

Press Release

November 2007

Acme Studios announces artist awarded the second Studio Residency in Southwark

Acme Studios recently announced the recipient of the second Studio Residency in Southwark based at its Galleria Studios in Peckham, London SE15. **Ana Laura Lopez de la Torre** will succeed Isa Suarez as Southwark's new artist in residence from January 2008.

The Southwark Residency programme was established in 2006 following the completion by Acme of 50 permanent new-build artists' studios at The Galleria as part of a pioneering mixed-use housing development. 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.

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 in the borough. 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.

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Acme Studios is a group of three exempt charities registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1965

Members of the National Housing Federation

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The first residency, which proved to be a huge success, 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.

The Human Rights Jukebox took to the streets of Camberwell and Peckham in June 2007 with Isa, Southwark residents and participants of the workshops leading the way. Attracting crowds at Peckham Library, the Jukebox journeyed on to the South London Gallery before travelling to Tate Britain where it has been featured in the 'Late at Tate' programme.

Selected from over 40 strong applications, Ana Laura demonstrated a 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. Her proposal for the residency "uses night-time as a conceptual framework. I want to explore people's experiences and perceptions of the night. Who lives and works at night? Is the night a time of freedom or danger?".

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 winning the award 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 to that to have that stress taken off my mind will allow my thinking to flourish and my work to become a lot more experimental.”

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.

Press Information: For more photographs or information on the Southwark Residency contact Tom Giddins on 020 8981 6811 or on tom@acme.org.uk

To contact Ana Laura: southwarknights@gmail.com



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



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

Notes to editors:

Acme Studios is a London-based charity providing affordable studios and living space for artists. It is recognised as the leading development organisation for affordable artists' space in England. Acme has supported over 5,000 artists with this practical, financial and creative breathing space. Acme receives revenue funding from Arts Council England.

Through an expanding residency and awards programme we invest in artists' careers and in projects which provide direct community benefit. In response to the enormous demand we continue to pioneer the creation of affordable, high-quality, accessible and permanent space for artists, working in partnership with commercial and affordable housing developers and other agencies.

