



INTRO

Factory Works is conceived by Neville Gabie.

Music by Nabihah Iqbal and Neville Gabie with the construction workforce of Aviva Studios, the home of Factory International.

Commissioned and produced by Factory International.

Factory International's landmark new space, Aviva Studios, will become a significant part of the cultural heartbeat that makes Manchester such a great city. But once it has grown into a vibrant creative hub, will many of us remember how the building itself came into being?

When I was invited to make a new work celebrating the people who were fabricating and constructing this huge new building, I couldn't have been more excited – and to be honest, I was also a little overwhelmed. This was a wonderful opportunity to meet engineers, builders, steel fabricators, project managers, concrete experts, timber workers, finishers, sewing machinists, glass fitters, acoustic engineers, crane drivers, security guards and office staff, and to make something as a tribute to their contributions to the city. The challenge was coming up with the right idea. It needed to be simple and unique – and, once complete, it needed to be something we could give to everyone as a tribute to their achievements.

What struck me on my first visits to the site were the sounds: diggers and cherry pickers, steel being lifted and bolted into place, short-wave radio exchanges, echoes under the old brick arches, gates crashing open and closed – and, of course, conversations. No matter how busy they were, most people found a few minutes to share their stories and their work.

Alongside the sounds, the visions: the building's robust skeleton and the core materials put in place to create its envelope, from steel and concrete to timber, rubber and glass. Unlike most constructions, the majority of the building's component parts were fabricated not on site but in other factories, then brought into Manchester to be fitted together – 'A giant piece of Lego,' as one project manager described it to me. The entire steel framework was manufactured in Bury, for instance, while every concrete panel was made in Worksop. I soon realised I needed to visit the different sites where these component parts were being created.

I grew up in the late 1970s and hung around art schools in the early '80s – and of course, we were all immersed in the new wave music of the time. The sounds of Joy Division and New Order, of Buzzcocks, The Smiths and Factory Records, were my first introduction to Manchester.

Back here in 2020, I once again found myself thinking about and feeling the sound of the city. I was inspired by the sounds I was hearing on the building site, which inevitably made me think of those vinyl records with their inspirational sleeve designs in my collection. And from the very start, it was also important to me that I make an artwork that could be freely given to everyone who had played a part in the project – a collectable and desirable object that they could treasure as a memento of their contribution.

That conflux of influences is why I chose to create an album from conversations and field recordings made at the construction site and some of the places where parts of the building were being manufactured. But I'm not a musician, and so I had to find someone who would find all these things as genuinely inspiring as I did – which is how I came to collaborate with musician, composer and DJ Nabihah Iqbal. I was also keen to offer visual insights into these different places of manufacture, and collaborated with Mark Thomas of Soup Collective on a short film to accompany the album.

We were thrilled to work with North to explore how the album itself might look and feel – and together, we decided to make the artwork for every copy unique. There will only ever be 1,500 copies of the album made, and each will have a different sleeve made from close-up images of the sites and materials we encountered. The record you're holding in your hand, then, is a genuine one-off – and I hope, in some small way, it serves a thank-you to the people who made this extraordinary building.

NEVILLE GABIE

Even though I'm used to writing and recording music, and to making field recordings, I've never approached an album in this way. It was my first time on a construction site, for instance, and my first time in a steel factory. There were so many new and interesting sounds to take in, and so many stories from the workers we met along the way. I found myself transfixed by the crane operators, explaining to me how the cranes on the site worked – and absorbed in the slurry, gooey sounds of concrete being poured.

With all this inspiration around us, Neville and I wanted to create something all-encompassing: a soundscape of the different workplaces, interwoven with voices and music. It's been an impossible task to try and fit in all the sounds and stories that we collected over these two years or so, but I hope that what we've created offers a glimpse into the fascinating world of the people and the core materials that construct our buildings.

NABIHAH IQBAL

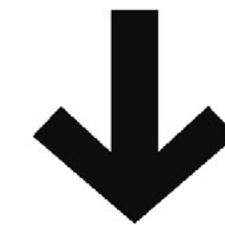
It's humbling to witness a great building emerge from the ground and realise how many skills and specialisms, how much care and precision, and how much hard, determined work has gone into its birth and growth. As a cultural organisation embedded in the city of Manchester, we wouldn't be doing our own work properly if we didn't find a way to express and respond to this extraordinary effort.

Neville and Nabihah's collaboration with the workers who have built our new home honours their effort with an individualism reflecting the character of those workers – a joyous insight into their labour and thoughts. Factory Works is both a tribute to and an expression of these workers, and is also a tribute to the work of those on whose shoulders we stand – the Manchester radicals of the past. It is fittingly strange, unexpected and celebratory.

Whilst the album focuses on the work of the companies at the heart of this build, the entire project would not have been possible without the unwavering dedication and ingenuity of Manchester City Council's Capital Programmes Team, to whom we offer a huge and heartfelt thanks.

JOHN MCGRATH
Artistic Director & Chief Executive,
Factory International

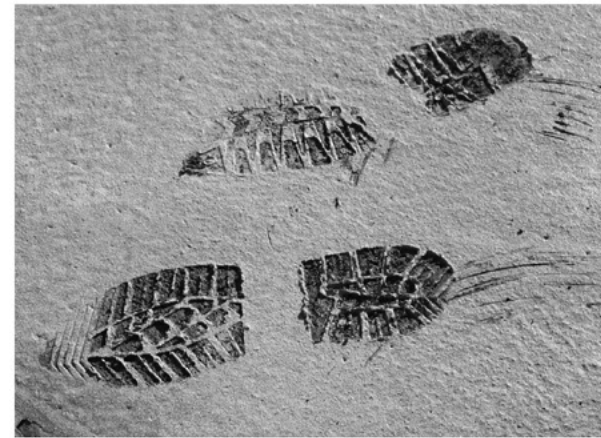
LISTEN



To download the album and watch the film, visit factoryinternational.org/factoryworks

MORNING

Recorded at the building site, where construction is led by Laing O'Rourke



IAN MCMUNN
Gateman

'My job is basically to get all the wagons on to site, make sure they get booked in, make sure the drivers are wearing all the PPE. This site is quite tight – it's a juggling act, and you've got to be a diplomat as well. Nobody comes on site without coming past me. I like it – I'm getting too long in the tooth to be shovelling concrete or putting in pipes.'

JOHN HARTLEY
Excavator & Dumper Driver

'Many a job, you get on at the start and you don't realise, six to 12 months later, it'll be a completely different place. If you were stood here and took a picture six months ago, and then you took a picture now, it's like two completely different places. You dig up all sorts of stuff. There must have been a fishmonger's here at some point – there was a cellar over there and it was full of oyster shells.'

STEVE O'BRIEN
Steel Fixer

'Every time they say "steel fixer", people think I'm a steel erector – but no, I fix all the reinforcement steel in the concrete. There's a lot of steel because it cantilevers, so there are no columns to support it. Really, all my work gets hidden, but I call it protected.'



8 : 02

Featured voices
Oliver Flounder: Cleaner
Ryan Maguire: Construction Manager
Ian McMunn: Gateman
Gurmakh Singh: Concrete Finisher/Operative
Pete Wilkinson: Site Foreman

a SIDE



TRACK 1

CRANE

Recorded at the building site, where construction is led by Laing O'Rourke



GARETH MCNARY
Lead Appointed Person for Lifting Operations

'It doesn't matter what type of crane you've got – they all react differently. You have to know how the cranes will react under these loads. These pre-cast concrete panels, they can be anything from two tons to 10 tons, and some of the steel beams and columns are 17, 18 tons. There's one word we use in lifting, and it goes from the guy at the top to the guy who's attaching the hook. That word is *trust*'.



NORMAN HILL
Banksman

'We trust each other. When the hook comes down and he's picking up a 10-ton panel, he cannot see it. So I'll watch all the way up until the crane driver can see it, then I'll pass control over to the other banksman – so there are always two eyes on the load at all time. It never goes unseen.'

STUART WHEELHOUSE
Crane Driver

'You're never on your own. There's always someone talking to you, or a voice coming over the radio and having a bit of a laugh and a joke if you're not busy – and if you're busy, obviously, it's time to get serious.'

4 : 18

Featured voices
Norman Hill: Banksman
Gareth McNary: Lead Appointed Person for Lifting Operations
Stuart Wheelhouse: Crane Driver
Craig Smith: Tower Crane Driver
Steve Tierney: Crane Supervisor

a SIDE



TRACK 2

CONCRETE

Recorded at Explore Manufacturing, Worksop; and at the building site, where construction is led by Laing O'Rourke

CHRIS HOLLAND
Operations Team Leader

'Consistency. With concrete, it's consistency. We can set up the right moulds and create the shapes, but without the consistency it becomes a much bigger challenge. It's a computer-controlled batching plant and they'll batch the mix in relation to what's on the charts – but I don't think there's anything better than a check to see with your own eyes what it looks like.'



PETER FLAHERTY
General Operative

'It's easier today. Go back 30 or 40 years ago, there was no fancy pump, nothing – just a shovel. Everything by shovel.'

JASWANT SIDHU
Concrete Chargehand

'With concrete screeding, you learn all your life. Every time is different. Everything is different.'



GEORGE DEACON
Quantity Surveyor

'What we call the "permissible deviation" during the manufacture of precast concrete panels can be as little as 3mm.'

4 : 04

Featured voices
John Hardisty: Concrete Foreman
Chris Holland: Operations Team Leader

a SIDE



TRACK 3

CLOTH

Recorded at J&C Joel, Sowerby Bridge



CONOR MCGIVERN
Specialist Project Manager

'People are always fascinated by upstairs, where people are cutting great big lumps of cloth with scissors and then sewing them with machines. I'm convinced that half the people we sell to have no idea. They just think it goes to a great big machine and comes out as a drape – they don't think there are, like, 22 people hulking this great big thing, 22 metres long and 17 metres high, around a table.'

MANDY HERON
Senior Seamstress

'My Mum worked here! When I was a little kid of, like, 10 years old – seven? eight? No, even younger – we used to play out the fire escape, waiting for her to finish work. And I'd be knocking on that door, going, "Hurry up, Mummy!"'

JAMES WHEELWRIGHT
Chief Executive Officer

'Black serge gets used in every theatre. It's a wool that's flame-retardant. It hangs everywhere: it helps blackout, it helps deaden the light, it helps improve the sound in the theatre and onstage. It's probably the main product we sell, and the main thing we sew.'

DAVID BROGAN
Manufacturing Technician

'I've always wanted to be different and, obviously, working at J&C Joel is different. It's the entertainment industry and every day is not the same. When you look at the work we do, you can see that people have got pride in their work, and that's why we are still going. It's a matter of delivering on your promises.'

3 : 56

Featured voices
Natalie Fleetwood: Manufacturing & Quality Manager
Mandy Heron: Senior Seamstress
Geraldine Nelson: Sewing Machinist
Debbie Tidwell: Sewing Machinist
John Wheelwright: Founder

a SIDE



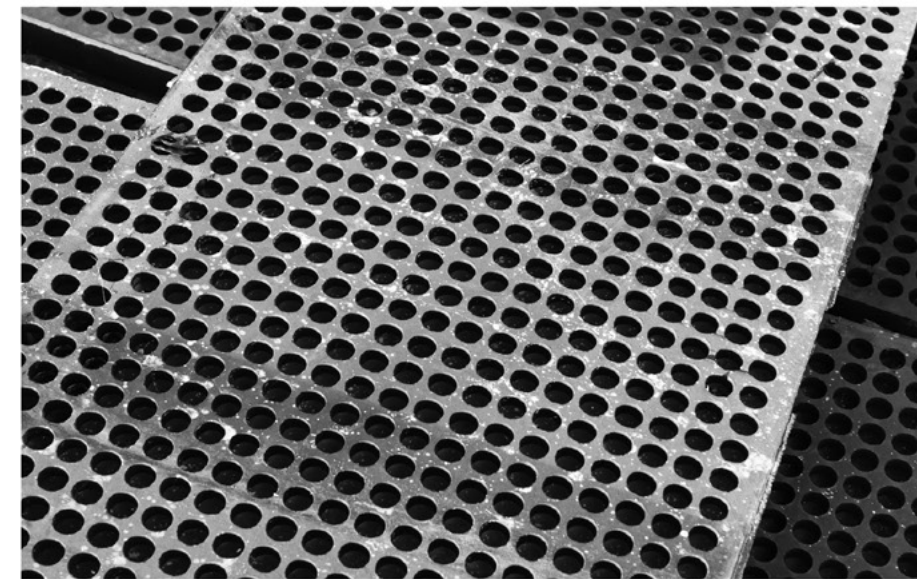
TRACK 4

RUBBER

Recorded at Farrat, Altrincham

LOUISE DIXON
Marketing Executive

'Both the people and the projects make working here fantastic. They're so motivated to get it exactly right. To watch that passion for engineering is great. Even though we've done some amazing projects around the world, to be able to get the tram into the centre of Manchester, see what we've done at the building and say, "See that bit? Farrat made that..." I'm going to be doing that'.



RYAN ARBABI
Technical Director

'The incredibly high level of sound insulation performance, mixed with the huge variation in shape, load condition and connection style of this structure, is something that hasn't ever been attempted in the world before. In terms of acoustic design, the building really is an engineering marvel. The fact that it's in our hometown makes it all the more special – it's testament to Manchester's ambition, which is something we wholeheartedly support'.

FLORIAN CABARET
Applications Engineer – IVC

'A dynamic test is where we apply a dynamic load at a certain frequency and check the dynamic response of the rubber material. It's all about playing with the properties. We're trying to work out the vibration from a vibration source to the receiver, which in this case is the floor of the building'.

Featured voices
Florian Cabaret: Applications Engineer – IVC
Lee Williams: Moulding Technical Specialist

a SIDE



TRACK 5

0 : 37

GLASS

Using recordings from found locations and Interpane, Germany

VINCENT SMITH
Sales Manager

'The float tanks that make the glass generally run for up to 10 years – non-stop. The silica sand mixture sits on top of molten tin, which we manoeuvre to change the thickness of the glass. These float lines are huge, up to three-quarters of a mile long. But if you visit, you might find just five or six people running the whole thing. It's all mechanical now.'

The glass we've made for this building is very thick. It's actually two sheets together: one sheet on the outside, 21.5mm thick, and a second sheet on the inside, 15.5mm thick, both with acoustic interlayers.



We then apply a solar control coating to the 21.5mm glass, which allows 70 per cent of external light but only 37 per cent of external heat into the building while also stopping heat from escaping. It's nanotechnology, so-called for its small size, and incredibly thin. How thin? Compare the coating on the glass to spreading jam on your toast. If the jam is 4mm thick, then to match the proportions of the coating and the glass, your toast would have to be 40 metres thick.

Both glasses are then produced into a double-glazed unit with a 16mm cavity between them. So altogether, it's 53mm thick, or just over two inches. The acoustic standards are extremely high'.

b SIDE



TRACK 1

2 : 26

STEEL

Recorded at William Hare Group, Bury

PAUL DAVIES
Welder

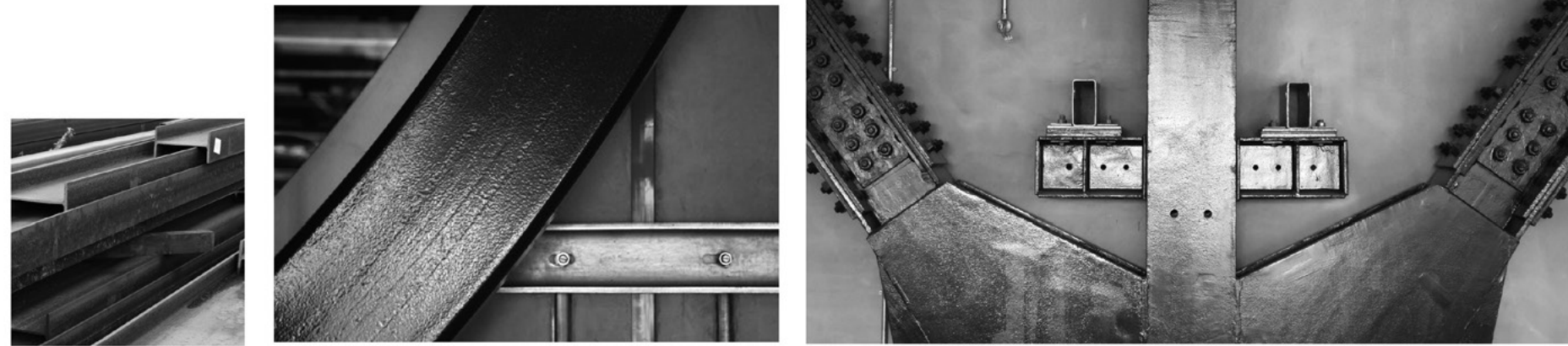
'Architects and designers seem to outdo each other with the most complicated, intricate designs, and it doesn't make it any easier for us. Think back 50 years ago, when they started doing steel buildings – they were more or less square, simple rectangles. Now they've got all these computers that will show you what's possible. But when we get it here, it doesn't always work.'

ANN MOLYNEAUX
Materials Controller

'I'm in charge of all the steel coming into our factory and getting it to the shop floor, and getting all the drawings to the shop floor. I sort all the transport as well. All our steel comes with a test certificate, so you can trace each piece back to the suppliers – to the mill, if they need'.

SUE WADSWORTH
Project Manager

'This is probably the hardest thing I've worked on, in terms of the geometry and the level of change. I've been working on it since 2018. But we've come out the other side now'.



3 : 33

Featured voice
Leona Budworth: Apprentice

b SIDE



TRACK 2

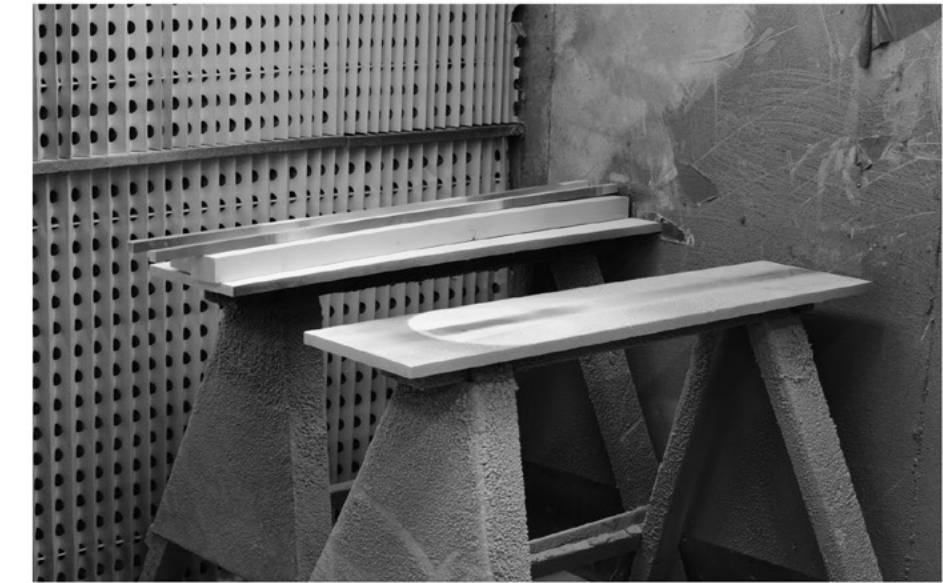
WOOD

Recorded at Gariff, Trafford Park



MIKE KEYES
Bench Hand

'Since leaving school, I've been a joiner – for 40 years. An apprentice for four years, then a joiner ever since on the shop floor. All we get is a drawing. And that's the key: being able to read the drawing and do what they want. Every job we make is bespoke. You never get two of the same job'.



CERISA BOND
SHEQ Manager

'Not so many people are coming back to this industry, and everything is increasingly being made by machines. Everybody here is a bespoke joiner at the end of the day – guys who are hands on and like to see the finished product, from beginning to end'.

3 : 04

Featured voice
Mike Keyes: Bench Hand

b SIDE



TRACK 3

CONSTRUCT

Recorded at the building site, where construction is led by Laing O'Rourke

CORRINE COMLEY
Senior Health & Safety Advisor

'Safety managers need to have a good rapport with people on site. Normally, we're the people they don't want to interact with because we're telling them to stop doing something. But normally, I'd ask, "How can we do this task better? It's not that I'm telling you, but is there a better way?" They'll come up with a solution.'

NICOLA GIANNOTTA
Site Engineer

'I like beauty. I see this building in its shape, in its functionality and in what it's giving - it's not just a structure. This building is beautiful, and it's going to create jobs and bring art and music to the city. This is something that is going to enrich the city. It's a job that's perhaps once in a lifetime.'

DARREN SUTTLE
Project Leader

'You have to break everything down into little bits or else the scale of the job would just blow your mind.'



3 : 38

Featured voices
Gary Bellis: Cladding Manager
Corrine Comley: Senior Health & Safety Advisor
Peter Flaherty: General Operative
Nicola Giannotta: Site Engineer
Emma King: Capital Director
Gareth McNary: Lead Appointed Person for Lifting Operations
Darren Suttle: Project Leader
Winston Watson: Project Leader

b SIDE



TRACK 4

EVENING

Recorded on a walk from the building site to Piccadilly Station, Manchester

STEPHEN STEWART
Banksman

'I only live five minutes away - I'm working on my own doorstep, so this is a building I'm going to see all my life. When I walk past here, I'll always remember my work here.'

PETER MARSHALL
Factory International Disabled Persons
Engagement Group

'When I'm going through cities, I really hate noise, and so I'm in the habit of following routes. I connect routes in my mind - "OK, there is that cut-through there, and that cut-through there, and..." I like urban exploring, and I think at the very least it can be the basis of your creativity. And I think it does say something about you as a person and how places make you feel.'



EMMA KING
Capital Director

'The principles of the building were always about a place for artists to make work at scale. That's not easy to find elsewhere in the UK, and only in a few places around the world. It's a very generous offer - for artists to come and do something extraordinary inside a building that's really equipped to allow them to imagine anything they would want to do.'



3 : 38

Featured voices
Stephen Stewart: Banksman
Peter Marshall: Factory International Disabled Persons
Engagement Group

b SIDE



TRACK 5

CREDITS + THANKS

We're delighted to celebrate the people who built Aviva Studios, Factory International's landmark new home in the heart of Manchester.

A space for invention, ambition and discovery, the design of Aviva Studios is led by Ellen van Loon of the world-leading practice Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA). The building is based around large, open and adaptable spaces that can be constantly reconfigured, enabling artists to develop and create large-scale work of a kind not seen anywhere else in the world. Matching Manchester's ethos as an ever-evolving city, this dynamic space invites artists to create bold new work by providing a canvas to make, explore and experiment. Almost anything is possible – from intimate theatre shows and immersive exhibitions to large-scale multimedia performances and arena-like concerts.

Aviva Studios is programmed and operated by Factory International, the organisation that also stages the city-wide Manchester International Festival every other year. Factory International commissions, produces and presents a year-round programme of original creative work and special events at Aviva Studios, online and internationally, in collaboration with its networks of co-commissioners and partners. Through the Factory Academy, it provides opportunities for careers in Greater Manchester's ever-growing creative industries, benefitting the next generation of creative talent.

The development of Aviva Studios is led by Manchester City Council, with backing from HM Government and Arts Council England.

All the work on the field recordings, the interviews, the sound-studio edits and the production of this vinyl album was made during the early days of construction on Aviva Studios, between spring 2020 and winter 2021. In addition to the normal challenges of working in large construction sites and industrial manufacturing complexes, our task was hampered by the logistical requirements of the COVID-19 pandemic. None of what we achieved would have been possible without the generous and enthusiastic cooperation of the companies with which we worked.

Over the course of construction, thousands of people have been involved in providing every conceivable material, technology, innovation and infrastructure. By focusing on just a few of those core materials, we hope to reflect on the ingenuity and contributions of everyone involved. Everything has been underpinned by the unswerving skill and dedication of the teams at Factory International, Manchester City Council, OMA and construction lead Laing O'Rourke.

NEVILLE GABIE

Album production

Conception:
Neville Gabie

Music:
Nabihah Iqbal & Neville Gabie
with the construction workforce of Aviva Studios,
the home of Factory International

Design:
North, with thanks to Peter Saville

Record Cover Photography:
Jeremy Coysten, Neville Gabie, Jonathan Leonard

Booklet Cover Photography:
Jeremy Coysten
(image of Ellen van Loon, John McGrath, Gary Owen)

Booklet Back Cover and Inner Photography:
Neville Gabie

Digital Mastering:
John Davis at Metropolis

Production:
Peter Jones at Rotator

Copy Editor:
Will Fulford-Jones

Film production

Conception:
Neville Gabie

Direction:
Mark Thomas & Neville Gabie

Editing:
Mark Thomas

Music:
Nabihah Iqbal & Neville Gabie

Camera:
Percy Dean, Mark Thomas

Sound Recordist:
Morgan Wetherill

For Factory International

Senior Producer:
Ruhi Jhunjunwala

Producer:
Angela McSherry

Production Administrator:
Abigail Hellam

Director of Production & Building Operations:
Paul Moore

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for their work on this project.

We are indebted to the many people who organised
our visits to each of the sites:

Explore Manufacturing:
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Lewis Moss, Philip Muff

Farrat:
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Stephen Lloyd, Daniel Warren

Gariff:
Cerisa Bond, David Langshaw

Interpane:
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J&C Joel:
Matt Corbett, Natalie Fleetwood, Natalie Van-Eda,
James Wheelwright

Laing O'Rourke:
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Disabled Persons Engagement Group

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Flan McNamara, Luke Roscoe, Olivia Turner,
Sam Wilson

**factory
international**

AVIVA studios



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Factory International 2023

