



**Novas Gallery Camden**  
73 Parkway  
Camden Town  
London NW1 7PP  
TEL: 020 7267 5641/9127

## Press Release

### The Spirit of Arlington

**Private view:** 10<sup>th</sup> July 2008 6pm-9pm  
**Exhibition:** 11<sup>th</sup> July - 26<sup>th</sup> July 2008  
**Open:** Tues – Sun  
11am – 6pm (Thursdays late 7pm)  
**Entry:** **FREE ENTRY**



Novas Arts presents **The Spirit of Arlington**, an exhibition of painting, sculpture and audio portraying customers at the historic Arlington House in Camden. The exhibition documents the lives within a disappearing community, inspired by the artists' personal connections to Arlington House.

Arlington House, remains one of the most significant social housing resources in the country. Over the last century it has been a symbol of Victorian philanthropy and social welfare support for working men, a resource for soldiers and refugees during the two World Wars, a major lodging resource for Irish men working in London during the economic boom of the 1960-70's and recently a provider of high quality support and care services to a diverse range of individual needs from homelessness, dependency to frailty due to old age.

The building is a landmark in Camden Town and a major contributor to the life, character and economy of the local area. Arlington House is also of importance to the Irish, and this is linked to the past history of the hostel as a provider of low-cost housing for working men, particularly in the construction industry. As the generation of Irishmen who migrated to work in the post-war reconstruction of London and the Southeast got older, and as work got harder to get, these men have remained in the hostel, and have grown to depend on the resident Irish community as they lost contact with friends and family in Ireland.

Arlington House now represents a disappearing community: the number of Irish living there has declined as many of the older Irish residents have passed away, including some of the most notable and well-liked figures in the hostel. Other ethnic groups, such as refugees from war-torn Africa, are now moving in, with their own stories to tell and their own culture to maintain. Although the Irish retain a highly visible and vital community within Arlington House, their age and their ill health mean that this is now a community in rapid decline.

This exhibition documents some of the lives within this disappearing community, capturing incredible life stories, unrealised ambitions, friendships and close camaraderie. It is an emotive and moving exhibition, a historical record that captures this time and immortalises a lost community.

Arlington House is currently undergoing a major refurbishment programme to be completed within the next two years that will include supported accommodation with ongoing support for customers with dependency, mental health and other support needs; a training and conference centre, social enterprise/workspace units and retail space; and cultural and arts-based activities.

Chris Cullen will be showcasing his sculptures of customers of Arlington House and Novas Scarman staff. Chris is the tutor at the Arlington Sculpture Studio located in Early Mews, Camden.

Gina Bold will be showcasing the work she produced whilst she was an artist in residence within the historical Arlington House. This includes 45 paintings of Arlington House customers, as well as sculptures created at the Arlington Sculpture Studio.

The Arlington Media Association will be presenting podcasts of interviews by ex-customer and now Novas Scarman employee Andrew Moran, with the men of Arlington House. These interviews are a magnificent documentation of Arlington House residents, told in a frank and honest way that cannot fail to move the listener.

Gina Bold says of her experience as Artist in Residence at Arlington House:

“[The men] would talk openly about life at Arlington House and how it was that they came to be there. One day I saw some photographs of the men and decided to paint them. I photographed the painting and gave a copy back to the men. When one of the men said that he was going to send the picture home to his family I felt an incredible sense of achievement, I was communicating through these portraits to a group of people who would generally have little or no interest in art. I feel very privileged to have been a guest at Arlington house; it has been one of the most moving and worthwhile experiences of my life.”

**For more information contact:**  
**Alexandra Pryce on 020 7424 3060 or**  
[alexandra.pryce@novasscarman.org](mailto:alexandra.pryce@novasscarman.org)

The **Novas Scarman Group** is major social justice charity at the cutting edge of tackling social disadvantage through social enterprise, innovation and positive impact.

Novas Scarman works at a local level to empower people and communities by creating opportunities for positive change through personalised support and development, pathways into work and learning, inclusive local decision making and change programmes, and releasing enterprise and cultural expression.

**Novas Arts** is an arts and cultural initiative that invests 100% of profits into services to increase access to education, work and training for homeless and other excluded individuals. Containing a series of galleries, art centres and training initiatives, Novas Arts offers open arts and exhibiting space, retail outlets, studios and performance space for established and up and coming artists, and most importantly to people traditionally excluded from arts and cultural activities.

Novas Arts covers a broad range of arts exploring the cultural diversity of contemporary life in and outside Britain today including the mediums of visual art, fashion, architecture and performance.

[www.novasscarman.org](http://www.novasscarman.org)