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Southwark welcomes its first artist in residence

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Southwark now has its very own artist in residence, following an award to a talented Peckham performer.

Local artist Isa Suarez, who beat off tough competition to gain the post, will now spend a year working in one of 50 new-build studios at The Galleria in Peckham, following a £10,000 grant by Southwark Council and Acme Studios.

Isa said: "This award gives me the chance to develop my work as a composer, performer and sound artist within the Southwark community."

Anya Whitehead, arts manager at Southwark Council, said: "We're delighted that Southwark now has its very own artist in residence and we wish Isa all the best in her new position. As well as developing her own practice, she will be working with local community groups to create work that is all about the people in Southwark - we believe this is a great way to support enjoyment of arts in the borough."

Acme's co-director Jonathan Harvey said: "The Galleria is a fantastic example of the private sector helping to create cultural infrastructure, providing studio space for many local artists at a price they can afford. The residency programme will help to make our new building more visible and forge real and lasting relationships with our local community".

The residency is supported by Southwark Council, Acme Studios and the South London Gallery.

The studios are owned and managed by Acme Studios, a key strategic development agency for artists' studios in England, and were developed in partnership with Barratt Homes. They opened in January and are part of a larger mixed-use development which includes private and affordable residential apartments.

There is a huge demand from artists for affordable space in London with thousands of artists on waiting lists. Recent Acme-led surveys show that commercially available studios are up to three times more expensive than studios in the affordable provider sector. 430 studios are at risk over the next 10 years from rising land values and new development schemes.

In partnership with private developers, Acme plan to increase the number of much-needed affordable and permanent studios for artists. Mixed-use planning gain projects such as The Galleria in Peckham could offer

a significant source of finance for future studio developments.

Notes for editors:

Acme studios is a charitable organisation founded in 1972 to assist artists with low-cost studio and living space.

Since 1972, Acme Studios has helped over 5,000 artists and is the largest organisation of its kind in the United Kingdom.

Currently Acme manage over 400 studio units, and are recognised as the key strategic development agency for artists' studios in England.

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