

Fundraising and Acme's 40th anniversary

Background

The main focus of our fundraising has been on our role as a capital development organisation and we have secured significant capital funding from a range of sources (including from local authorities, other public agencies, European regeneration funds and trusts and foundations) most recently in the form of capital lottery funding from Arts Council England in 1996 (£1.2 million) and again in 2005 (£2 million). Since 2006 we have pioneered the use of 'planning gain' to achieve very significant subsidies from social and commercial housing developers, amounting to over £5 million, to support the acquisition of new-build studio projects.

With our focus as a capital development and management organisation we have not actively fundraised to support core activities because achieving capital funding enables us to generate high levels of rental income and deliver high-quality and affordable space. However in recent years we have fundraised to support particular programmes which add value to our core provision of studios and work/live space for artists: achieving help for our Work/Live Residency Programme at the Fire Station from The Paul Hamlyn Foundation and The Esmeé Fairbairn Charitable Trust, ongoing support from the London Borough of Southwark towards our Southwark Studio Residency at the Galleria and, recently, from the Swan Foundation to support our Bow Cross Residency. We have also been able to establish a number of awards through support from legacies, private donors, supporters' groups and trusts: Adrian Carruthers Award, Chadwell Award, Chelsea Studio Award and Jessica Wilkes Award.

There is now both a significant opportunity and need to undertake fundraising **as a core activity**. The immediate opportunity is Acme's 40th anniversary year (commencing 9 November 2012) and the need arises from far greater uncertainty over the long-term availability of Arts Council revenue funding.

The following proposes what we should aim to achieve in our anniversary year, and beyond, and the strategies we should pursue to deliver these aims.

2012 is the year of the London Olympics located in East London which has always been our base and the focus of our activities. Our Carpenters Road studio building which supported over 500 artists between 1985 and 2001 is now the site of the Aquatics Centre.

In the lead up to November 2012 we will be involved with two profile-raising projects:

Commencing 19 May will be the centenary year of the formal opening of our **Fire Station** building (19 May 1911) which will not only provide a useful focus to promote those artists on the current work/live residency programme, but also the 40 artists who had been on the previous three programmes. Activities to celebrate this centenary will also provide a useful 'warm-up' for our anniversary year.

We are now working in collaboration with **Neville Gabie, Artist in Residence on the Olympic Park**, and the Arts and Culture Team at the Olympic Delivery Authority, on an 'archaeological' project which will uncover, honour and celebrate the creative activity of the artists who had studios at Carpenters Road with the intention that the work produced will be made visible in late 2011 / early 2012.

In our anniversary year (June 2012) we will be opening two significant new studio projects as part of major developments on the fringes of the Olympic Park – the partnership with Telford Homes and London Borough of Hackney at **Matchmakers Wharf in Homerton** and with Genesis Housing Group, London Thames Gateway Development Corporation and London Borough of Newham at **Warton House in Stratford High Street**.

It will also be the year when our **Knowledge Transfer Partnership** will be completed and the findings of this important two-year research and development project made public.

2012 is also the 25th anniversary of our **International Residencies Programme**, which has supported over 300 artists from eight countries on major residencies in East London since its inception.

What do we have to celebrate?

- Acme has developed from a self-help artists' initiative using short-life housing stock and temporary ex-industrial buildings to being the leading professional studio development and management organisation in England. We have an increasingly substantial and secure property base and support increasing numbers of artists through our studios and associated residency and awards programmes, many of which focus on community engagement and participation. We also continue to play a leading research, advisory and advocacy role in the field of affordable space provision for artists.
- Our values and vision have remained remarkably consistent.
- The organisation is still led by its founder members and guided by a small and effective board.
- Our relationship with artists is distinctive – 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 continue to deliver the highest professional standards in the design and management of space for artists and associated residency and awards programmes.
- We have provided significant career development support for nearly 5,000 artists, some for many years and many at critical points in the development of their practice. Many of these artists now have significant national and international reputations and include nine Turner Prize winners.
- Other important groups and organisations have emerged from Acme's early support including ACAVA and the Bermondsey Artists' Group and we have provided premises for important publicly-funded galleries, the Showroom and Matt's Gallery.
- We have played a pioneering role in establishing East London as a centre for the visual arts and thus have contributed to the regeneration of the area and the status of London as the world's cultural capital.

- We have pioneered new models of affordable space provision including the use of short-life housing stock, the development of work/live space, developments secured through cross-subsidy, and the achievement of permanent purpose-built studios through planning gain.
- We have benefited many other artists, groups and organisations through our advisory service and playing the lead role in establishing the national body (National Federation of Artists' Studio Providers) to represent the affordable studios' sector in the UK.

Aims of development strategy

- To raise the profile of our past achievements, current programmes and future plans.
- To open up and secure new funding streams.
- To help secure new development and partnership opportunities.
- To help promote artists on our current residency and awards programmes.

Central to our strategy is the establishment of a dedicated post, through the recruitment of a part-time Development Officer, which will focus on our 40th anniversary but also on fundraising more generally.