

ARCHITECTURE_MEDIA_POLITICS_SOCIETY
Amps



**London
South Bank
University**

Living and Sustainability: An Environmental Critique of Design and Building Practices, Locally and Globally

1. Paper / Proposal Title:

Housing Futures: the anomaly of innovation is a post-growth and post-human world

2. Format:

Written paper and/or verbal presentation

3. Author(s) Name:

Bridgette Engeler

Dr Kirsten Day

4. University or Company Affiliation:

Swinburne University, Australia

5. Abstract (300 words):

Whether mainstream or avant garde and progressive, housing of the future (as it is visualised in contemporary culture and architecture/design) could be considered a less-confronting - or whimsical reinterpretation - of housing futures depicted in sci-fi utopias. Functionally and aesthetically what is imagined we will be building and living in 25 years or more from today is, however, mostly very different from housing now, yet in most ways those images are still grounded in our current paradigms of living,

consuming, construction and community, with insufficient attention to feasibility and practicality. There is also little consideration of other possibilities in housing futures such as new social structures, sentient cities or non-technocentric models that rework future housing in novel ways.

These normative and expected – albeit imagined - images of future housing very much fit the ‘flat-pack futures’ (Smith) and ‘used futures’ (Inayatullah) approaches – convenient and ready-to-go solutions to an unsure future. They’re sufficiently corporate and recognisable images that are insufficiently confronting to foster any real shift in our sense of urgency and action.

Rarely do we confront the real and significant challenges of the 21st century when positing scenarios for a sustainable earth. Yet we need to – and to do it far more deeply – given we have now reached the point of no return, and research suggests we are making few of the changes necessary to ameliorate the consequences. It may be possible in principle to maintain economic growth without affecting physical impact and forcing population growth down, but we have yet to work out how.

Innovation, technology and design remain the magic combination or ‘silver bullet’ that will fix our fascination and self-centredness. Our inability to see beyond our view of the world and agency/role in it has led to global overshoot and demand for energy isn’t matched by resources available. Our human fascination with growth remains, although the sustainable lifestyle and housing options presented to us now may only be possible in future in a virtual reality.

6. Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Course Director for the Master of Design at Swinburne University School of Design, and practicing academic, Bridgette Engeler teaches in the areas of design thinking and strategic design management, innovation and strategic foresight. Prior to joining Swinburne, Bridgette worked on myriad design projects, from new product and brand launches to corporate rebrand initiatives and innovation projects in Australia, Asia, North America, New Zealand and the Middle East.

Dr Kirsten Day is a registered architect, lecturer (Interior Architecture, Swinburne University of Technology) and researcher (Centre for Design Innovation, Swinburne University of Technology).

She has worked as a researcher in solar technology, and brings those skills to the practice. Her PhD thesis was titled: Fengshui as a narrative of localisation: Case studies of contemporary architecture in Hong Kong and Shanghai.

In addition to her work on contemporary Chinese architecture and expressions of cultural identity, her research examines Ageing in Place. She was the organiser of Future Housing: Global Cities and Regional Problems at Swinburne in June 2016.