixed-use model will make an important contribution to the wider debate about how to create genuinely sustainable communities and meet challenging house building targets.

Modular offsite construction method chosen for Leven Road housing and studio development

Swan Housing Group commissioned Greenwich-based architectural practice **bptw partnership** to design the four to eight storey building consisting of 66 affordable housing units and 21 affordable studios. The studios, which are being built to our specification, are located on part of the ground floor of the development, in a self-contained 'block'. Total gross square footage is 7,683, net 6,020. The average studio size is 286 square feet, the largest 378, the smallest 202 square feet. The studios are served by a combined wash-up and WC area, and bicycle and refuse stores.

Swan always saw Leven Road as having the potential for being a pilot scheme, initially in terms of the form of construction used. Steve Eccles, Swan's



Construction site 2 November 2007, photo David Pantan

Development Manager, was fully aware that: "The government is continuously looking for ways to speed up, and increase housing supply. The modular offsite construction method we have

chosen will realise a 50 per cent reduction in construction programme whilst also significantly reducing construction waste which would be generated on a traditionally built scheme."

This fully modular construction method is for the residential areas only, where the completed units, including corridors, are manufactured off site. The volumetric modules, of which there are numerous dimensional variations, are constructed with load bearing floors, walls and ceilings, and are designed to carry the weight of the modules above. They are completely watertight, with fully-fitted kitchens and bathrooms, including electrical and plumbing installation, and finished to a very high standard before transportation. This results in minimal work on site to connect services and complete finishes. The key benefits include a radically reduced construction time, factory quality construction and finishes, and reduced waste and environmental impact.

The nature of the site and our requirement for three metre minimum ceiling height led to the decision to 'stack' the housing modules on a podium, or transfer slab, and to construct the studios below the slab using traditional building methods. Swan engaged **Fleming Developments**, a firm of contractors based in Cork, Republic of Ireland, who specialise in the design, manufacture and erection of large modular buildings, to work with the architects on the final design.

Once the concrete transfer slab has been erected in early January, and while the modules are being craned onto the slab above, our studios will be built following the standard trades process. The total time on site – less than a year – is remarkably quick and we look forward to exploring how this construction model can be applied elsewhere.

Don't be racist to Jamaica, Love Black - Participant of Say it Loud! Southwark's Black History Month Launch at Peckham Square, 2006 photo Ana Laura Lopez de la Torre

Ana Laura Lopez de la Torre awarded the second Studio Residency in Southwark

The recipient of the second Studio Residency in Southwark, based at our Galleria Studios in Peckham, London SE15, is **Ana Laura Lopez de la Torre**. She will follow Isa Suarez as Southwark's new artist in residence from January 2008.

The Southwark Residency programme was established in 2006 following the completion of our 50 permanent new-build artists' studios at The Galleria as part of a mixed-use housing development in partnership with Barratt Homes. This pioneering planning-gain scheme was formally opened in June 2006 by the then Minister for Culture, David Lammy MP. The residency is awarded to a Southwark-based artist, who receives a rent-free studio (worth nearly £5,000) for 18 months, plus a cash stipend of £10,000.

Acme provides self-contained, private studio spaces for artists, and although many artists will have strong links, professionally and personally, with the local community, the public will only usually be aware of these spaces during annual open studio events. The residency programme is partly

intended to make the Galleria Studios more visible and accessible as a permanent cultural resource within the borough.

Supported by Southwark Council and the South London Gallery, the residency provides an opportunity for an artist involved in socially-engaged practice to develop significant relationships with cultural agencies and communities. Aiming to nurture and extend the relationship between the artist, their work and the wider community, the partners aspire to achieve publicly visible outcomes at the end of the programme and encourage greater participation in arts practice. The programme also acts as a major financial breathing space for the artist, allowing them to focus on the development of their practice.

The first residency was awarded to composer, songwriter, performer and sound artist **Isa Suarez**, who began her residency in April 2006. Working with groups including Southwark Pensioners Centre, Southwark Refugee Centre, The Maroons and The Music Project at Charterhouse in Southwark, Isa collaborated with local



groups and individuals, exploring the theme of human rights in everyday life, creating *The Human Rights Jukebox* project, which toured throughout Southwark.

There was intense competition for the second residency, with over 40 serious and deserving applications, with Ana Laura demonstrating a very clear understanding of the aims of the residency. Not only will it provide a much-needed creative breathing space for Ana Laura, but her understanding and experience of working with diverse communities promises that her contribution will make a real impact.

Born in Montevideo, Uruguay, Ana Laura has been based in South London since 1995 and completed an MA in Fine Art from Central Saint Martins in 1997. Using the ephemeral, the overlooked and the underrated as a starting point, her work creates visible and unexpected connections between things, people and places. She is interested in public opinion, social networks and the uses of public space as a platform for self-expression and diversity, often using conversation and celebration as strategies for engagement, in which the public is invited to become an active contributor to the work.

When asked what being awarded the residency meant to her, Ana Laura replied: "I haven't started the residency yet and I can already feel the benefits. It is very exciting to know I am about to embark on a long period of research with lots of 'selfish' time to think, read, write, play around with ideas, and hopefully take my work into new directions, working to my own agenda in a much more focused way. I think the location of the studio in a mixed-use facility will be really



important to me, to have the time and the space to create longer-term and stronger collaborative links with the people of Southwark and with its creative sector. It is also a great relief to know I will have some financial stability after years of surviving on a variety of commissioned work. I can only imagine that to have that stress taken off my mind will allow my thinking to flourish and my work to become a lot more experimental."

Ana Laura's proposal is to use night time as a conceptual framework: "I want to explore people's experiences and perceptions of the night. Who lives and works the night? Is the night a time of freedom or danger? Bakers, prostitutes, bus drivers, new parents nursing their babies, hospital A&E units, revelers and the homeless: all populate the city at night. But night time can also be understood as a metaphorical space for the expression of fears and desires."

Acme Studios and the partners are looking forward to working with Ana Laura over the next 18 months and witnessing the benefits her work will bring to Southwark's diverse communities.

**Ana Laura can be contacted at:
southwarknights@gmail.com**

Participants of *All Great Thoughts are Conceived by Walking*, creating a collective drawing of pedestrian movement on the South Bank. Tate Modern, 2007
photo Ana Laura Lopez de la Torre

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Ana Laura Lopez de la Torre

Fire Station career boost for Ming Wong

Acme's work/live programme at the Fire Station, London E14, is one of the most directly supportive schemes for artists in the U.K., providing combined studio and living space at low rents as well as special bursaries: rent-free space and grants of £5,000 a year, in all worth over £30,000.

Forty artists have now benefited from this creative 'breathing space' since the project was established in 1997. The former fire station was bought and converted with funding from the National Lottery and other sources, and restored and developed to provide purpose-designed work/live and non-residential studios. These units were created in response to the lack of affordable space for artists to work and live in, and to the lack of studios properly accessible to disabled artists. The fixed-term residency scheme is intended to allow artists more time to concentrate on the development of their work and professional careers, and less time working to survive.

Programme 3, which started in April 2005, provided two bursaries of two and a half years (£5,000 a year plus rent free work/live space) and was aimed at attracting applications from black and ethnic minority artists and artists with disabilities. The bursary for an artist with a disability was awarded to Ben Cove, who still has a year to run, having moved into the Fire Station in 2006. Ming Wong, who was awarded the other bursary, has just come to the end of his residency.

The bursary provided Ming with the time and space to develop a new body of work inspired by his research into the National Sound Archives' literature and drama collection, which includes audio art, sound poetry, and recordings of experimental drama and deceased British comedians. It has proved to be an invaluable boost to his artistic career.

"The Fire Station Bursary and Residency programme gave me the opportunity to get my artistic career back on track"

I had the means, the space and time to develop ideas in a focused and sustained direction. I could afford more time to research and experiment, without the worry of tangible returns.

Ming Wong

said Ming. I had the means, the space and time to develop ideas in a focused and sustained direction. I could afford more time to research and experiment, without the worry of tangible returns."

Ming confirmed that being chosen for the programme marked a turning point in his life and served as a priceless advancement in his professional development. He said: "It's been a unique and unparalleled experience living and working at the Fire Station, with its camaraderie with fellow artists and its creative and supportive atmosphere. I shall always be grateful to the Fire Station for giving me a 'shot in the arm' when I needed it and for putting my career back on track and in the right direction."

Ming has now left the Fire Station and moved to Berlin to take up a one-year Künstlerhaus Bethanien residency. Ben continues to be fully involved in the programme as he enters his final year. Fire Station Programme 4 is due to start in 2010 with a continuing commitment by Acme to provide valuable bursaries (rent free spaces and grants) for artists most in need and at critical points in their career development.

Ming Wong preparing to move on to Berlin
photo Ming Wong



PREVIOUS ARTISTS AT THE FIRE STATION

Programme 1 (1997-2001) Edward Allington, Helena Ben-Zenou, Gillian Blease, Paul Burwell, Martin Creed, Permindar Kaur, Kypros Kyprianou, Noel Paine, Marty St. James, Lindsay Seers, Virgil Tracy, Barbara Tyrrell and Joanna Woodward.

Programme 2 (2001-2005) John Askew, Sonia Baka, Stephen Conning, Stevie Deas, Paul Harrison, Laurence Harvey, Kevin Heavey, Elizabeth LeMoine, Gordon McKenna, Pat Naldi, Hayley Newman, Stuart Parkinson, Tim Sanderson, Erika Tan and Aaron Williamson.

Programme 3 (2005-2010) Kate Broad, Lisa Cheung, Ben Cove, Maggie Hills, Robert Holyhead, Lizzie Hughes, Riccardo Iacono, Samson Kambalu, Damien Roach, Jack Southern and Ming Wong.

closely with her family and friends, we have established the award in a way that we hope will maximise its impact and financial value. Acme's work is dedicated to supporting artists who cannot afford to rent studio and living space on the open market and this award will help extend the value of what we do.

The award will be made to an artist who is currently (as at 1 January 2008) an Acme tenant. The financial value of the award is £10,000. Acme will waive the rent on the selected artist's studio for a year from April 2008 and the balance from the £10,000 will be made as a grant payable in advance in four equal instalments. A rent for an average-sized Acme studio of 400 square feet is around £3,400 a year.

Artists who apply will need to demonstrate that they are in need of financial assistance and that this award will make a significant difference to the development of their practice. Acme will work with the recipients to promote their work and the results of their year's award.

Jessica Wilkes



Jessica Wilkes Award

An annual award to celebrate the life of artist Jessica Wilkes (1948-2005)

The annual Jessica Wilkes Award, to begin in April 2008, will provide an artist with a free studio and grant to enable them to devote more of their time to their studio practice.

This major professional development opportunity is the result of a legacy from the estate of the artist Jessica Wilkes who died in November 2005 at the age of 56. Jessica had been the tenant of an Acme 'short-life' house in Southwark for a number of years. In the 80s she, like many other Acme tenants, had the opportunity to buy her house at a discount and as a result was able, with this secure base, to focus on her work as a painter.

Jessica was a fine art student at Newcastle University and moved to London in 1975 where she completed an MA in Painting at Chelsea School of Art. She exhibited her paintings extensively throughout her

professional life and established strong connections with the Bermondsey Artists' Group and with Byam Shaw School of Art, where she taught. She also had a long-term involvement with the Youth Services and supported other studio groups.

Her wish was that through her bequest to Acme other artists would be given the opportunity to have a practical and financial breathing space. As drawing was at the centre of her practice she hoped that artists who shared this approach would benefit. Our sense is that she would have wished this to be interpreted to embrace the widest possible range of contemporary practice regardless of whether the technologies employed are 'traditional' or 'new'.

We hope that this new award will be a fitting memorial and a celebration of her life, her work and her generosity. Working

Adrian Carruthers Studio Award 2006/07

The Adrian Carruthers Studio Award 2006/07 has recently been completed by **Nicola Wallis**. This was the fifth year of the award, set up as a memorial to Adrian Carruthers, an artist who worked at our Childers Street studios in Deptford and who died in 2001, aged 40.

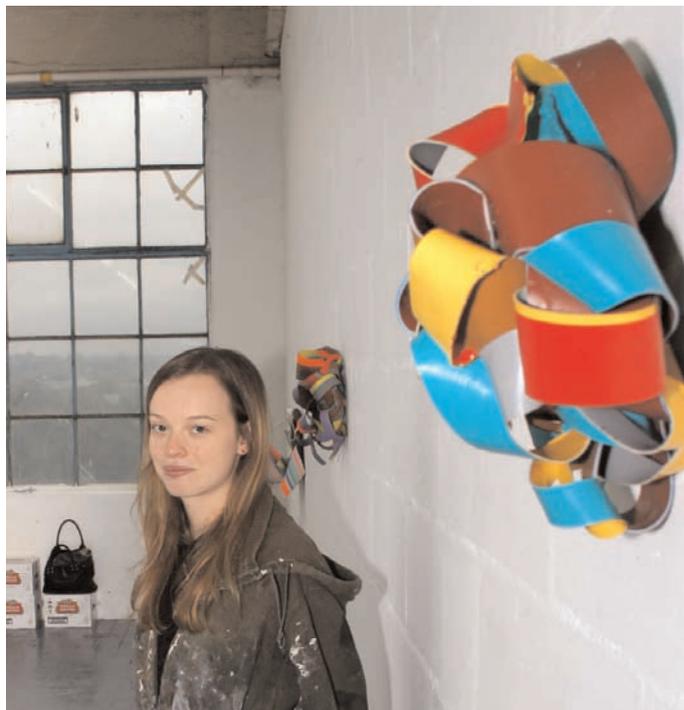
The award, open to a graduating student from the Slade School of Art where Adrian was a student, gave Nicola a year's free studio space, partly-funded by Acme, plus a bursary of £5,000 to support the research and development of her work.

Nicola has a BA Fine Art in Painting from Northumbria University and completed her MFA in Painting at the Slade in 2006. She was chosen for the award by a panel including Slade Professor John Aitkin and artist Paul Winstanley.

During her year at Childers Street Nicola used her time and resources to further pursue the notion of paint as a material rather than a medium, and the idea of painting being an object. Nicola said: "My work has both painting and sculptural concerns. Making my own paint from a wide range of viscous and fluid materials, I am exploring the notion of paint forming its own surface and have investigated how a painting might become its own support and content."

The recipient of this year's award is postgraduate student **Terumitsu Hishinuma**. Terumitsu studied Architecture at Muasahino University in Japan before completing his MFA at the Slade in the

Nicola Wallis
in her Childers
Street studio
photo Tom
Giddins



Sculpture School. He took up occupation of the studio at Childers Street on 1 October 2007 and was chosen from a selection panel consisting of John Aitkin, John Hilliard, Edward Allington and Estelle Thompson.

So far, with support from Adrian Carruthers' friends, family and fellow artists, more

than £30,000 has been raised, supporting six years of the scheme. However, the Adrian Carruthers Award needs further funding if it is to continue. If you would like to support a young artist, please send donations made payable to: 'The Adrian Carruthers Memorial Fund' c/o Acme Studios, 44 Copperfield Road, London, E3 4RR.

First studio residency at The Galleria – evaluation of a successful pilot project

A significant milestone in our long-term mission to develop new permanent studio buildings was the establishment of The Galleria Studios in Peckham, London SE15. A ground-breaking planning-gain project created in partnership with a commercial property developer, the 50 studios are available at affordable rents for artists in perpetuity and represent a permanent cultural resource for the borough and beyond.

The new project reaffirmed our understanding of how our studios should be used. An artists'

studio is as much a space for reflection and experimentation as it is for production – privacy and security are critical requirements. It is for artists, not for us, to determine how they and their work connect with the public and we trust them to use the opportunity of a secure studio to develop their professional practice and to make their work public in ways appropriate to their creative expression. We also know that, not just anecdotally but through recent research, given this opportunity artists not only create work of cultural value and meaning, but also create

public benefit across a wide range of social, health and education agendas.

The Galleria is unique and a vitally important model. It is unique because it is the first new building in the U.K. which includes the mixed uses of private and affordable residential space **and** affordable work space. This mix provides an opportunity to explore how the embedding of artists' studios into a housing development can help to raise the quality of life for residents and the wider community. This is both an opportunity and a responsibility and whilst we must ensure that artists can have the privacy and security they need, we must, at the same time, try to make what they do and what the studio building represents be both visible and accessible. The establishment of the Studio Residency in Southwark Programme at The Galleria Studios, working with our partners Southwark Council and the South London Gallery, is one way in which we have begun to approach this challenge.

Isa Suarez, the artist selected for the first residency (2006/2007), more than fulfilled our hopes for the programme and we know the opportunity significantly benefited her professional development. From the beginning Isa demonstrated a clear understanding of the aims of the residency and her major work *The Human Rights Jukebox* project, the culmination of her time at The Galleria, evolved with the participation of a wide range of locally-based groups: "The Human Rights Jukebox acts as a voice transmitter, speaking people's thoughts on freedom and rights...it expresses questions from the many different

Poet Cheick Salih Sanoko on The Human Rights Jukebox March
photo Isa Suarez

cultures, generations and languages, social backgrounds and religious beliefs that make up the Southwark community."

Looking at the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Isa created sound and text works through discussions, interviews and music sessions with groups including: Charterhouse in Southwark, Corazon Latino, Creative Routes, St Giles Trust Homeless Group, The Maroons, Southwark Pensioners Centre, Southwark Muslim Women's Association, Southwark Refugee Project and Dulwich Choral Society.

Leticia, a member of Corazon Latino said "I liked it very much because people could express something they had inside. And I enjoyed the relationships that came out from this experience and also to share similar opinions, ideas and aspirations, principles and values and somehow dreams we all have."

Reflecting on her time at The Galleria Isa said: "I was given total freedom in the time I held the residency to do what I wished with whomever I

I was given total freedom in the time I held the residency to do what I wished with whomever I wished. Acme were so present, so active, in encouraging me to pursue my ideas and finding means by which this could be done, no matter what the circumstances.

Isa Suarez

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The Human Rights Jukebox took to the streets of Camberwell and Peckham on Saturday 16 June 2007 with Isa, Southwark residents and participants of the workshops leading the way. Attracting crowds at Peckham Library the Jukebox journeyed onto the South London Gallery before



travelling to Tate Britain where it has been featured in the 'Late at Tate' programme.

Towards the end of the first residency we commissioned independent consultant Holly Tebbutt to carry out a review of the first residency. Independent evaluation is of critical importance in helping us to learn from this 'pilot' and in suggesting how we can maximise the value of future schemes. The evaluation carefully reviewed

how the initial aims of the scheme were met and highlighted those issues we need to consider for the future.

The choice of residency artist is of course critical, but what we have also learnt is that if the artist is to realise their ambitions it is important not to underestimate their need for a responsive and well-resourced support structure. The management of this residency programme is very much a

partnership between Acme, Southwark and the South London Gallery. Working together we have not only provided the support which Isa required but now move forward with a renewed long-term commitment to the continuing programme.

Studio Residency in Southwark 2006-07. Evaluation Report for Acme Studios. Holly Tebbutt – July 2007. can be downloaded from www.acme.org.uk/publications.php

National Federation of Artists' Studio Providers inaugural conference held in Bristol

Gaining Ground, the National Federation of Artists' Studio Providers' inaugural conference, confirmed the organisation's role and status as **the** professional membership body representing the work of affordable studio providers throughout England. Held at Spike Island in Bristol, the main day of the conference on 30 November welcomed over 150 delegates to a full programme of presentations, practical workshops and important opportunities for information sharing.

The conference provided an opportunity to celebrate the significant achievements of the past two years. It was the culmination of the hard work of steering group members and trustees, and of Val Millington, who joined the Federation as its first Director in April. Naomi Dines, Chair of Trustees, recalled the key milestones in the new organisation's history, beginning with the important national conferences (*Creating Places* and *Making Spaces*) in 2003, which were seen as a

'coming of age' of the studios sector. These events highlighted both the value and the vulnerability of the sector, the need for a national membership body, and imparted a sense of urgency to the initiatives which followed. Supported by Arts Council England, Acme Studios' 2004 comprehensive survey and register of studio groups and organisations in England provided the foundations and mandate for a National Studios Forum meeting in May 2005, from which a nationally representative steering group was formed. It was from the work of this steering group that the Federation was incorporated in June 2006.

Only eight weeks after the launch of the conference and associated membership drive the Federation now has over 50 full studio members, representing the extraordinarily diverse range of groups and organisations across the country. This growing membership embraces both the newly-formed and the long-established. It includes organisations of

contrasting scale, some in rural locations as well as many at the heart of our cities, and groups with widely differing structures, activities and aspirations. What these members share is a common belief in the value of affordable studio provision and a common purpose in working together.

At Acme we are proud to be a part of this collective movement and a founder member of this professional body, something we have been promoting and working towards for many years. We are delighted that we were able to provide management support at a critical stage in the establishment of the organisation and to act as a conduit for Arts Council England funding – the Federation is in receipt of three-year start-up funding through the *Inhabit* strand of ACE's *Artists' Insights* managed-funds programme.

In her address to the conference, Val Millington reviewed the role of the Federation, how it supports and promotes the

activities of studio providers and how it campaigns to secure, sustain, improve and increase affordable studio provision in England. She highlighted some of the challenges and opportunities and how these are shaping future plans. Advice to groups and organisations is at the core of the Federation's work and an advisory strategy – everything from packages of on-line advice to long-term mentoring support – will soon be launched. At Acme we are working closely with the Federation to ensure that our advisory service becomes an integrated part of this strategy, to maximise value and avoid duplication.

We were delighted to be able to make one of the key presentations to the conference, describing how our 100 per cent affordable Leven Road development in partnership with Swan Housing Association had come into being, and how this model could be replicated elsewhere by other studio providers up and down the country. Other presentations by East Street Arts, based in Leeds, and Green Close Studios, which operates in a rural location in Carnforth, Lancashire, powerfully demonstrated the valuable work of studio

providers and the many and differing challenges they face. Gavin Turk's *The Artist's Perspective* reminded us of how access to appropriate working space is fundamental to the development of an artist's practice and he recalled how a studio with ACAVA in London had been so important for him early on in his career.

These inspirational presentations were balanced by a series of highly practical and topical workshops focussing on subjects including Health and Safety, Planning Gain, Governance, Public Benefit, the Disability Discrimination Act, International Exchange and VAT.

The concluding remarks by the conference chair, Peter Boyden, Chair of Culture South West, addressed to the membership and wider audience (including representatives from Arts Council England, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and local authorities) emphasised the importance of what had been achieved and how there was cause for celebration. He sketched the complex future landscape in which the sector will operate and the considerable challenges

There was a great buzz and a palpable, collective sense of purpose which has given the Federation strong foundations to build on.

Val Millington

that this will pose – and, in the face of this, left us all with a reinforced understanding of and belief in the power of collective activity.

Interviewed after the conference Val Millington reflected: "It was fantastic to see so many people, representatives of studio groups and others, come together from all parts of the country for this event – the Federation's first public outing. There was a great buzz and a palpable, collective sense of purpose which has given the Federation strong foundations to build on. I look forward to an exciting year ahead, taking forward so many of the important issues raised at the conference."

For further information about the conference visit www.nfasp.org.uk



Naomi Dines, Chair of NFASP, addresses delegates
photo Jamie Woodley

ACME STUDIOS is a London-based charity that supports fine art practice by providing artists with affordable studios and living space. We help artists who cannot afford to rent space on the open market.

Acme was formed by artists in 1972 and is the largest organisation of its kind in the United Kingdom. We have helped over 5,000 artists with this fundamental means of support – investing in the development of fine art at the level of production. Acme is recognised as the leading development agency for artists' working and living accommodation.

Through an expanding residency and awards programme we support the development of artists' careers by providing artists, selected from open submissions, with a financial, practical and creative breathing space. Through these programmes we also deliver wider community and public benefit by working with artists whose projects evolve from socially-engaged practice.

Acme continues to pioneer new models for developing affordable, high-quality and permanent studio space through the use of planning gain and partnerships with commercial and affordable housing developers. We promote these models for the benefit of the affordable studios sector as a whole.

Acme helped establish the National Federation of Artists' Studios Providers (NFASP). We work closely with the NFASP to promote the strategic development of the studios sector and to provide advice to studio groups and organisations throughout the U.K.



Supporting artists – non-residential studios:

- We provide 370 studios in nine studio blocks throughout east and south-east London at inclusive rent levels of between £6.90 and £8.50 per sq. ft. per year
- We provide six studios in Porthleven, Cornwall
- We have 21 new studios under construction as part of a 100% affordable development in Poplar, E14
- We are working in partnership with a number of local authorities, commercial and affordable housing developers and development agencies to create new affordable studios across London and the Thames Gateway

Supporting artists – work/live space:

- We provide a five-year work/ live residency programme for 12 artists at our fully accessible Fire Station building in Gillender Street, E14
- We provide a residency programme for eight artists at The Sugar House in E15
- We provide six units of living accommodation

Supporting artists – residency and awards programme:

- We provide two bursaries (rent free for two-and-a-half years plus grants) at our Fire Station building in Gillender Street, E14, including a bursary for an artist with a disability
- We provide an artist in residence programme (rent-free studio plus grant for 18 months) for a Southwark-based artist, in partnership with Southwark Council and the South London Gallery, at our Galleria Studios in Peckham, SE15
- We provide a free studio and grant for a graduating MA student from the Slade School of Art at our Childers Street studios in Deptford, SE8, through the annual Adrian Carruthers Award
- We provide a free studio and grant for an artist in an Acme studio through the annual Jessica Wilkes Award
- We are developing further residency and awards programmes in our existing buildings and new developments in partnership with local authorities and other cultural agencies

Supporting the sector:

- We work with the National Federation of Artists' Studios Providers and Arts Council England to help develop the affordable studios sector nationally
- We provide a nation-wide free advisory service to individual artists and studio groups and organisations on all aspects of property negotiation, development and management

Supporting other cultural agencies:

- We manage a major international residency programme on behalf of six foreign agencies from Australia, Germany, Sweden and Switzerland (3), in eleven properties in East London, providing living and working space for visiting artists on three, six and twelve month residencies
- We provide space for two important publicly-funded galleries: Matt's Gallery and The Showroom

acme

35 years supporting art & artists

Acme studios consists of three exempt charities registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1965:

Acme Studios Housing Association Limited

Reg. No: IP28377R
VAT Reg. No: 680 7763 03

Acme Artists Housing Association Limited

Reg. No: IP27215R

Acme Housing Association Limited

Reg. No: IP20468R

Member of the National Federation of Artists' Studio Providers
Members of the National Housing Federation
Acme Studios in funded by Arts Council England

Acme Studios

44 Copperfield Road, Bow, London E3 4RR
T 020 8981 6811/6821
voice & minicom
F 020 8983 0567
E mail@acme.org.uk
W www.acme.org.uk

Co-Directors

Jonathan Harvey, David Panton

Committee of Management

Robert Barnes
Zarina Bhimji
Naomi Dines
Jonathan Harvey (Company Secretary/
Treasurer)
Henry Lydiate
Richard Millward
David Panton (Chairman)
Trevor Sutton

Staff

Jemima Brown (Artists' Liaison Officer)
Heather Deedman (Senior Artists' Liaison
Officer)
Pippa Gavaghan (Communications Officer)
Tom Giddins (Communications and Liaison
Officer)
Calum F Kerr (Artists' Liaison and
Research Officer)
Richard Kingsnorth (Finance Officer)
Roger Kite (Senior Manager, Repairs and
Maintenance)
Julia Lancaster (Residency and Projects
Manager)
John Lang (Manager, Repairs &
Maintenance)
Ben Lawley (Rent Accounts Manager)
Caroline Vosburgh (Archivist)

Solicitors

Trowers & Hamlins
Sceptre Court, 40 Tower Hill
London EC3N 4DX

Accountants

Alliotts
9 Kingsway, London WC2B 6XF

Editors

Jonathan Harvey
jonathan@acme.org.uk
Tom Giddins
tom@acme.org.uk

Designers

Area
cara@designbyarea.com

Printers

Martin Edwards Printers
me.print@btinternet.com