

Securing the Future



acmestudios
SUPPORTING ARTISTS SINCE 1972

SEPTEMBER 2012

SECURING THE FUTURE

This bulletin is published on the occasion of the formal opening of our Matchmakers Wharf studios on 25 September 2012. It charts our capital development programme, begun in 1996, which has established a permanent portfolio of studio buildings to provide secure and affordable space for artists. The event also launches our 40th anniversary year, and described here are some of the events and activities which will celebrate our past.

Getting a foot on the ladder

The opening of our new studios at Matchmakers Wharf, E9 marks a significant milestone in Acme Studios' 40-year history. High property and land values in London means securing permanent, suitable and low-cost accommodation and studio space for artists continues to be a considerable challenge. Nonetheless, with Matchmakers Wharf, we now own seven major studio buildings and operate six other sites on long-term, secure leases.

Permanent or long-term leases provide security for the artists we currently support and for future artists, allowing them to plan and work without disruption. By September 2013, the addition of three further major studio projects will expand our property portfolio to 16 buildings, providing 620 studios, and taking us close to a position of self-sustainability.

The traditional model of affordable studio provision in the UK has seen artist-led groups and organisations operating opportunistically within the property market to access short-term, and therefore low-cost, property for studio use. While providing a critically important resource for artists, the temporary nature of most buildings sees artists operating in a sometimes insecure environment. Buildings can be in a poor state of repair and fail to meet artists' needs because of the way they have been converted on minimal budgets.

The success of the contemporary art world in London in recent years has not trickled down to the majority of individual artists who continue to struggle to afford time and space to devote to their work. It is these artists that create the 'product' on which the rest of the contemporary art world relies.

Cover: Matchmakers Wharf, E9. Morley von Sternberg (2012)

Studio provision in London and throughout the UK is vital, but continues to be undervalued, partly because it is less visible than the more public-facing elements of the wider visual-arts ecology.

Artists are impelled to do what they do and those artist-centred organisations that support them with studio space are similarly motivated. This has led to a general assumption that affordable studio space will happen anyway, without strategic support or funding. It is clear that the argument has yet to be won; that appropriate investment in studios can not only provide a significant return, but capital support which enables property ownership, can create a strong, independent and self-sustaining sector. We hope that Acme provides a successful model of how this can be achieved.

As a specialist property organisation – a charitable housing association – Acme has been a pioneer in the development of studio provision in the UK. Until the advent of the

The purchase of these two buildings provided the beginnings of an asset base against which the organisation could borrow. Acme could now plan a long-term capital development programme to secure the future of its support for artists.



Fire Station, E14 – purchased 1996. Acme Studios (2000)

National Lottery in 1994, and the availability of unprecedented levels of arts capital funding, Acme operated successfully using the traditional model of short-term property management. Small, but vitally important, amounts of arts and regeneration funding helped provide housing and studio space for many hundreds of artists. However it could not guarantee long-term security for the organisation or the artists it supported. It was impossible to maintain affordable rent levels and build significant cash reserves.



Copperfield Road, E3 – purchased 1997. Acme Studios (2009)

In 1996 all that changed. A successful application to the National Lottery through the Arts Council of England for £1.2 million (of total project costs of £1.7 million) supported the purchase and conversion of two major buildings: **42/44 Copperfield Road, E3** and **The Fire Station in Gillender Street, E14**. The purchase of these two buildings provided the beginnings of an asset base against which the organisation could borrow. Acme could now plan a long-term capital development programme to secure the future of its support for artists.



Orsman Road, N1 – purchased 2000. Acme Studios (2010)

In 2000 we purchased our third building at **Orsman Road, N1** which we had been leasing and sharing with the owner since 1983. The owner allowed us time to develop a scheme to purchase the entire building even though they could have achieved an immediate sale on the open market. With the support of our bank, and now with assets against which we could borrow, eight work/live units were developed for sale to artists. This cross-subsidy enabled us to part-fund the purchase of the whole site, both increasing the number of studios and maintaining low-cost rents.

Securing the Future – pioneering ‘planning-gain’ partnerships

In February 2005 we were awarded £2 million from Arts Council England’s Grants for the arts – capital programme, a new round of Lottery funding which had as one of its priorities the support of artists’ workspaces. Possibly unique amongst successful applications for capital funding to Arts Council England (ACE), our proposal was for four indicative, rather than defined, capital projects. Given the unpredictable

nature of property negotiation and the vagaries of the planning system, this flexible approach by ACE was critical to our success. Acme is a property development and management organisation by definition. Our experience in the field enabled us to explore a range of development options and partnerships and to proceed with those that met both Acme’s and ACE’s value for money and associated criteria.

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The availability of capital funding coincided with our pioneering a new model for securing new-build affordable studios, through a partnership with commercial housing developer, Barratt Homes at the Galleria, SE15. By utilising the requirements of planning permission a mutually-successful outcome was achieved: Southwark got continued employment use on the site, Barratt got their planning consent, Acme got its studios.

Communities of working artists bring cultural, economic and social benefit to regeneration schemes. Integrating artists' studios into mixed-use housing and commercial schemes brokered through the planning process brings 'gains' for all involved. Local authorities see the establishment of a permanent resource for local employment, and the demand from artists means studios are continuously fully-occupied from day one. The presence of creative, dynamic and diverse artists in a new development also assists with aims to establish vibrant, integrated communities in which people are happy to live.

In addition to achieving planning, developers gain from the process because the quiet activity

of artists' studios is perfectly compatible with housing and provides a guaranteed use of commercial space which is often difficult to fill. Living alongside artists is a powerful marketing tool which can be seen in the branding of schemes as 'The Galleria' by Barratt Homes and 'Atelier' by Swan Housing.

Artists gain from the process through the provision of high-quality, permanent studios at an affordable rent level. The security of a long-term studio leads to artists investing in the community through involvement in local initiatives, and even moving home to be closer to their studio.

The 'planning-gain' project at the Galleria was of critical importance, leading to five further partnership projects over the following six years. It also provided a viable model that could be pursued by other studio providers, developers and local authorities elsewhere in the UK.

The new-build, permanent projects achieved to which ACE funding was allocated are: **The Galleria**, SE15; **Leven Road**, E14; **Harrow Road**, NW10 and **Matchmakers Wharf**, E9. In total the four projects have delivered **132 permanent studios** across **42,700 square feet** at a total project cost of **£7.6 million**. This includes £3.8 million which Acme secured as partnership funding (the difference between the total project cost to the developer and the price paid) and £1.8 million which Acme contributed from a combination of loan finance and cash reserves.

Most of these large-scale housing developments had a planning requirement for commercial



Artist Isa Suarez in her studio at the Galleria. Hugo Glendinning (2012)



Left: Artist Kitty McLaughlin in her studio at Leven Road. Hugo Glendinning (2012)

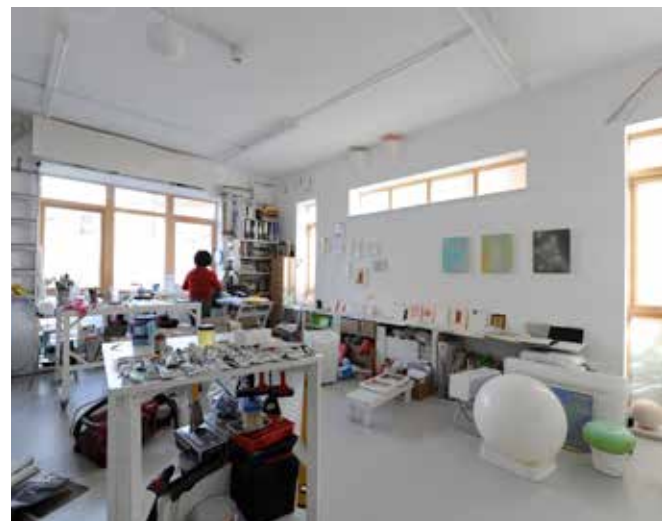
Below: Artist Yukako Shibata in her studio at Harrow Road. Hugo Glendinning (2012)

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space to be included (because employment use had previously existed on the site), while some had a planning obligation (section 106) to provide affordable workspace for artists. With Telford Homes Plc and the Matchmakers Wharf project, the developer proactively sought Acme’s inclusion in their scheme. With the London Borough of Brent and the Harrow Road project it was the local authority that took the lead. The ‘gain’ is the achievement of permanent, purpose-designed, new-build studios secured at a price which enables sub-market ‘affordable’ studios to be sustained.

Acme was able to buy studios built to exacting design and performance specifications at considerably less than the cost to the developer of land acquisition, professional fees and build costs. The nature of the contract with each partner saw the majority of the risk being borne by the developer because Acme only paid for final measured lettable studio floor area at a fixed price per square foot.

The development of new models for achieving affordable, high-quality studio space, and Arts Council England’s capital investment in Acme since 1996, has established a permanent and self-sustaining resource which will benefit artists for years to come.



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The four development partnerships (2006-2012) supported by Arts Council England

Galleria Studios



Galleria, SE15 – purchased 2006.
Acme Studios (2006)

Pennack Road, London SE15 6PW (London Borough of Southwark). 155-year lease purchased. Designed and built in partnership with Barratt Homes consisting of 50 self-contained studios ranging from 260 to 500 sq ft (24 to 46 sq m) over lower-ground, ground, first, second and third floors. Total lettable square footage is 16,111. The studios form part of a mixed-use development which includes private and affordable residential apartments. The Galleria studios opened in April 2006. Current rent: £10.77 per sq ft / £116 per sq m per year. Full tenant occupation was achieved within one month of practical completion and the average occupation rate since the opening to March 2012 is 99.43%.

Leven Road Studios



Leven Road, E14 – purchased 2009.
Swan Housing (2009)

40 Leven Road, London E14 0GZ (London Borough of Tower Hamlets). 125-year lease purchased. New ground floor studios designed and built in partnership with Swan Housing Group (achieved through a s106 planning requirement) consisting of 21 self-contained studios ranging from 195 to 380 sq ft (18.1 to 35.3 sq m). Total lettable square footage is 6,007. The studios form part of an entirely affordable mixed-use development which includes 66 affordable housing units for rent and shared ownership. The studios opened in March 2009. Current rent: £10.77 per sq ft / £116 per sq m per year. Full tenant occupation was achieved within one month of practical completion and the average occupation rate since opening to March 2012 is 97.99%.

Harrow Road Studios



Harrow Road, NW10 –
purchased 2010.
Greg Goodale (2010)

733 Harrow Road, London NW10 5BQ (London Borough of Brent). 75-year lease purchased. New-build studio block designed and built in partnership with Kensington Housing Trust part of Catalyst Housing Group, (achieved through a s106 planning requirement) consisting of 12 self-contained studios ranging from 240 to 340 sq ft (22 to 32 sq m). Total lettable square footage is 3,248. The studios occupy a ground floor of one of the buildings facing onto Harrow Road, while affordable residential apartments are managed by Kensington Housing Trust. The studios opened in June 2010. Current rent: £12.85 per sq ft / £138 per sq m per year. Full tenant occupation was achieved within one month of practical completion and the average occupation rate since opening to March 2012 is 99.29%.



Matchmakers Wharf Studios

Homerton Road, London E9 5GP (London Borough of Hackney). 999-year lease purchased. New studio block over six floors designed and built in partnership with Telford Homes Plc (achieved through a s106 planning requirement) consisting of 49 self-contained studios ranging from 223 to 559 sq ft (20.7 to 52 sq m). Total lettable square footage is 17,150. The studios form part of a major scheme which provides retail, commercial and 209 residential units (40% affordable). Completed in May 2012. Current rent: £12.00 per sq ft / £129 per sq m per year. Full occupation achieved within one month of practical completion.

Matchmakers Wharf, E9 – purchased
2012. Morley von Sternberg (2012)

Securing the Future - new projects and partnerships

Our portfolio of permanent buildings, achieved with the support of Arts Council England and partnerships with commercial and social housing developers, has provided the platform on which further studio projects can be established. Driven by the continuing demand for affordable and secure studios, and our ambition to increase the quality and range of the programmes we provide for artists, we will be opening 100 studios in three further studio buildings by September 2013.

These are:

- 27 studios at **Warton House**, Stratford High Street, E15, a s106 partnership with Genesis Housing Group (opening December 2012)
- 39 studios and 4 work/live units in a new-build studio block at **High House Production Park**, Purfleet, Essex, in partnership with High House Production Park Ltd (opening May 2013)
- 30 studios and 6 work/live units at Stockwell Green, SW9 (opening September 2013)

Our previous capital development partnerships have all been successful, creating enduring cultural, social and economic benefits. However it is the nature of these partnerships that once the buildings are completed and occupied, the collaborative relationship generally comes to an end. The three projects opening over the next

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Visualisation of Warton House, E15 – opening December 2012. Image: Hectic Electric

year develop the partnership model and take it to another level. Each one will have a unique added dimension achieved through partnerships founded on ongoing creative collaboration. These vary from working with art colleges and others to establish programmes which support recent graduates, providing a 'bridge' between education and professional practice, to exploring the potential for exchange between artists and organisations with specialist creative and technical skills.

Critical to this new phase in our capital development programme has been the achievement of a better understanding of the artists we support. This is to ensure that what we design and build, and the management services we provide, meet artists' needs and will continue to do so into the future. We know anecdotally that artists value our studios and we receive positive feedback – we routinely achieve occupation levels of 99%. However, until recently, we had not

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sought feedback in any systematic way. Our two-year government-funded **Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP)** with **Central Saint Martins College of Arts and Design (CSM)** has changed all that. With our full-time research associate, Dr Arantxa Echarte, we have been able to undertake new and extensive research into contemporary artists' studio practice, including in-depth interviews, to feed into our studio designs and specifications. We have also developed a detailed on-line survey to provide artists with the opportunity to comment on how our buildings perform, how we manage our services and importantly how an affordable studio contributes to the development of their practice. The other important benefit of the KTP is that it has enabled an ongoing dialogue with CSM, and University of the Arts London, to be maintained and provides a significant focus for the development of collaborative projects. The expertise offered by CSM, particularly their knowledge and experience of contemporary practice, the relationship fine art students develop with studio space and their needs on graduation, is proving invaluable.

At **Warton House**, on the edge of the Olympic Park, we will be opening 27 studios in a refurbished listed building which opened in 1937 as the factory and office of Yardley's. Based on our highly-successful Childers Street graduate studios, we will be establishing four new awards to be operated in partnership with two London art colleges and a major foundation. The purpose-designed adjacent studios will be accommodated in one of the large west-facing, semi-circular spaces of this modernist building and provide year-long free studios, bursaries, mentoring, exhibiting opportunities and peer support. We have been working closely with leading London art colleges in recent years and the addition of the Warton House studios will expand our programme to eight annual studio awards for graduates by 2013.

Our partnership project with developer Spiritbond in Stockwell Green, **The Glass Yard**, will provide us with a further 30 new-build studios. The fact that these form part of a student accommodation development for University of the Arts London creates a significant opportunity to explore and pursue a range of collaborative programmes. The KTP project has also identified the important role played by a specific type of space for recent graduates; one that reconciles the desire for autonomy, community, a professional environment and affordability. As a result, and in addition to the KTP's broad aims, Acme and CSM are now working together towards the creation of specifically-designed 'transitional studios' for recent graduates as part of this new studio development. This jointly-managed programme



Visualisation of
The Glass Yard, SW9 –
opening September 2013.
Image: TP Bennett



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will offer studios at half-rent and the graduates will benefit from a continuation of contact with the college.

The development of studios at **High House Production Park** in Purfleet, Essex creates a whole new set of opportunities and challenges. Rather than physically embedding studios within a larger development, a detached studio block can be designed from scratch. The presence of other creative organisations on the site creates the possibility of unique collaboration.

High House Production Park is a collaboration between Arts Council England, East of England

Visualisation of High House Artists' Studios, Purfleet, Essex – opening May 2013. Image: HAT Projects

Development Agency, The National Skills Academy for Creative & Cultural, Thurrock Council, Thurrock Thames Gateway Development Corporation and the Royal Opera House. These agencies worked together to set up the Park which opened in December 2010. The 14-acre site is home to the Royal Opera House's Bob and Tamar Manoukian Set Production workshop where world-class artists produce the sets and scenery required for the Royal Opera House's Covent Garden stage. The Royal Opera House's Thurrock-based education team are also located on the site. Later this year the National Skills Academy will open the UK's first ever Backstage Training Centre. This facility will feature state-of-the-art technology to teach students of all ages the skills required to excel in backstage careers for the theatre and live music sector.

Artists' studios have always been central to the vision for the Park and Acme has been involved since early 2007 when we carried out an initial demand study. This was followed by an in-depth feasibility and demand study in 2010 which provided a blue print for the new scheme.

Planning consent for the three-storey building, sited next to the Royal Opera House workshop,

The project provides a great opportunity to develop the rich potential for the studios to become a centre for visual arts activity in the Thames Gateway, beyond our traditional base in east and south east London.

was granted in March 2012. The development will consist of 43 studios, including four work/live units and has been designed by Colchester-based architects HAT Projects who recently completed the Jerwood Gallery in Hastings. High House Production Park Ltd, the charity which manages the Park, is working in partnership with Acme and we will be taking a 25-year lease on the building. The £2.4 million scheme has been granted £1 million from Arts Council England's new capital round and construction will start soon. The building has a range of studio types and sizes, with those on the ground floor specifically designed for large-scale fabrication and public display.

This project has benefited from our KTP with Central Saint Martins, with the in-depth research feeding into the designs and specifications. The high-quality studios have been designed with great care to ensure not only that artists' practical

needs are met but that the building itself will be an inspiring place to work and visit, reinforcing the professional status of its artist tenants. The target rent is £8.50 per square foot per year (£91 m² per year) which is considerably lower than the current average for artists' studios in London.

The project provides a great opportunity to develop the rich potential for the studios to become a centre for visual arts activity in the Thames Gateway, beyond our traditional base in east and south east London. The quality of the studios, the Park's emphasis on making, and the potential for active collaboration with the Royal Opera House and National Skills Academy, makes this a very significant new resource for local artists on both sides of the estuary, as well as those wishing to relocate from London.

To promote the new studios and provide a major creative development opportunity we are establishing the **Stephen Cripps' Studio Award**. This will celebrate the work and life of the important 'pyrotechnic sculptor', Stephen Cripps (1952-1982), and be open to applications from artists whose practice is rooted in sculpture but which embraces elements of light, movement, machinery, sound or performance. The award will also help make public the vision for the Park and the potential for creative collaboration between its partners, High House Production Park Ltd, the Royal Opera House, the National Skills Academy and Acme Studios. The annual award will provide a free purpose-designed sculpture studio, a bursary and project realisation costs.

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SUPPORTING ARTISTS SINCE 1972



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**ARTS COUNCIL
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ACME STUDIOS 40TH ANNIVERSARY CALENDAR

This calendar lists some of the events and activities taking place during our anniversary year, including the opening of four new buildings, the launch of new residencies and awards, artist commissions and the archive exhibition of Acme's first ten years (1972 to 1982) at the Whitechapel Gallery. Some of the dates are still indicative – please refer to our website for further information nearer the time: www.acme.org.uk/40years

2012

25 SEPTEMBER

OPENING OF MATCHMAKERS WHARF, E9

Launch of 49 new-build studios as part of a mixed-use development in partnership with Telford Homes Plc and supported by London Borough of Hackney and capital funding from Arts Council England. Welcome to first **Hackney Studio Residency** artist **David Murphy**. **Open Studios 5pm to 8pm.**

29 SEPTEMBER

GRADUATE STUDIOS – 165 CHILDERS STREET, SE8

Studio event to mark the end of year-long residencies of four recent graduates: Adrian Carruthers Award: **Luke McCreadie**; Chadwell Award: **Joss Cole**; Camberwell Award: **Josie Cockram** and Chelsea Award: **Anna Moderato**. **2pm to 8pm, Studios 99, 100 and 101, 165**

4 TO 21 OCTOBER

ADRIAN CARRUTHERS AWARD: LUKE MCCREADIE, ACME PROJECT SPACE, E2

Exhibition by 2011-12 award-holder and welcome to new recipient, **Ninna Bohn Pederson**. Celebration of 10 years of the award for Slade School of Art graduates.

20 OCTOBER TO 11 NOVEMBER

TIME & VISION: NEW WORK FROM AUSTRALIAN ARTISTS – BARGEHOUSE, SE1

A major exhibition celebrating 20 years of **Australia Council for the Arts** London Residencies hosted by Acme as part of our **International Residencies Programme**.

25 OCTOBER TO 11 NOVEMBER

CHADWELL AWARD: JOSS COLE, ACME PROJECT SPACE, E2

Exhibition by 2011-12 award-holder and welcome to new recipient, **Maaïke Anne Stevens**, MFA graduate from Goldsmiths, University of London.

NOVEMBER ONWARDS

40TH ANNIVERSARY COMMISSIONS – www.acme.org.uk

Twelve works, one for each month of the anniversary year, commissioned from current Acme artists and presented on the website. Portraits of over 30 current Acme artists and their studios will also be presented online in a major visual essay by **Hugo Glendinning**.

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

ARTIST-INITIATED EVENTS AT ACME BUILDINGS

A range of events proposed by Acme artists, either individually or collectively, happening across Acme's buildings.

17 NOVEMBER TO 16 DECEMBER

EXHIBITION – ROGER KITE, ACME PROJECT SPACE, E2

Survey exhibition of long-serving staff member and painter who has sustained his practice, like many of Acme's staff, throughout his time with the organisation, having joined the team in 1978. Roger will be leaving Acme next year to pursue his own work full-time.

DECEMBER

FIRE STATION PUBLICATION

Launch of publication to celebrate the centenary of the opening of the original Fire Station, 30 Gillender Street, E14, and the 50 artists who have participated in Acme's work/live programme since Acme purchased, restored and converted the building in 1996.

2013

JANUARY

OPENING OF WARTON HOUSE, E15

The development of 27 purpose-designed studios in a listed building, Warton House, Stratford High Street. A s106 partnership with Genesis Housing Group.

MARCH

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER PARTNERSHIP, TWO-YEAR RESEARCH PROJECT

Presentation, and launch of publication, to share the research and outcomes of this first-ever fine art KTP, undertaken by **Dr Arantxa Echarte** for Acme Studios and **Central Saint Martins College of Arts and Design** into the form, function and future of the artist's studio.

APRIL

JESSICA WILKES AWARD

Fourth year-long studio award for an Acme artist begins. A major professional development opportunity in memory of the Acme artist Jessica Wilkes who died in November 2005 at the age of 56.

MAY

OPENING OF HIGH HOUSE ARTISTS' STUDIOS, PURFLEET, ESSEX

Launch of 39 new-build studios and four work/live units at High House Production Park (HHPP) and announcement of first **Stephen Cripps' Studio Award** recipient.

JUNE

ACME CRICKET CLUB ANNIVERSARY MATCH, LONDON

The Acme Cricket Club was established in 1975 when a team of Acme artists played a number of arts teams, including the Arts Council, SPACE and Tate Gallery, in Victoria Park, E2. The anniversary match will pitch the current team against a 'Rest of the Arts World' eleven.

JULY

SOUTHWARK STUDIO RESIDENCY AT THE GALLERIA STUDIOS, PECKHAM, SE15

Beginning of the fourth twelve-month studio residency at the Galleria Studios providing a selected artist with a free-studio, bursary and project costs. The residency is being planned with partners **Peckham Space – Camberwell College of Arts, University of the Arts** and the **South London Gallery**.

SEPTEMBER 2013 TO MARCH 2014 ACME ARCHIVE EXHIBITION AT THE WHITECHAPEL GALLERY, LONDON E1

Focusing on the early years of Acme from 1972-1982, this co-curated archive exhibition gathers photographs, moving images and other material to chart the pioneering early years of the organisation. **Whitechapel Gallery, Pat Matthews Gallery (Gallery 4)**

OCTOBER

FOUR NEW GRADUATE STUDIO AWARDS AT WARTON HOUSE, E15

Launch of four year-long studio awards for recent graduates and announcement of recipients. These awards will be operated in partnership with two London art colleges and a major foundation.

POSTCARD FROM MY STUDIO AT ACME PROJECT SPACE, LONDON E2

An invitation exhibition by Acme artists which gathers together responses to the life and experience of the studio.

NOVEMBER

STEPHEN CRIPPS' ARCHIVE EXHIBITION, HENRY MOORE INSTITUTE, LEEDS

Running concurrently with the archive display at the Whitechapel Gallery, The Henry Moore Institute will be presenting a display of the Stephen Cripps' Archive. Cripps died in 1982 at the age of 29 and 'exhibited' regularly at The Acme Gallery. **Sculpture Study Galleries, Leeds Art Gallery, 21 November 2013 to 17 February 2014.**

'72-82' – A FILM BY WILLIAM RABAN

Premiere of artist film commissioned by Acme to complement the archive exhibition at the Whitechapel Gallery. The 52-minute film will be a response to the archive and will use the material as its principal resource.

DECEMBER

OPENING OF THE GLASS YARD, SW9

Launch of 30 new-build studios which form part of a larger mixed-use development including accommodation for students from University of the Arts London. Launch of transitional studio spaces for recent graduates of Central Saint Martins College of Arts and Design, operated in partnership with the college.

CELEBRATING THE PAST

Founded on 9 November 1972 by Jonathan Harvey and David Panton, over 40 years Acme has developed from a self-help artists' initiative to being the leading professional studio development and management organisation in England. We have played a pioneering role in establishing East London as a centre for the visual arts and have provided significant support for nearly 5,000 artists, many at critical points in the development of their practice.

Our relationship with artists is founded on the principle of arms-length support that trusts artists to make best use of our investment in their creative risk-taking. By supporting artists at the level of research and development we underpin the other public-facing areas of the contemporary visual arts ecology.

We have pioneered new models of affordable space provision including the use of short-life housing stock, the creation of work/live space, developments secured through cross-subsidy and the achievement of permanent purpose-built studios through 'planning-gain'. We continue to play an important research, advisory and advocacy role in the field of affordable studio provision.

Cover: Back addition of short-life house on Spanby Road, E3 undergoing repairs. Acme Studios (1975)

Whitechapel Gallery – Acme Studios' Archive Display 1972-1982

A calendar of events for our anniversary year is included within this publication. Towards the end of the year (September 2013 to March 2014) we will be presenting an exhibition of archive material at the Whitechapel Gallery (Pat Matthews Gallery – Gallery 4). Focusing on Acme's first ten years, this co-curated exhibition will present photographs, moving images and other material to chart the pioneering early years of the organisation.



David Panton and Jonathan Harvey outside 117 Devons Road, E3 one of the first two Acme houses and first office. Claire Smith (1974)

Acme's first decade saw the use of short-life houses in East London and beyond, the unfolding of The Acme Gallery's programme in Covent Garden (1976 to 1981) and the beginnings of studio provision in converted commercial buildings. The display will be accompanied by seminars and form part of Whitechapel's wider education programme. Acme has a comprehensive archive which will be supplemented by contributed material from artists and others. We are planning to establish a permanent archive to enable access for study and selected material will also be accessible via our website.

Critical to the success of the Whitechapel display, and the depth and richness of the archive more generally, will be the contributions from Acme artists who experienced those early years. This was a shared experience of a remarkable time. It is important that personal recollections, documentation and work from the artist's perspective are included to complement the material we hold. We have very good records of the artists who had houses, studios and exhibitions with us and, over the next few months, will be in contact with as many as possible to invite them to contribute to the archive display and other events associated with it.

THE FIRST DECADE



Far left
Boarded-up houses
on Campbell Road,
E3, awaiting repairs.
Acme Studios (1974)



Left
Webster Road,
SE16. Acme Studios
(1975)

1972 – 9 November, Acme Housing Association Ltd, led by **Jonathan Harvey** and **David Panton**, registers with sole aim of providing founder group of recent graduates with cheap studio and living accommodation.

1973 – Acme approaches **Greater London Council (GLC)** for empty properties in **East London**. GLC transfers two derelict shops in Bow, pending demolition, for 21 months. Artists required to carry out extensive repairs in exchange for very low rents (£3 per week) and agreement to hand properties back when required for demolition. The properties are put back into working order and, encouraged by this, the GLC transfers more property, taking Acme beyond the needs of its original members. **Acme becomes a voluntary service for other artists in similar need.**

1974 – Acme achieves charitable status. Jonathan Harvey and David Panton become part-time officers with 'seeding' funding from the **Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation**. The GLC transfers longer-life properties and gives grants for their repair. Artists do most of the work themselves, and develop building skills. **Arts Council** gives conversion grants for studios in houses. **December: Acme manages 76 houses, providing living and studio space for 90 artists. Over 130 people housed.**

1975 – March: 13 properties successfully returned to GLC. Acme's efficiency as a short-life housing organisation, rather than as an artists' group per se, produces further transfers of housing stock. Acme becomes the largest single manager of short-life housing in London. Newly-transferred

properties now have lives of at least five years, with grants from the GLC of up to £1,500. Acme publishes **Help Yourself to Studio Space** to help artists in other cities. Advisory visits follow. Responding to high demand, Acme seeks new sources of properties from other London boroughs. Working with Hammersmith and Fulham, Acme takes on an old school at **Hetley Road, W12** and a school kitchen at **Faroe Road, W14** as studio space only, creating 19 studios for local artists.

1976 – Acme obtains planning consent to convert a banana warehouse into a non-commercial gallery in Covent Garden, WC2. **May: The Acme Gallery opens**, catering principally for artists whose reputations have yet to be established, or whose work in installation and performance is difficult to accommodate elsewhere. Acme encourages artists to adapt the space to their own needs. Capital assistance received from Arts Council, GLC and Gulbenkian Foundation. Arts Council and Greater London Arts give revenue funding. Acme office, previously in Bow, moves to Covent Garden. Jonathan Harvey becomes Gallery Director, and David Panton Housing Director, both with part-time assistants. Acme leases former meat pie factory from the GLC in **Acre Lane, Brixton**, for conversion to 28 artists' studios. Arts Council provides conversion funds. In other areas, including South East London, GLC transfers more houses in good condition and gives grants sufficient to use contractors for specialist work. **Department of Transport** becomes new source of stock with transfer of houses in Archway, N6, due to be demolished for A1 road widening. Acme funds initial repairs, recovering the outlay through rents.



Eight Artists : Women : 1980, Part 1: Shelagh Cluett, Emma Park, Josefa Rogocki, Claire Smith. Image: Floor pieces - Park, wall pieces - Cluett. October 1980. Acme Studios



10 Days. A ritualised deconstruction of the ritual by Stuart Brisley in association with Manfred Blob. Continuous performance installation - 21 to 31 December 1978. Acme Studios.



Ron Haselden, Working 12 days at the Acme Gallery, August 1978. Acme Studios



Artist Richard Deacon in his studio at Acre Lane, SW2. John Riddy (1989)

1977 – Acme develops **International Visual Artist Studio Exchange Programme**, a five-country network of organisations funded by the Arts Council, British Council and the National Endowment for the Arts (USA). Acme publishes **Artists Guide to London** by Heather Waddell, to provide visiting artists with information and advice. **Acme becomes a revenue client of the Arts Council. December: 142 short-life houses managed, and three studio blocks in Hammersmith and Brixton.**

1978 – Some GLC short-life houses no longer required for development schemes and thus become permanent. Acme negotiates tenants' rights for the licensees, qualifying them for GLC's tenant-purchase scheme. Acme loses property management, but has helped artists to buy their houses with substantial discounts. **December: 204 properties managed, helping over 350 artists.**

1979 – Growth slows as GLC acquires very little stock for development. Demand from artists remains high.

1980 - Some Acme-managed GLC properties transferred to local authorities, leading to new

working relationships for Acme. **In Leytonstone, E11, Department of Transport** transfers short-life houses that ultimately will be demolished to make way for M11/Hackney link road. Acme finances repairs.

1981 – March: Acme manages 180 GLC-owned houses. October: The Acme Gallery closes and is returned to GLC for demolition. Major shows by artists over five and a half years include Stuart Brisley, Helen Chadwick, Shelagh Cluett, Stephen Cripps, Rose Garrard, Ron Haselden, Albert Irvin, Jock McFadyen, Simon Read, Kerry Tregrove, Darrell Viner and Anthony Wishaw. Acme office moves to **Robinson Road**, Bethnal Green, E2 as part of complex of 28,000 sq ft of ex-industrial space negotiated from Crown Estate Commissioners. The site is converted to provide 46 studios with Arts Council capital support. Eight short-life houses transferred by **Royal London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea**. Department of Transport transfers more houses in Leyton, E10, becoming major new source of housing stock.

1982 – Against background of rising demand, Acme increasingly seeks more studio premises. **December: Acme manages 250 housing units.**

'72-82' – A Film by William Raban

In 1996 we commissioned William Raban to make a film about our newly-purchased building in Gillender Street, E14 and its transformation from a derelict fire station into studio and work/live accommodation for artists. *Firestation* alludes to the history of the building through the use of photographic archive material and memories recorded on the soundtrack.

The 26-minute film, with sound by David Cunningham, includes fire performances by Paul Burwell and work by three other artists who lived and worked there.

We are delighted once again to commission William, this time to respond to the challenge

Still from William Raban's film *The Houseless Shadow* (2011). Film adaptation of the essay *Night Walks* by Charles Dickens commissioned by The Museum of London for their *Dickens and London* exhibition.



of making a film which takes as its subject Acme's first ten years. **'72-82'** will complement the archive display at the Whitechapel Gallery and be premiered in November 2013. William has lived in East London since 1974 and been making films since 1970. He is currently reader in film at the University of the Arts London. He has made a number of works that document London's history. They include the feature length *Thames Film* (1986) and *Under the Tower Trilogy* (1992-6). William's latest film *The Houseless Shadow* (2011) was adapted from

the essay *Night Walks* by Charles Dickens and commissioned by The Museum of London. Acme has a rich archive of photographic, film and audio material relating to the history of the development of the organisation and the 'shows' emanating from the Acme Gallery. William will be drawing upon this archive in order to construct a one-hour film that will show the crucial impact that Acme had in supporting the work of artists in London during the first decade of its operation. David Cunningham, once again, will be collaborating with William to create the soundtrack.

Stephen Cripps' Archive Display at the Henry Moore Institute

In November 2013 the Henry Moore Institute, a centre for the study of sculpture in Leeds, will be presenting a display of The Stephen Cripps' Archive. Spanning his practice from early student work to 1982, this exhibition tracks how Cripps tested out ideas through drawings, constantly expanding the horizons of sculpture, transforming objects with actions, sound and pyrotechnics.

Cripps was an artist closely associated with The Acme Gallery (1976-81), and the Henry Moore Institute's exhibition will run concurrently with the display at the Whitechapel Gallery that features the Acme Gallery's extensive archive. This will be the first public exhibition of this narrative of artist experimentation that built the ground from which present artistic activity in Britain has grown.

From its inception in 1976, The Acme Gallery developed a reputation for supporting artists

whose approach to the presentation of their work could not be happily accommodated elsewhere as it pushed the boundaries of how art was understood. The reviews, or 'obituaries' of the gallery's programme, when it closed, speak for themselves:

"... The Acme Gallery, which has done so much for the boldest and most experimental of our artists in recent years....always excelled at allowing artists to take unparalleled liberties with the space at their disposal...."

Richard Cork, 'Terminal Acme', *Evening Standard*, 8 October 1981

"....The Acme was very much a gallery of the seventies, a gallery devoted to extremes, a rallying point for the avant-garde...."

Waldemar Januszczak, 'Touching Class', *The Guardian*, 8 October 1981



The Acme Gallery, 43 Shelton Street, Covent Garden, after a Cripps' performance, April 1978. Acme Studios

Stephen Cripps was an artist who 'exhibited' a number of times at the gallery. He exemplified Acme's spirit and emphatically took 'unparalleled liberties with the space'. Cripps was a 'pyrotechnic sculptor', an artist who created objects and machines which often reacted with the spaces which attempted to contain them, his practice extending from sculpture to pyrotechnic and sound performances.

Cripps died in 1982 at the age of 29. Immediately following Stephen's death, friends and family ensured that his work – mostly drawings, documentation of performances and associated material – was listed and collected together. This was particularly important as his work was largely ephemeral and his principal form of expression, performance, existed only as documentation.

A group of his close friends and artists – Anne Bean, Paul Burwell, Rita Harris, Jonathan Harvey, Michael Heindorff, Claudia Kinmonth, Margy Kinmonth and Ally Raftery – formed an informal trust to ensure his work was not forgotten. A monograph was published by Acme in 1992



Top: *Shooting Gallery and Roundabout for Crashed Helicopter* in background, *Cripps at the Acme, Machines & Performances*, April/May 1978. Acme Studios

Above: *Cripps at the Acme, Drawings and Performances*, May 1980. Acme Studios

enabling a comprehensive survey of his work as a permanent record. The publication was launched with a performance by Anne Bean, Paul Burwell and Richard Wilson at the Serpentine Gallery on the tenth anniversary of Stephen's death. The archive material was subsequently brought together in one place and stored by Acme.

Twenty years later the efforts of the trust have finally borne fruit with the display of The Stephen Cripps' Archive at the Henry Moore Institute. The exhibition will set out to increase the awareness of Cripps' groundbreaking work and to encourage research into his artistic practice that radically rethought the ways in which we understand sculpture.

The Stephen Cripps' Archive will be on display at the Henry Moore Institute, in the Sculpture Study Galleries of Leeds Art Gallery, from 21 November 2013 to 17 February 2014. For more information contact Rebecca Land, Communications Manager, on rebecca@henry-moore.org

Hackney Studio Residency

The Lesney Matchbox Toys Factory, which had occupied the Matchmakers Wharf site, was an enormously significant landmark building and local employer. With the opening of the new development it is important that we recall and celebrate that history. Our approach is to invest in an artist to bring the history, and the lives of the people associated with it, to life. To do this we have established a new artist residency, the **Hackney Studio Residency**, based on our successful programmes in Southwark and Tower Hamlets.

The eighteen-month residency, commencing October 2012, will be based in a ground-floor studio at the entrance to the main development, and provides a free studio (worth £7,500) and a bursary of £10,000. The programme is a collaboration with our partners, **Hackney Council's Cultural Development Team** and the Hackney-based independent arts organisation, **PEER**, who will provide additional professional support and mentoring to the artist.

This is a significant professional opportunity for an artist to develop their studio practice. It is important that at the very beginning of the new development we do not let the history of the site fade and there is an opportunity to bring it to life in a form created and mediated by an artist. The open 'brief' therefore is that the history of the site, and the people associated with it, become the artist's principal 'subject matter'.

The residency opportunity was widely promoted and from 98 applications, the panel representing the partners, selected **David Murphy**. David



Lesney Matchbox Toys Factory shortly before demolition. Greg Goodale (2010)

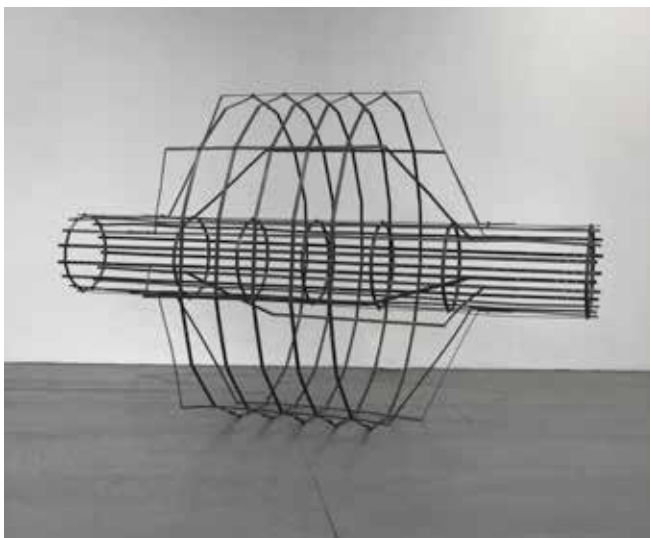
lives and works in Hackney. He graduated from Glasgow School of Art in 2006 and has since exhibited and travelled widely. He describes his work as follows:

"From architecture to anthropology, tool-making to trade routes, my practice takes up inherently human activity that begins with the hand. Looking carefully at these specific processes, and re-presenting aspects of them as part of a larger imaginary, stories are spun leaving room for conjecture, but anchored in rigorous research and historical groundwork."

For David "...notions ofconstruction remain important both formally and philosophically. Whether in wood or words, these methods are framed as essentially positive, affirmative acts, though shadowed by an awareness of their precariousness in nature and time."

David is "...thrilled to be the first recipient of the Hackney Residency at Matchmakers Wharf. The site's former life as the Lesney Matchbox Toys Factory will provide the backbone to my investigations and research over the coming months, though the residency's duration also allows for the work to grow in unfamiliar and unexpected directions. It brings significant resources to my practice at this important stage in my artistic development; space and time to work without many of the familiar creative compromises, but also the valuable guidance and support of Acme, Hackney's Cultural Development team and PEER."

David will be presenting a display in the residency studio during the opening of the studios on September 25, to introduce his work to other artists and local people. The partners look forward very much to working with David over the coming eighteen months.



David Murphy, *They are the mysteries and these are the traps of the mysteries*, 2011. Mild steel, boot polish, 200 x 130 x 130 cm.

Celebrating the Past

A black and white photograph of a dilapidated brick building. The building features a prominent window with a decorative metal scrollwork element below it. The roof is damaged, with a large section missing. A stack of bricks is visible in the foreground. The overall scene suggests a state of decay or historical significance.

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