

Old Kent Road Manufactures

A celebratory booklet
with photographs
by Carmel King,
featuring **Kaymet,**
London Stone Carving,
Small Beer Brew Co,
Studio Makecreate,
Weber Industries,
and also mentioning
100 other makers
and menders who are
threatened with expulsion.



Diespeker & Co, Ormside Street. Photo by Carmel King.

Old Kent Road Manufactures

Stand in the giant Asda car park, just off the Old Kent Road, and nothing signals it, but in this part of London people make things. Hundreds work in factories, workshops and studios, hidden away, producing. Alongside that supermarket's giant expanse of tarmac, as it happens, is a small yard that takes you to the [Kaymet](#) tray and trolley factory. As 2017 arrived this modest stalwart of urban manufacturing began celebrating its 70th year, but as it did so **the sky was darkening**. Southwark Council were working up a new version of their plans for the area, advocating the sweep-aside of Kaymet and most other Old Kent Road industry. It was clear that the time had come to get going a celebration of the area's vibrant economy, make people more aware, in the hope that better understanding might persuade the local authority planners to think again, might help them to understand that it is better to nurture than to annihilate, that it is not alright to disregard and destroy.

And so, in the September of their anniversary year Kaymet welcomed the public into their factory during the Open House London weekend. Hundreds came and took a tour, had a coffee and a biscuit, heard about the plight of the area's industry, the threat to several thousand jobs, the dangers of a loss of economic diversity. Spurred on by this success, by people's warm response, more Old Kent Road manufacturers have this year joined in. Photographer Carmel King was invited to make a record of what goes on, what the businesses do. Five are opening their doors this time, encouraging all to see and to enjoy, while rallying support for their David versus Goliath struggle. This tabloid tells you a little about each of 2018's brave five, and it presents a selection of Carmel's wonderful documentary photographs. The five are a taster, a glimpse into an Old Kent Road making and mending scene that includes over 100 thriving businesses.



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1 Purpose Powder Coatings, Verney Road. Photo by Alex Marsh.
2 Flux Metal, Hatcham Road. Photo by Alex Marsh.
3 Kaymet, Ossory Road. Photo by Carmel King.

Here there are melt filtration machine manufacturers, hydraulic equipment refurbishers, knife makers and menders, the pipe lining people, garment sewers, metal polishers, platers and powder coaters, precision engineers, furniture makers, Diespeker producing terrazzo, James Glancy conjuring big festive decorations. 50 people at the mighty William Say & Co make tin cans, PSG cut shims, Kaymet send out 20,000 trays each year. Amongst the many construction related businesses in the area are six joinery and metal fabricators, two stone workshops, two mirror and glass places, eleven contractors workshops and depots. Vehicle repair and servicing, along with garaging and hire, employs about 900 people in forty businesses. In the Old Kent Road area there is a dairy, butchers and fishmongers, seven commercial caterers, two wholesale bakeries, two ice producers and four breweries. More than 300 people are employed by close to thirty businesses in the world of food and drink production, preparation and wholesale.

There is a thriving culture and event related production industry in the area, with big emphasis on supporting art and theatre, sustaining around 470 jobs in 24 businesses that include Studio Makecreate, Souvenir Scenic Studios, Setwo, Flux Metal, Weber Industries, Veevers Carter, Event Concept, Made Up, and lots of smaller enterprises making props, models and costumes. Near the Old Kent Road close to 400 people work in printing businesses such as Jigsaw Colour, Paragon Service Point, Print Set, Four Graphics, Fountain, Push, Kube Print, Screaming Colour, FE Burman, Benwells, Willow Graphics, The Stationery Office, Hexio, and garment printers Plain Bear and 3rd Rail. Art and artisan production is now fast growing, with carvers, leatherworkers, jewellers, potters, costume makers, painters, sculptors, upholsterers, art printmakers, Damien Hirst's art factory, and Patey making riding and ceremonial hats as they have since the 1950s.



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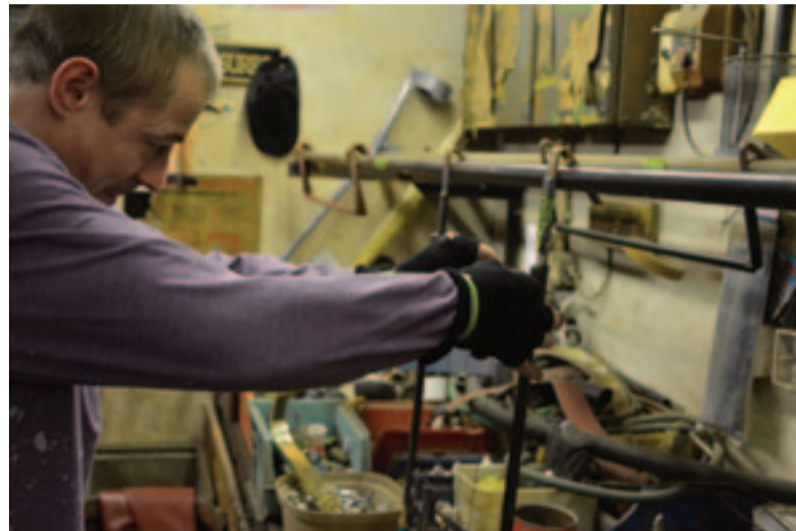


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- 1 Souvenir Scenic Studios, Verney Road. Photo from their website.
- 2 Gringa Dairy, Old Kent Road. Photo by Astrid Schultz.
- 3 William Say & Co, Verney Road. Photo by Carmel King.



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- 1 3rd Rail, Verney Road. Photo from company's Instagram.
- 2 Capital Chrome, Old Kent Road. Photo source unknown.
- 3 Patey Hats, Ilderton Road. Photo from company's Instagram.
- 4 John Hinds Framing, Latona Road. Photo source unknown.
- 5 Livesey Workshop, Bird in Bush Road. Photo from their Instagram.

Southwark Council have said that all this activity is declining, but all we see on the ground is growth. The manufacturing economy is burgeoning, hungry for more space. Established businesses like William Say are expanding, Kaymet has doubled in three years, Weber have just taken on another unit, Glancy is overflowing, Souvenir bursting at the seams. Others want to come to the area and start-ups are keen to be near the Old Kent Road. A recent advert offering short-term space for makers and menders, in industrial buildings that the owner hopes to replace with a giant residential tower, had a remarkable response. In just a few days dozens expressed interest, including bicycle producers, shoe makers, brewers, metal fabricators, leatherworkers, display fitting assemblers, coffee roasters, furniture makers and up-cyclers, lens cutters, clock and watch repairers, scenery makers, fibrous plaster moulders, upholsterers, an events florist, jewellers.

The future for these London makers should be bright, but now they must make a case for space in their own city, must fight with a burly local authority and its developer friends. The people who are the Old Kent Road urge all who read this to swing behind their argument that this world of enterprise should be allowed to stay, should be encouraged to thrive where it wants to be, and to gather others who are keen to be part of a fresh and spontaneous blossoming of urban industry. Please shout out, that good cities have industry, that the expulsions must stop, the welcome should begin.

This document was put together by the Vital OKR business association in collaboration with Cass Cities (The Cass, London Metropolitan University). Photographs by Carmel King unless otherwise stated. Apologies to those photographers we could not trace. Curation and text by Mark Brearley (Kaymet and Vital OKR). Graphic design by Adam Cheltsov. With thanks to: Vital OKR members and the people and businesses of the Old Kent Road area, Rory Olcayto and Open House London, Kaymet, London Stone Carving, Small Beer Brew Co, Studio Makecreate, Weber Industries, Diespeker & Co, William Say & Co, Joe Williams, Alasdair Flint, Ivana Milanovic. Special thanks to The Cass and Southwark Council for help with the cost of producing this booklet. Published September 2018.

**VITAL
OKR** A VOICE FOR THE ECONOMY
OF THE OLD KENT ROAD

If you support what's argued here and would like a mixed economy to thrive in this part of London, then please visit the Vital OKR website: vitalokr.com and join the association, either as a business member (if you are a business in the area) or as a friend member.



William Say & Co, Verney Road. Photo by Carmel King.



Kaymet, Ossory Road. Photo by Carmel King.

Kaymet

52 Ossory Road

Kaymet produce anodised aluminium trays, trolleys and electric table hotplates. Their products sell in over 200 shops, in about 40 countries, and are supplied to hotels, restaurants and cafes, plus a few yachts and aircraft. The business started in the basement of the Schreiber family radio shop at Elephant & Castle, evolving into Kaymet in 1947, by which time a move to Kennington Lane had been made. At the end of the 1950s the company built its own factory near the Old Kent Road, where it stayed until the 1990s. Four moves after losing that one, the company arrived at its current fine spot behind Asda, the sixth Kaymet Works. The company has more than tripled production since 2013 and currently employ around ten people who produce about 20,000 anodised aluminium trays per year, as well as lots of trolleys and a few hotplates. At Ossory Road the team cut on a chop saw, table saw and guillotine. They crop with a big Bentley power press and with fly presses, notch with a smaller power press, grain on a big graining machine, do some lathe work, bend tubes and extrusions, drill and counter-bore, punch holes and logos. In the polishing shop they finish and polish, then degrease. Anodising and powder coating are done elsewhere (nearby in the Hatcham industrial area, in Mitcham and in Crawley). The team assemble with some glue and lots of rivets, rivnuts, screws, nuts and bolts, then they clean, label, pack and dispatch.

The current Kaymet Works was originally the Printorama printing works, built in the 1950s and 60s on the site of the Albany Pumps factory that was destroyed on the third night of The Blitz in September 1940. It's a wonderful building including a big square shed with a tubular truss north-light roof hovering above a continuous glazed clear-storey. Kaymet, who are proud to have a history of supply to the Royal Family tracing back nearly 70 years, and are delighted to have recently been granted a Royal Warrant of Appointment, look forward to the Royal Arms going up on the factory, and hope that the lion and the unicorn might scare off planners and developers who seem to want rid of them and other industry in Southwark.



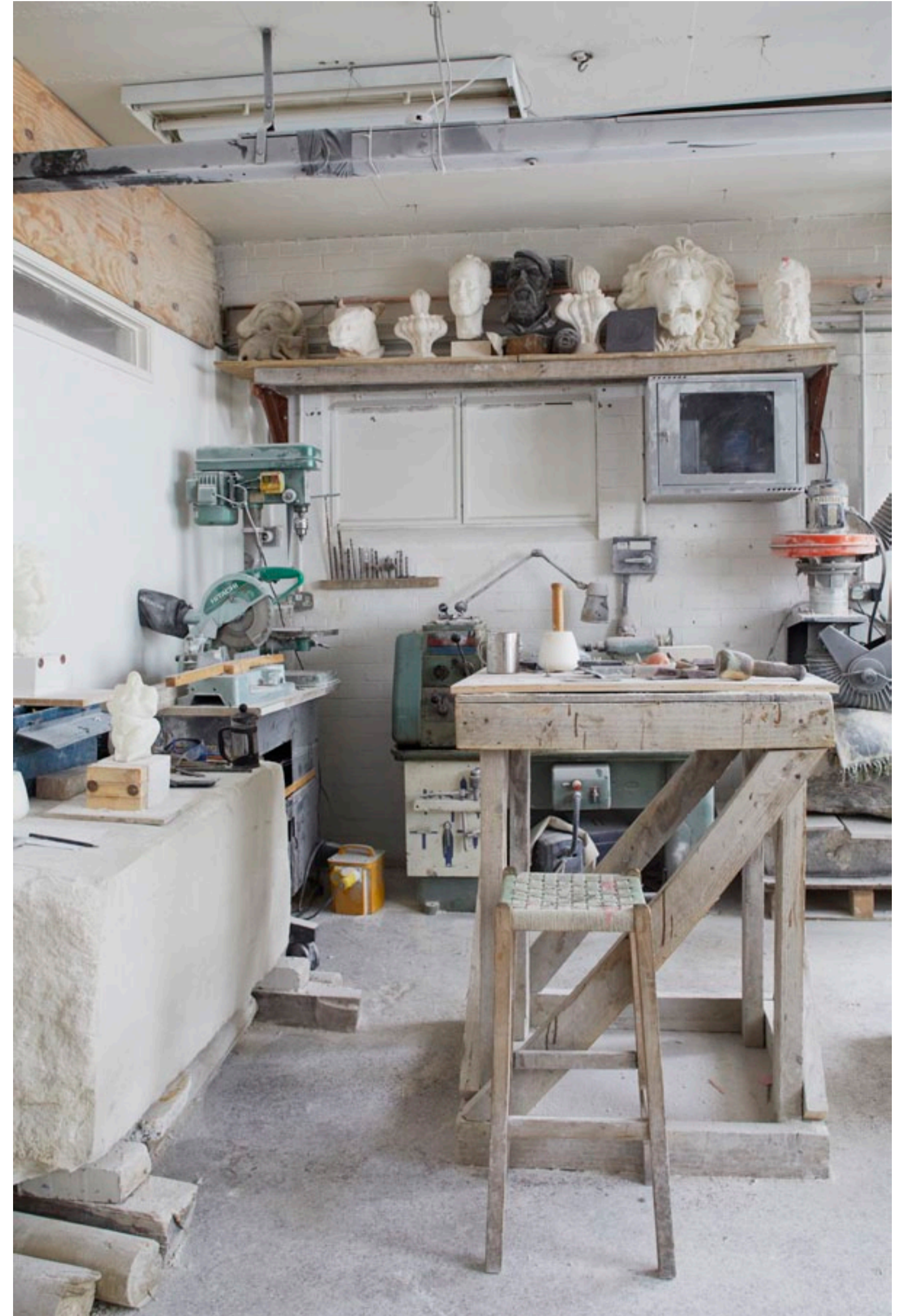


London Stone Carving

52 Ossory Road

London Stone Carving is a multi-award winning team of classically trained stone carvers with over four decades' combined experience working stone, proud to be described as Master Craftsmen. Their workshop is in a small 1960s industrial building alongside the Kaymet tray factory, with which London Stone Carving share a yard. They take on a complete range of architectural and sculptural stone work, with expert attention to material, form, detail and historical context, producing work of the highest grade. The team's deep, broad and specialist skill sets mean projects can be organised to maximise each member's input; responsibility for each aspect is delegated according to specific strengths and all work is scrutinised and approved by the entire team before being released from the workshop.

Intrinsic to the profession are not only strong understanding of stone masonry, architectural and art history, but aptitude in academic drawing, accurate draughtsmanship, clay modelling, ornamental styles, and anatomical study. The work demands patience, attention to detail and accuracy. Alongside sculpting skill the restoration carver must also possess a deep understanding and appreciation of architectural period style and ornamental forms. Capacity to accurately reproduce is as essential as the ability to re-design and re-interpret. Together these allow work to be produced expertly and sympathetically within the context of historic restoration and new build. The team employs both traditional techniques and modern methods to produce work efficiently and competitively while maintaining high standards. The group of qualified masons and architectural conservators have broad experience and qualifications. All studied 'Historic Stone Carving' at the City and Guilds of London Art School, a course with international recognition as one of the only remaining institutions offering the extensive training it takes to become a highly skilled stone sculptor and carver. Team members hold the qualification BSC in Conservation and BA in Fine Art Sculpture, and have also studied architectural stone-masonry and conservation at Weymouth College. These qualifications are critical in strengthening and broadening our unique team's field of expertise.



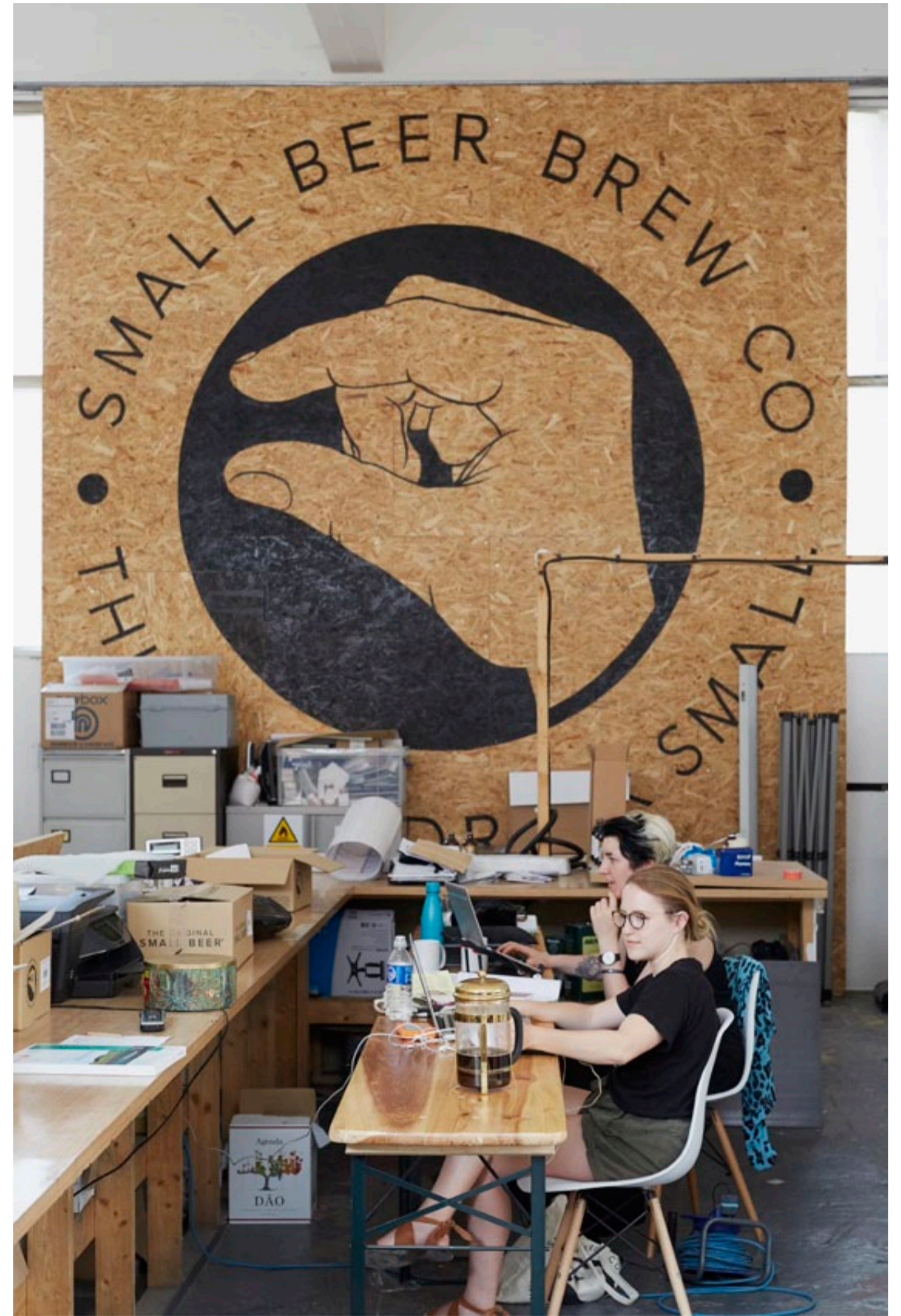


Small Beer Brew Co 70–72 Verney Road

The Small Beer Brew Co was established in 2017 and is the world's first dedicated solely to the production of Small Beer. Founders James Grundy and Felix James always considered themselves fans of great tasting beer. On the search for one that they could enjoy without being knocked for six, they were surprised to find the space between 0.5% and 2.8% ABV completely untapped. Combining modern know-how with classical brewing methods, they set out on a mission to reignite the lost tradition of small beer, historically a staple in British daily life.

The brewery is housed in a Belcon portal frame structure erected circa 1983, comprising an open warehouse of 5,000 sq ft and an adjacent office space. In recent years it housed a commercial laundry and a logistics company specialising in electronic components. A series of internal partition walls and mezzanine floor were designed by Garbers & James Architects and built in 2018, incorporating the brewery bar, offices and storage rooms. Production is combined with cultural and community events. Brewery Yoga takes place on Saturday mornings and the cultural calendar includes Small Beer Sessions live music evenings, theatre and installations by local artists. The team are passionate about reducing the brewery's impact on the environment through their green initiatives. Consumables from boxes to labels to business cards are 100% recycled and water usage is kept to a minimum in part due to the implementation of an unconventional 'dry floor policy'. All electrical power is sourced from wind, water and solar and the team is insistent on continually questioning and improving on current practise.



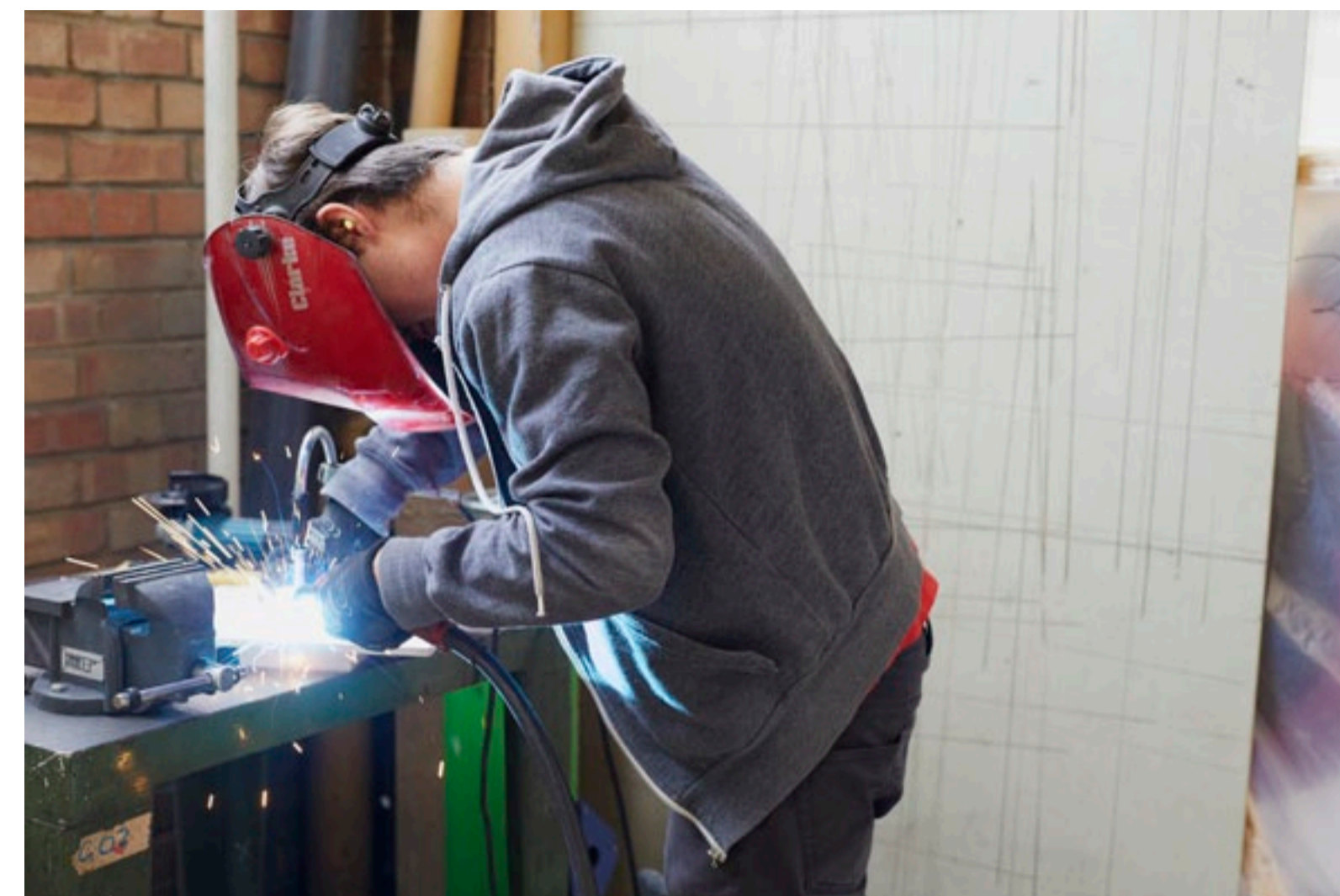


Studio Makecreate 16–28 Penarth Street

Studio Makecreate is a multidisciplinary design and fabrication studio who specialise in bespoke sculpture production, product development, and design and manufacture for events & retail. The business was started by designer Lucy Norman and sculptor Jonathan Batten, and it has been based on Penarth Street for three years. The workshop is packed with everything that might be needed to take on a wide range of varied projects, from floats for London Pride, to mechanical sculptures for the Lumiere Festival and restoration of the huge Wishing Clock in Cheltenham. The venture began almost by accident, when Lucy was asked if she could design and make a waffle iron that made waffles in the shape of Nike trainers, in just five days. Johnny was drafted in, and after a few sleepless nights, they got it done, and the business grew from there.

Royal College of Art graduate Lucy Norman is a product designer whose career has included designing and manufacturing everything from furniture to sustainable lighting, points of sale and jewellery. Prior to starting the business, she designed for companies such as John Lewis, Nike, B&Q, Argos and Agent Provokateur, and has exhibited her own jewellery and furniture extensively throughout the UK and Europe. Central St. Martins graduate Jonathan Batten is a commercial sculptor with a passion for materials and techniques. Prior to starting the business, he worked for many years crafting a huge range of 'things' such as hats for Lady Gaga, architectural models for Anish Kapoor, furniture for Amanda Lavete Architects, lighting for Westfield Shopping Centre and window displays for brands such as Carphone Warehouse, M&S and Cartier. The workshop is in a portion of the old Dualit toaster factory.



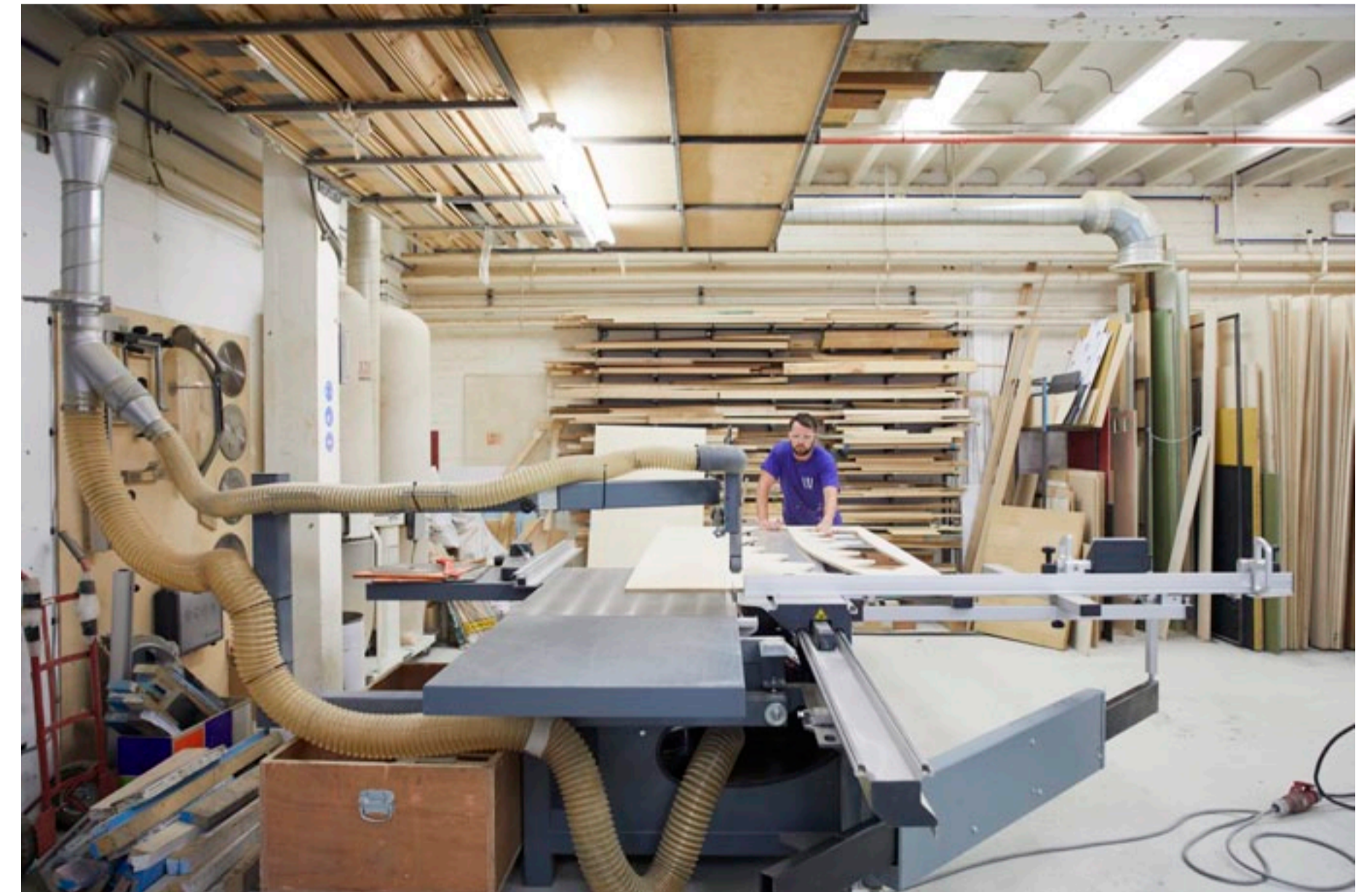
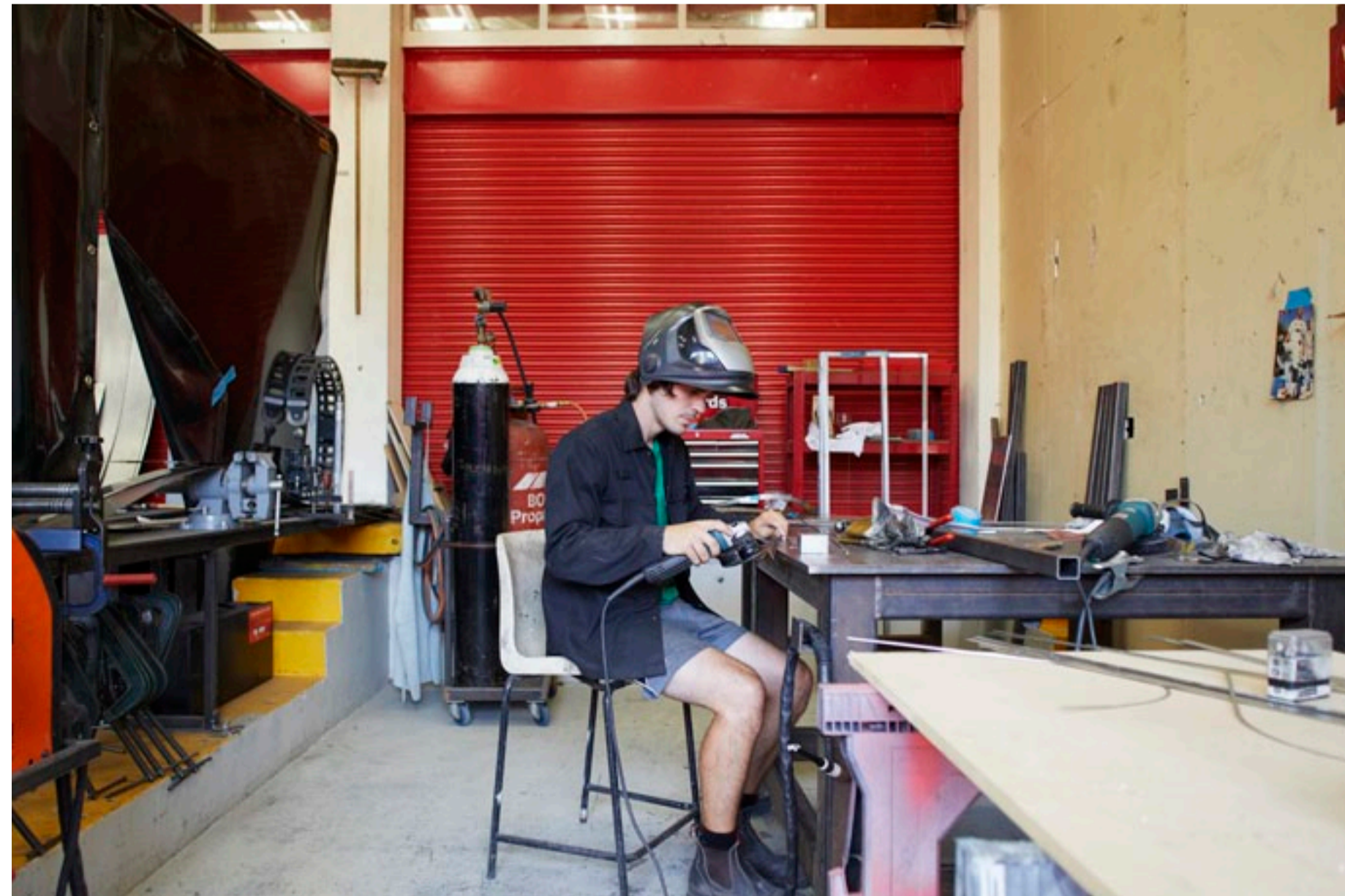
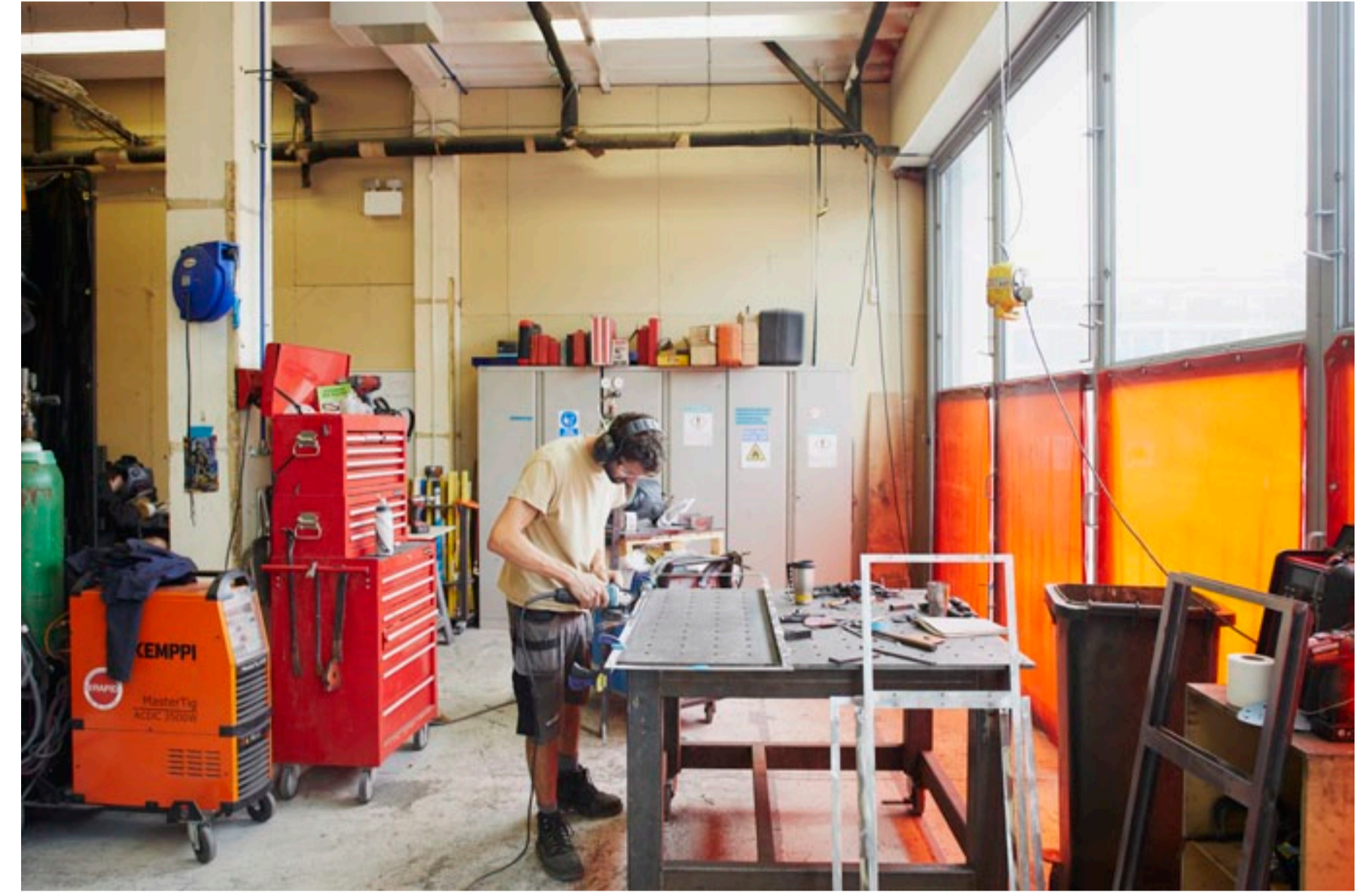
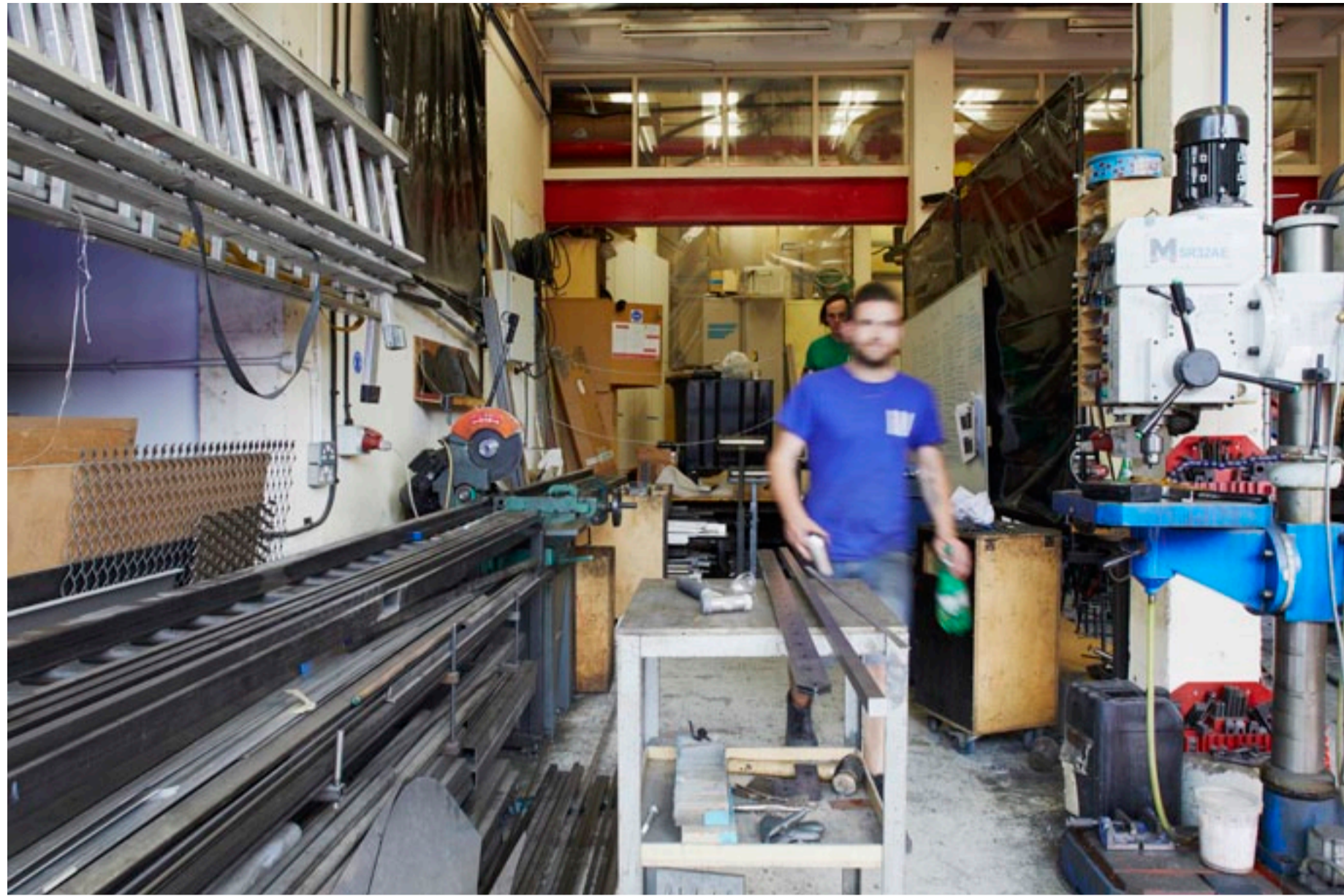


Weber Industries Studio 11G, 90 Haymerle Road

Weber Industries is a bespoke fabrication and design consultancy studio. They are able to develop projects from design conception through to production and installation. Weber's flexible workspace can facilitate projects using a wide variety of processes and materials ranging from wood and metal to Corian and Jesmonite, across all scales, from intricate objects to structural architectural features. An established network of partners enables delivery of technologically advanced solutions to production. All projects are completed in-house, providing a high degree of flexibility and control over every aspect of each project. Design services are offered, tailored to suit the needs of each client. The team can work from simple sketches, or develop initial concepts into CAD models and full architectural plans. Alongside bespoke fabrication and custom design the company offers project management and consultation services. Weber's approach integrates design with making, allowing elegant and efficient fabrication and installation methods to be developed for even the most complex or unusual projects.

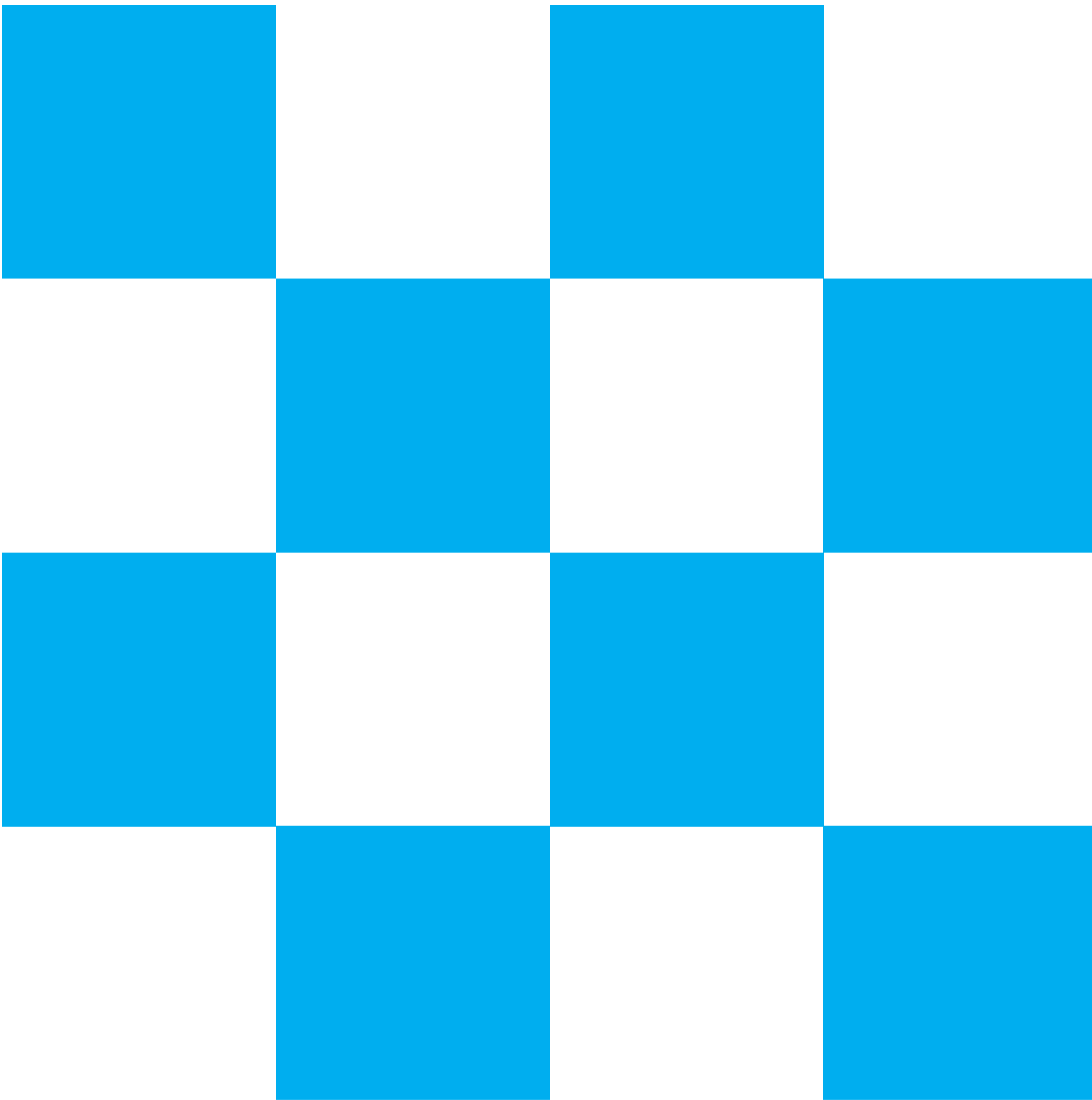
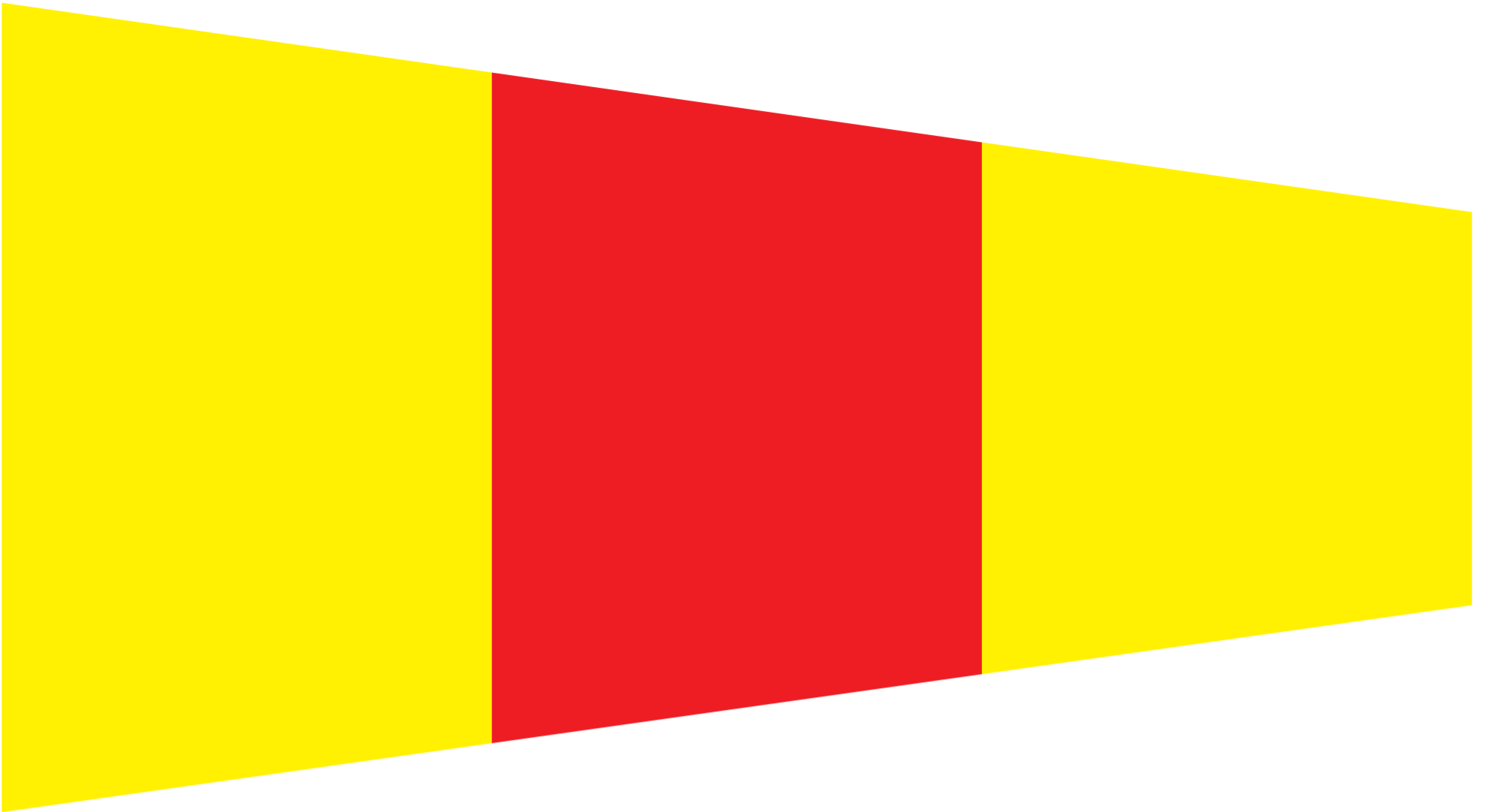
The workshop is in a former pram factory that was refurbished in 2011 by Space to provide studios for artists and creative makers. Weber Industries has operated in the street-facing ground floor studios since 2012, and has been steadily expanding.







Weber Industries, Haymerle Road. Photo by Carmel King.



Firm put out the flags

TO make way for the first flyover in South London, Old Kent-rd. is to be widened by 40 ft. at the Bricklayers Arms intersection. One of the historic shops in London, John Edgingtons, known for tents, banners and flags, will disappear in the process.

In the true Trafalgar tradition, they are flying a farewell signal — in flags — reading: "Am coming down. Making way for flyover." The widening of the road will eliminate the historic part of John Edgingtons premises but they will continue to trade 40 ft. further back.

South London Press, 3 November 1969.

In 1969, the long established marquee, banner and flag sellers John Edgington, just before being pushed aside by the Bricklayers Arms Flyover, displayed maritime signal flags reading: **Am coming down. Making way for flyover.** Inspired by this wonderful incident, the mighty chandler Alasdair Flint has helped us figure out the two flags needed to shout out: **We are not nothing.** We are not nothing: do not expel the people and economy of the Old Kent Road.