

Acme Board of Trustees Applicant Information

Introduction

Acme is recruiting new Board members at an exciting time for our organisation.

We have appointed a Chief Executive Officer as part of our transition from a Co-Director leadership team and have completed the first part of our 25-30 Strategic Plan by purchasing the freehold of our largest building, Acme Propeller Factory.

We are seeking voluntary board members committed to keeping artists living and working in London. People who believe in our mission, trust artists and will bring influence, adding value through their own experience, investigative mind-set and specialist skills.



Background

Founded in 1972 by David Panton and Jonathan Harvey initially as way to obtain cheap short-term housing for themselves and fellow artists finding their feet in London, Acme is now a specialist non-profit charitable organisation with a clear purpose and a dedicated staff team.

We provide affordable artist studios, work/live accommodation and an extensive residencies and awards programme to help maintain and transform artistic practice. We currently support over 800 artists per year and play an important role as an advocate for the artist studios and residencies sectors.

Our approach to partnerships is trailblazing, especially regarding working with the properties sector, we manage 15 commercial properties in the Greater London area.

The key principles that underpin our approach and decision-making are:

- We support artists in necessitous circumstances
- We place artists at the centre of our activities, constantly evaluating our understanding of artists' needs to ensure the most effective use of our unique position and resources
- We have a strategic and enabling sector role underpinning our operational activities



Our Values

Artists are essential to society, and we place them at the heart of everything we do. Through our activity, we are committed to ensuring that artists can continue being artists.

Humanity

We strive to make a positive impact

- We treat people fairly and do not exploit artists to fulfill the outcomes of others.
- We value other perspectives, taking time to listen with compassion, and with a commitment to honesty and openness.
- We value diversity in all we do and are committed to equality and social justice.
- We consider the environmental impact of our activity, striving to minimise it in all aspects of our work.

Trust

Trust is the foundation of all our work

- We trust in artists and prioritise their autonomy.
- We operate principled and transparent criteria for selection and allocation, and don't take risks with artists' needs.
- The effectiveness of our team is built on mutual trust and we are motivated by a shared desire to support artists.
- We place trust in partners who share our values and earn their trust through transparency, honesty and integrity.

Stability

Our long term approach creates stability

- We protect and nurture the future of artists in London, prioritising their long term growth and development.
- We evolve and innovate without taking short term decisions that would be detrimental to our long term goals.
- We continue to grow expertise to meet the political, cultural and economic challenges of the future, without compromising our mission or beliefs.

Acme Staff

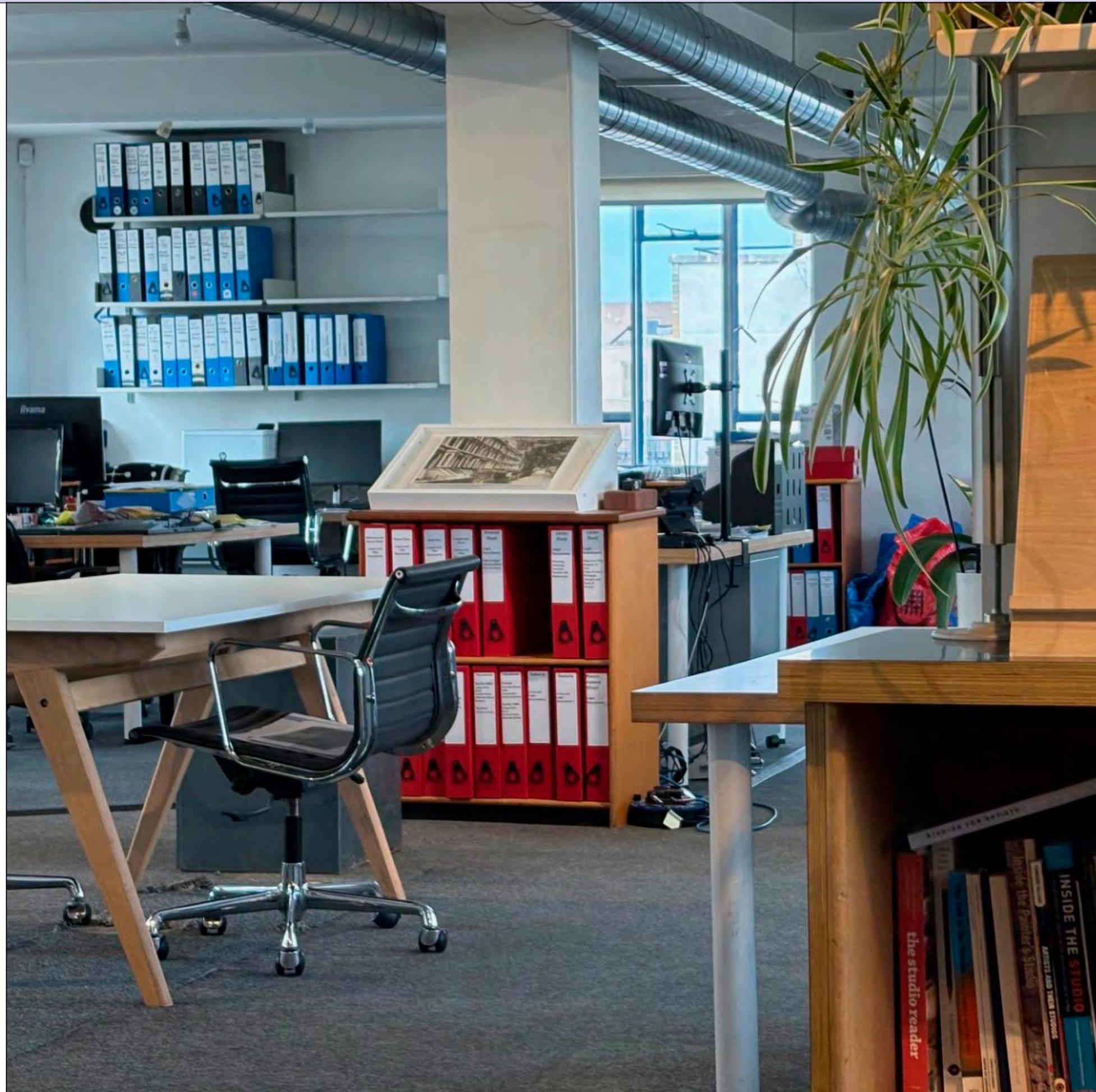
Over the past three years, Acme has been carrying out leadership resilience and succession planning, moving from a three-person Executive Co-Director model to one where a CEO is supported by Executive Management Team (EMT).

This transition is in its penultimate phase, with Acme led by a two person Co-Director executive team: Lea O'Loughlin and Richard Kingsnorth. From April 2026, Lea O'Loughlin will assume the position of CEO, with Richard Kingsnorth remaining in the role of Co-Director until his departure from Acme in September 2026.

There are 23 staff members (in full and part-time employment), working in roles related to Finance, Operations, Property and Artist Support.

Acme Board

Originally registered under the Industrial & Provident Societies Act 1965, but now subject to the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014. There are currently seven board members in total: Robert Barnes, Juliet Can, Naomi Dines, Henry Lydiate, Caroline McCarthy, Tarek Virani and Acme Founder David Panton OBE (Chair). It is Acme's intention to build the board size to 10 board members, who undertake board service terms of 3 + 3 years.



Summary of Board Roles and Responsibilities

The board meet four times a year. During the year, the board are presented for approval with:

- The budget for the forthcoming year (which includes salary increases and rent reviews) and then monitor any variations from the budget during the year
- The financial statements following the audit
- The annual statement of activities
- Any new policies or any changes to existing policies that affect the way the organisation carries out its business
- The strategic plan or, where an existing plan is in place, any variations from the plan
- Any significant financial commitments such as taking on new buildings or taking on new borrowing from the bank

The board's decisions are informed by the reports from staff and expert advice. The Executive and Management report informs the board about the activities of the organisation and outlines any potential risks it may face.

In addition to attending four formal meetings in the year, board members are also expected to:

- Attend a minimum of two Acme programme events annually
- Publicly identify as board members and advocate for the organisation
- Avoid and declare any potential conflicts of interest
- Apply specialist skills and expertise on request to Acme board relating to Finance, Property or Artist Support issues

Mind the Gap: Designing residencies for everyone,
September 2023 © Hydar Dewachi, courtesy of The Acme
Archive.



Summary of Board Roles and Responsibilities

The Acme board of trustees is ultimately responsible for the actions, decisions and future of the organisation. The board are all volunteers and receive no financial compensation. The main duties of the board are:

- To act in the charity's best interests
- To manage the charity's resources responsibly
- To comply with the charity's governing document and the law
- To ensure the charity carries out its purposes for the public benefit
- To assess risk to the organisation and take steps accordingly
- To appoint and support the Chief Executive Officer

In practical terms, the board delegates responsibility for the operation of the organisation to the CEO, who is in turn supported by an executive management team.

Board	CEO
Ultimately are accountable to stakeholders and legislators	Accountable to the Board
Advocate for the organisation	Lead the organisation
Read board papers	Attend board meetings, providing information that accurately reflects the health of the organisation
Attend events	Attend events
Ensure legal and financial obligations are adhered to	Manage legal and financial obligations
Have responsibility for Health and Safety and other policies	Manage Health and Safety matters and ensure other policies are conformed to
Appoint and appraise the CEO, being mindful of their development and wellbeing	Appoint and appraise other staff, being mindful of their development and wellbeing
Review and approve the mission	Draft, develop and review the mission
Agree the values of the organisation	Ensure values are upheld
Understand, scrutinise, approve and monitor the strategic plan for Acme	Prepare the strategic plan and ensure that it is carried out
Develop and agree the strategic aims and planning process	Draft, manage and plan the strategic aims and planning process
Oversee organisational change	Manage organisational change
Have overall responsibility for the strategic aims and direction of Acme	Responsible for Acme's operational strategy
Delegate the responsibility for the operational running of Acme to the Chief Executive Officer and monitor their progress	Make the organisation perform and deal with the practicalities and operational aspects of running Acme
Oversee and support programming policy	Devise and implement programming
Scan horizon for factors that may impact on Acme's future operations	Inform board of any matters that may impact on Acme's future operations
Monitor the management structure	Develop the structure and use it to inform the operational running of Acme

Person Specification

We are looking for people who have:

- Respect for artists and a belief in their right for autonomy
- An understanding or interest in the value of practical support for artistic development
- Active listening and questioning skills
- Objective decision-making skills
- An interest in self- development and a desire to continue learning
- A desire to help the organisation and its staff

and who are:

- Comfortable challenging, and being challenged, in a positive manner
- Able to work as part of a diverse team
- Able to step back and contribute as a non-executive

As we operate a continuous recruitment process from 2026-28, we are currently particularly interested to hear from individuals with practical experience in any of the following areas:

- Property (development, planning, regeneration, policy, design or building)
- Law and Finance
- Environmental expertise

However, we strive for inclusivity and recognise the benefit of different voices and experiences on our board.



Induction

We provide a 6-month induction programme involving:

- Welcome and introduction to the board team and key personnel
- An introduction to the strategic plan and financial position of the organisation
- An introduction to the governance arrangements which are in place
- Recorded introduction on each functional area of the organisation (Property, Artist Support, Operations)
- Pre-appointment invitation to observe an Acme board meeting, with a candidate Q&A session
- Meeting with key stakeholders (where relevant)
- Regular reviews with the chair to check understanding, identify issues and encourage development

These activities will be organised through in-person meetings, events, documents and video resources, and at times naturally through the board meetings themselves.

Issue	Activity	With Whom
Welcome	Welcome and introduction to the board	Chair
Governance	Explanation of function and services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of organisation • Vision and mission • Ethics, values, and philosophy • Board structure • Terminology, jargon and glossary of company-specific terms 	Chair, Co-Director and CEO
Governance	Initial discussion re: contribution Outline of appraisal / review process	Chair, Co-Director and CEO
Internal Relationships	Outline of each functional area of the company, departmental structure and activity	CEO with other staff
Strategic Planning	Give copy of strategic plan Discuss strategic plan and progress	Chair, Co-Director and CEO
Governance	Provide policies and procedures: Expenses; Conflict of interest; Risk policy; Code of conduct; Whistleblowing Finance and audit	Chair, Co-Director and CEO
Governance	Copies of relevant board minutes, code of governance and constitution document Schedule of dates of board meetings Bios, photos and contact details of board members	Chair, Co-Director and CEO
Finance	Copy of annual report and accounts Copy of most recent budget report	Co-Director

How to Apply

For an initial conversation about joining Acme's board of trustees, please get in touch with Acme's Chair of Board, David Panton OBE david@acme.org.uk.



Acme's Chair of Board, David Panton OBE (centre left) and Acme Board Member Juliet Can (far right) at Mayor of London's Creative Enterprise Zones celebration event and the announcement of Acme's successful purchase of Acme Propeller Factory, January 2026 © James O Jenkins.

Access Support

As a Disability Confident employer, we are committed to making our recruitment and selection practices barrier free and accessible to everyone. This includes reasonably adjusting the recruitment process for those with disabilities or long term health conditions. If you have any access requirements at any stage of the recruitment process please contact, Natasha O'Brien, HR Advisor by emailing – natasha@acme.org.uk.

Proud member of the Disability Confident Employer Scheme

As Acme is a Disability Confident employer, we commit that we will generally offer an interview to any applicant that declares they have a disability and meets the minimum criteria for the job as detailed in the person specification.

AI Usage

Acme understands the benefits of using AI. However, if you are thinking of using this tool to submit your application, we ask you to think about what value it will add. AI tools tend to lack the personal touch and authenticity we value in candidates. We encourage you showcase your unique knowledge, real life experience, skills using your own voice.

Applications perceived to be significantly supported using Artificial Intelligence (AI) such as ChatGPT to generate, cut and/or paste answers into your application without subsequent personalisation by you are likely to be scored down during the shortlisting process.

We do not use AI during our shortlisting / selection process, this is carried out by us to ensure we select the best person for the role.

ED&I Commitment

Acme exists to support the broadest possible range of artistic practice and creates opportunities for artists to develop and take greater creative risks.

We passionately believe in social equity and the benefits of diversity, seeking to support, encourage and include people, regardless of age, disability, gender identity or gender expression, race, ethnicity, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or any other equality characteristic.

We particularly encourage applications from disabled people and those from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, as these groups are currently under-represented in the arts and cultural sectors.

Thank you!

To find out more about our work, visit acme.org.uk or follow us on Instagram [@acme.art](https://www.instagram.com/acme.art) and LinkedIn [Acme Studios](https://www.linkedin.com/company/acme-studios).

ACME Supporting artists since 1972

