

Art and SOUL

From an early age, singer songwriter Ruby Martins, aka Sweet Ambition, was surrounded by music, writes **Helen Barnes**. Growing up she listened to soulful ballads and melodic tracks by the likes of Dina Carroll, Whitney Huston, Sade and Nina Simone. Music, inevitably, was going to play a part in her life. Her dad was a musician in a rock band before going on to pursue a solo career, while her mum is the artist Ruth Bircham. The creative writing and film student was encouraged to sing and says her parents' belief in her talent spurred her on. She performed at numerous talent contests and would sing wherever she could. Writing her own songs, she says, came naturally. She would write down her

thoughts and feelings as poems and they soon turned into songs. Later she started to create her own digital music productions with the help and support of her partner. Now she is on the verge of breaking into the industry with the release of her debut album, *Wings Unfolded*. She is to perform tracks from the album at a special gig at the Scream Lounge. Other acts on the bill include Darlington, Poetic Justin, Mikey Smith and Gambit Ace. Art work will be on display by Bircham, Titus Agbara and Edward Oforu, who met as part of art group Kreative Minds International, to promote an exhibition to be



A splash of colour: Sweet Ambition and the artwork of Ruth Bircham (right) will be part of Croydon Art and Music Live Show at Scream Lounge next week



held at the Redchurch Gallery in London later this year. Some of Bircham's work will be on sale and 10 per cent

of the proceeds will go to the Down's Syndrome Foundation in Nigeria. **■ Croydon Art and Live Music**

Show, Scream Lounge, South End, January 19, 7pm, free. Call 020 8667 0155 or visit myspace.com/screamstudios.

What's on

FOLK GANG: Folk outfit the Dalton Gang kickstart the new year programme at Croydon Folk Club with their lively repertoire. **■ The Dalton Gang, Croydon Folk Club, Ruskin House, Coombe Road, January 17, 8pm, £5 or £4 members. Call 020 8660 5919 or visit croydonfolkclub.org.uk.**

ARTS REVIEW: The results of the council's consultation on the future of Croydon's arts and heritage services are now online. The survey findings will be discussed at the council's cabinet meeting on January 24. **■ You can view the results at croydon.gov.uk.**

MODERN MASTERPIECES: An exhibition showcasing the work of former Croydon arts teacher Bridget Riley is being staged at the National Gallery. A handful of Riley's paintings, from a career spanning five decades, are on display in the gallery's Sunley Room until May 22. **■ Call 020 7747 2885 or visit nationalgallery.org.uk for more details.**



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