

Our home is definitely where the art is

AN art exhibition inspired by Hackney's diverse mix of residents opened in Shoreditch last week.

As a starting point for *In/Flux*, artists used 10 video interviews of the borough's residents reflecting on what it is to call Hackney "home" – individuals, couples, young and old, some who have lived here all their lives and others who moved here recently.

For more than a year, 12 artists have been working to produce sculptures, paintings, graphic designs, moving images and even a song – and the work is now on display in a Kingsland Road studio.

Miriam Kings, *In/Flux* curator, describes the project as an oral history archive.

"There are so many different stories around in Hackney," she said. "It is a unique place.

"This is about not losing them and archiving them, so you get a sense of what Hackney was like in 2009 – giving it a bit of history."

The project is the brainchild of Lucy Tomlins and Marnie Baumer, who describes it as "a labour of love".

Part of the creative process was to integrate into the community to find interviewees.

They range from 81-year-old Elsie Howls, who talks about her memories of the Second



Talking point – artist Cristina Mitrentse (left) delighted 81-year-old interviewee Elsie Howls with an abstract mushroom portrait of her

World War, to 36-year-old Hackney Wick resident Lise Munroe, aka performer "Killpussy", who loves Hackney because, like her, "it comes alive at night" and is "busting at the seams".

Australians Vivi Boucher, 61, and her husband Rod, 62, who moved to Lower Clapton two years ago to be part of an international street theatre company, were also interviewed.

"We work as artists," said

Vivi, "so I think to have something as precious as your life which allows someone else to be stimulated by it is lovely."

"What I love about Hackney is when you get on a bus there might only be one English person on it and I think that's how society should be – people living to get on together – although I know Hackney does have violence and people struggling."

Elsie was delighted with the abstract mushroom portrait of

her by artist Cristina Mitrentse.

"It's growing on me by the minute," said the pensioner, who moved to Hackney when she got married at 19 and now lives in Fellows Court, Haggerston.

She thinks Hackney has changed a lot for the better.

"We are very secure now," she said. "You used to get a lot of drugs here, but not anymore."

In/Flux runs until this Sunday at 80 Kingsland Road from 12noon to 8pm.