

Looking Inside the Box
Drawing a Line Between the Manufacturing Plant and the Gallery

My interest in working with the employees and materials of *Tony's Pizza Service* is rooted in the parallel circumstance of the art gallery and the manufacturing plant.

Many people perceive the art gallery as an exclusive space where they are unknowing and uncomfortable. They see it as a world that doesn't belong to them...a white box with few windows; hard to know what's inside.

Many people perceive the manufacturing plant as a closed space, a gray concrete box with few windows, security at the door...a world of machinery and mass production that is closed to them and unknown.

My work as an artist is to reveal the elements found in the manufacturing plant through production and process and use them to draw a line to the art gallery and back again. Hopefully, that line will be the beginning of a path.

Tony's is the largest pizza manufacturing plant in the world. It is the largest single employer in Salina. The parent company of *Tony's* is SSE Manufacturing of Marshall, Minnesota.

They produce tens of thousands of products a week. As well as being shipped all over America, many of these products feed school children in China, Australia and New Zealand, as well as other countries. These are some of the elements that make up the environment in which *Tony's* pizzas are made:

These hairnets are worn by the employees every day.

These very gloves have been worn by the employees, and carry the history of their work in their fibers.

These are some of the sounds that are heard in the plant, though not in isolation, as you hear them now.

These are the sights that are seen every day, of cheese, of sauce, of sausage. This is only a glimpse of what goes on inside.

There are 2000 employees, three shifts daily, seven days a week. There are two production shifts and a cleaning shift that cleans the entire plant every twenty-four hours.

Employees on the production lines change jobs every 15 minutes for safety's sake.

Susan White
2001

Note: This project was funded in part by a grant from the NEA as an outreach program to address new audiences.