

## Acme leaves lasting impression on Russian artist

Acme Studios has helped over 5,000 artists since it was founded 40 years ago. For many this support came at an important stage of their lives or development of their practice and no more so than **Oleg Kudryashov**.



Oleg outside his Acme house in 1975.



Part of Oleg's exhibition at The Acme Gallery in 1976.

Oleg left the Soviet Union in 1974 and arrived in London with his wife via refugee camps in Austria and Italy. With few friends, little money and none of his artwork, Oleg was put in touch with Acme Housing Association, as Acme was then known. The minutes of the board meeting in 1974 show that their 'special circumstances' meant 'necessitous queue jumping' and they were almost immediately given a short-life house in Bow and, when that was demolished, another in South London.

Oleg began working again and met with other artists including many leading and 'conceptual' artists of the time. In September 1976 he had a solo show at the newly-opened Acme Gallery in Covent Garden. Acme gallery director Jonathan Harvey remembers that they only had a handful of words in common, including 'problem' and 'vodka', but this did not prevent a lively creative collaboration. The exhibition was a success and received a positive critical response, including Marina (now Lady) Vaizey's warm review in the *Sunday Times*: *'It all has a singular, disturbing emotional force, the more powerful as it is the more suggestive.'*

Now 80, Oleg has returned to live in Russia where he was welcomed as a culture-hero. In 1999, he had a retrospective exhibition at the Tretyakov State Museum in Moscow and the following year he was awarded the Russian State Art and Literature Prize.

A retrospective of his work curated by Edward Lucie-Smith and Sergei Reviakin entitled *'Freedom Inside Yourself'* at **Bermondsey Project** will be opened by Lady Vaizey on **13**

**September.** The exhibition will give London audiences the opportunity to once again see work by one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's leading print-makers.

Exhibition: 14 to 30 September 2012; Thursday to Sunday, 12 noon to 6 p.m.  
The Bermondsey Project : Unit 7, 46 Willow Walk, London SE1 5SF

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Notes for editors

**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. By September 2013, the addition of three further major studio projects will expand our property portfolio to 16 buildings, providing 620 studios as well as residency and award programmes for over 30 artists a year. For further information, please contact Jack Fortescue, Communications Officer at:

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