

**Factory as Studio: A Case Study Exploring Critical  
Issues and Situated Responses Arising from Artist  
Residencies within Manufacturing Organisation  
Communities**

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## Declaration of Originality

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

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## Abstract

In recent times, economists have highlighted the need to escalate innovation within organisations. Organisational researchers affirm that creativity and collaboration with skilled practitioners from outside these communities can be catalysts for innovative outcomes. This study focuses on a particular form of collaboration: artist residencies within manufacturing organisation communities. Research has suggested that artists acting as creative exemplars in action stimulate interest and motivation among members of an organisation. While there are studies that explore the positive dimension of these residencies from an organisational perspective, few studies examine the problematic effects of these collaborations and fewer still have provided a view of these engagements from the artists' perspective.

An aim of this thesis is to advance an understanding of the potentially pivotal role that the artist plays as exemplar in action in organisations. This research is motivated by two questions. The first question asks what critical issues emerge during a self-organised artist residency within a manufacturing organisation. Critical issues are distinct and recurring ideas or practices that present barriers to the success of the self-organised artist's residency in a factory. The second question asks how artist-researchers can structure their practice in a way that overcomes these issues, allowing them to contribute to the culture (and/or products) of the factory.

This action research case study focuses on a self-organised artist residency in a Belgian colourant factory in 2010. Each of the critical issues identified is illustrated with representative incidents from the case study or related previous residency material. The study also identifies actions that the artist took in working through these issues. The thesis includes a discussion of how each of these challenges was responded to in practice.

The broad categories of issues identified include communication between the artist and the factory community; human, infrastructure and material resource implications; ethical issues, including intellectual property rights and protection for participants; and instances of potential emotional risk or harm to the organisational community and the artist.

The principal outcome of this study is a framework that gives artists and organisational members specific understandings of each other's domain. The framework provides a resource for artists seeking to expand their practice within organisations and for artist-educators who are preparing students for organisational collaborations. Ultimately it is anticipated that the framework will provide a basis for building deeper connections between these participants, facilitating sound preparation for future collaborations.