

Residency, Awards & Community Programme

Helping artists by providing them with affordable studio and living space has always been Acme Studios' principal charitable activity. Over the years we have worked hard to secure, expand and improve this provision so that increasing numbers of artists can benefit from high-quality, long-term, accessible and affordable studios, enabling them to spend more time devoted to their professional practice in a stable, well-managed and supportive environment.

In recent years we have been developing new ways of supporting artists, adding value to our core provision but remaining true to our belief that providing artists with time and space is fundamental to supporting the development of contemporary fine art practice.

This programme now has a number of different strands: work/live residencies and bursaries at low rents, and awards which provide free studios and grants. The programme also includes studio residency schemes for selected artists whose practice naturally embraces or reflects the areas and communities where the studios are based,

resulting in direct public engagement in creative visual arts activity. This is in contrast to many other schemes where there is often a requirement for artists to deliver quantifiable outcomes. Experience tells us that our approach works, that encouraging risk-taking in this way often leads to the enhancement of an artist's work, profile and future prospects. Timing is key, and we always work with external expert artists and others to help assess whether an artist is in a position to make best use of the opportunities provided.

Although obligation-free, we ensure that artists operate within a clear support structure often, as with our Southwark and Tower Hamlets Studio residencies, working with external partners to provide mentoring, and support with advice and resources when needed. Increasingly we are developing partnerships to help fund new awards.

Our awards and residency programme is one of the most extensive and direct means of support to artists in the UK.

Southwark Studio Residency (2008-09) holder Ana Laura Lopez de la Torre with local residents at launch of 'At Night I', an artist book. Photo: Franco la Russa (2009)





Robert Holyhead in his Work/Live unit at the Fire Station Programme 3 (2005-2010). Photo: Derek Brown

Fire Station Work/Live Programme

Acme's work/live programme at the Fire Station provides combined studio and living space at low rents as well as special bursaries: rent-free space and grants of £5,000/year.

The former fire station was bought in 1997 and converted with funding from the National Lottery and other sources. Restored and converted to provide 12 purpose-designed work/live and six non-residential studios, these units were developed in response to the lack of affordable space for artists to work and live in, and in particular, to the lack of studios properly accessible to disabled artists.

The five-year fixed-term residency scheme is intended to allow artists more time to concentrate on the development of their work and professional careers, and less time working to survive.

'If I was asked to devise an art award, it might consist of a house and studio; maybe like Acme Studios, who offer, from a national open submission, five-year work/live residencies at low rents and two-and-a-half-year bursaries at The Fire Station, in Bow in East London; that seems a good model.'

Jeremy Dellar, *Frieze* (Nov-Dec 2005)

Since the programme began in 1997, over forty artists have benefitted from work/live residencies at the Fire Station.

Over 100 artists applied for Programme Four (2010-2015) and the following 12 were selected:

Briony Anderson, Gemma Anderson, Kate Atkin, Jonathan Baldock, George Charman, Melanie Clifford, Susan Corke, Robin Footitt, Haroon Mirza, Matthew Noel-Tod, David Osbaldeston and Emma Smith.

Southwark Studio Residency

This residency is awarded to Southwark-based artists, who receive a rent-free studio (worth £4,750 a year) for 18 months, plus a cash stipend of £10,000.

The Southwark Studio Residency was established in 2006, following the completion of our 50 permanent new-build studios at the Galleria in Peckham. This studio residency, in partnership with Southwark Council and the South London Gallery, is an opportunity for artists who are involved in socially-engaged practice to develop significant relationships with cultural agencies and communities in the borough. It is also a financial breathing-space, allowing artists to focus on the development of their practice.

The support of the partners is key: Southwark Council provides £5,000 to the residency, as well as support and advice; South London Gallery provides support from their senior curator and/or director who visits the artist four times throughout the residency period. There is also additional support for marketing and programming.

'The residency [was] the most well-supported, enriching and exciting professional opportunity I have ever had as an artist. It has really had a great impact on my practice, on my visibility as an artist and on the way I am thinking about my future.'

Ana Laura Lopez de la Torre, Southwark Studio Residency holder (2008-09)

The partners aim to nurture and extend the relationship between the artist, their work and the wider community, and the artist is supported to achieve publicly visible outcomes at the end of the programme which encourage greater participation in art practice.

Three artists have received the award:

K Yoland (2010-11)

Ana Laura Lopez de la Torre (2008-2009)

Isa Saurez (2006-2007)

'March of the Human Rights Juke Box' Isa Saurez Southwark Studio Residency holder (2006-07). Photo: Isa Saurez (2006)



Tower Hamlets Studio Residency

As part of our new-build studios in Leven Road, London, E14, we offer a two-year rent-free studio residency worth £7,000, plus a grant of £10,000 a year to an artist living or working in London.

The residency is an opportunity for an artist involved with socially-engaged practice to develop significant relationships, through their work, with local residents and the wider community. Like the Southwark Studio Residency it also offers a financial breathing-space, allowing artists to focus on the development of their practice

Jan Hendrickse, a London-based artist working with sound and visual references, was chosen as the first artist in residence at Leven Road. As well as developing his own practice, Jan is working with local residents and community groups to explore the acoustic ecology of East London, employing listening as a way of exploring the sonic environment.



Adrian Carruthers Award

Established in 2002 for artists graduating from The Slade School of Art, the Adrian Carruthers Studio Award provides a rent-free studio for a year, plus a bursary of £5,000.

The award was created in memory of the artist Adrian Carruthers, who died in 2001 at the age of 40. A graduate of The Slade School of Art, Adrian's family, friends and fellow artists have worked together to set up an award in his name, which offers practical support to artists at the beginning of their careers.

The space is at Childers Street, Deptford, SE8, where Adrian had a studio. Acme contributes half of the cost of the studio space, and Adrian's friends and family continue to fundraise to provide the remainder of the costs.

The 2010-11 holder of the award is **Rose Davey**. The previous holders are:

Janne Malmros, Revati Mann, Terumitsu Hishinuma, Nicola Wallis, Lorraine Neeson, Bryan Parsons, Corinna Till, Eddie Farrell, Gil Pasternak, Graham Hayward & Emma Hart, Matt Templeton and Sibylle Baltzer.

'Leaving the security and support of college is extremely daunting for any student. This award serves as an invaluable advancement in my professional development and affords me the luxury of working as an artist in London which otherwise might not have been possible.'

Lorraine Neeson, Adrian Carruthers Award Holder (2005-06)

Tower Hamlets Studio Residency holder Jan Hendrickse with local residents. Photo: Greg Goodale (2009)



'Dance of the Techno Polar Bear' Jessica Wilkes Award holder (2008-09) Howard Dyke's solo exhibition at the Acme Project Space. Photo: Acme Studios (2009)

Jessica Wilkes Award

The annual award provides an artist currently in an Acme studio with a grant worth £10,000 to enable them to devote more of their time to their studio practice. The award covers the selected artist's rent for one year with the remaining amount available as a bursary.

This major professional development opportunity is the result of a legacy from the artist Jessica Wilkes who died in 2005 at the age of 56. The award has been established by Acme in collaboration with Jessica's family and friends to celebrate her life.

Two artists have so far received this award: **Howard Dyke** (2008-09) and **Stephanie Kingston** (2009-10); with both artists using the Acme Project Space to exhibit work during their award.

Chadwell Award

The Chadwell Award aims to provide a bridge between art school and practice as a professional artist. The award was set up in 2010 by Andrew Post and Mary Aylmer, philanthropic art collectors, in partnership with Acme. The award provides a recent MA graduate with a rent-free studio in Childers Street, Deptford, for a year, together with a bursary of £5,000 jointly funded with Acme.

The award will be offered to students who are about to complete postgraduate courses, and will target different institutions from one year to the next. The award for 2010-2011 was offered to students at one of two London colleges: the Royal College of Art and the Royal Academy Schools.

Sarah Poots (2010-11) is the inaugural award holder.



Chelsea Studio Award holder Sam Austen's studio at the Galleria. Photo: Sam Austen (2010)

Chelsea Studio Award

In 2009, Kiki Claxton and Harry Major, two second-year students at Chelsea College of Art & Design, approached a number of organisations with the intention of setting up awards for graduating artists. Aware of the difficulties graduate artists face, and impressed by Kiki and Harry's proactivity, Acme offered to provide a rent-free studio for six months.

In 2010, the Chelsea Studio Award will be greatly enhanced as a result of a grant from Chelsea Arts Club Trust, who encourage art and design education, and provide help and support for artists and designers. Chelsea Arts Club Trust's contribution, means the next award holder will also receive a cash bursary and mentoring.

From this year the Chelsea Studio Award will be at Acme's Childers Street studios alongside two other graduate studio awards; the Adrian Carruthers Award and the Chadwell Award.

This year the role of organising the award was taken on by another second year student, Lauren Houlton, who will also gain invaluable experience of working with professional arts bodies.

This year's recipient is **Amy Gee** following the inaugural holder **Sam Austen** (2008-09).

Acme/WASPS Residency

Acme has a long relationship with the major artists' studios provider in Scotland, WASPS. As well as sharing expertise and experience, the two organisations have been looking at ways they can work in partnership to directly benefit artists. Acme offered WASPS tenants the opportunity to spend two months rent-free at a work/live unit at the Fire Station in London and WASPS offered Acme tenants the chance to spend a month at The Steeple in Fife.

Moray Hillary was selected as the recipient artist of the Acme/WASPS residency and, along with collaborator Agnes Negregard, spent two months at Acme's Fire Station work/live programme in East London which ended in February 2010.

Acme Studios' tenant **Maggie Lill** was selected for a month-long residency at The Steeple studio development in Newburgh, Fife in August 2010.

'I have been inspired and have valued the opportunity to explore new themes within my work whilst networking with other artists.'

Maggie Lill (2010)

Inspire MA Programme

Acme approached the Royal College of Art Curating Course to explore a collaborative approach to the use of the Acme Project Space which would both benefit the expanding number of artists on Acme awards and residencies, as well as support the aims of this innovative course by providing a platform for these young curators to develop ideas.

The students, who are placed at galleries and museums across England, are also supported by a highly experienced and dedicated team of academics and practitioners, including Head of Department Professor Mark Nash and Senior Tutors Clare Carolin and Karen Alexander. The resulting exhibition, 'Contort Yourself' featuring work by David Blandy, Harold Offeh and Jan Hendrickse, was held at the Acme Project Space in June 2010.



Gail Pickering in her Work/Live unit at the Sugar House (2002-2007). Photo: Hugo Glendinning (2005)

Sugar House Work/Live

The work/live residency programme, based at The Sugar House, provides artists with combined studio and living space at low rents .

Like the Fire Station, the project was designed in response to the lack of affordable space in London for artists to work and live in. The project alleviates pressures on artists - both financial and practical. Low rent reduces the amount of time artists have to spend earning to pay for somewhere to live and work, while increasing the time spent developing their professional careers.

In 2002, eight artists were selected from a national submission to take up the first work/live residencies. Other artists have subsequently joined the programme as the original artists have taken up opportunities elsewhere. The current artists on work/live residencies are: **Ruth Caig, Ignaz Cassar, Max Goodchild, Jenny Hamblett, Harold Offeh, Jochen Holz, Tania Rowlings and David Smith.**

Bow Cross Artist Residency

Acme Studios is managing an artist in residence programme centred around Swan Housing Group's major regeneration scheme at Bow Cross, E3.

During the residency, a local artist with a strong professional track record of developing art projects which engage with local people, will develop a project/s in collaboration with the community.

The residency includes a £10,000 bursary and £10,000 towards the project/s costs and support throughout the 12 month residency from Acme Studios and key stakeholders.

Simon Terrill was recently selected for the residency which begins in December. Simon lives and works in nearby Poplar and is planning to use his award to develop a photography project based on sites around Bow Cross identified by local residents.

Acme Project Space

Opened in 2009, the Acme Project Space is a multi-purpose venue located at our major studio site at Robinson Road, Bethnal Green, E2. For 20 years the building was home to The Showroom which has now relocated to Penfold Street, NW8.

The Acme Project Space supports a range of activities including our expanding Residency, Awards & Community Programme and our major International Residencies Programme with exhibitions, presentations, seminars and events.

Details of previous and forthcoming shows can be found at:

www.acme.org.uk/projectspace.php



Exterior of the Acme Project Space, E2. Photo: Acme Studios (2009)

Contact

For more information about our Residency, Awards & Community programme, please contact:

Julia Lancaster
Residency and Projects Manager

Acme Studios
44 Copperfield Road,
London, E3 4RR
T 020 8981 6811
E mail@acme.org.uk
W www.acme.org.uk/residencies.php

Partner organisations involved in Acme Studios' Residency, Community and Awards Programme:



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