

Exploring enterprise, learning and growth: from craft workshops to makerspaces

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The early 21st century has seen a renewed interest in craft products and working practices. New organizational templates for craft-based enterprise, such as urban micro-breweries, open access ‘makerspaces’ and specialist online intermediaries such as Etsy, have reduced the barriers to entry for new craft practitioners. The movement has gained additional cultural resonance through popular books such as Matthew Crawford’s *Shop Class as Soulcraft*, Peter Korn’s, *Why We Make Things and Why it Matters* and Susan Luckman’s *Craft and the Creative Economy*.

This studentship provides an opportunity to investigate contemporary craft work and consider the extent to which it represents and enables distinct organisational identities and practices (Bell *et al.* 2018, Blundel and Smith 2018). We are keen for applicants to engage with an emerging research strand that seeks to reclaim a craft future within Modernity (Adamson 2013, Ferris 2015) and to examine how the application of craft-related values and ways of being could help to inform a transition towards more environmentally and socially-benign models of growth (Clarke *et al.* 2014).

Your research proposal should relate directly to this theme, but could focus on craft-based organisations and practitioners in a variety of countries, regions and/or sectors. Given the topic, we envisage a broadly qualitative approach being adopted in the proposed study, incorporating fieldwork. We are also interested in the wider role of learning in this organisational setting (Cunliffe and Bell, 2016) and encourage applicants to consider how researcher-practitioner collaborations might be used to explore this issue (e.g. Koomen and Blundel 2017).

About the supervisors:

Emma is Editor-in-Chief of the journal [Management Learning](#), which is hosted by The Open University. The successful applicant will have opportunities to engage with our active research groups, including the Centre for Knowledge in Organisations and Professions ([CKOP](#)). Richard is lead academic on an ESRC-funded project on promoting sustainable enterprise, [Growing Greener](#) and an Honorary Fellow at the ESRC Centre for Understanding Sustainable Prosperity (www.cusp.ac.uk), which may also provide opportunities for networking and engagement.

References/readings:

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