CITIES IN A CHANGING WORLD: QUESTIONS OF CULTURE, CLIMATE AND DESIGN

• Paper / Proposal Title:
urban farming in the context of healthy cities: ten years of experimentation 2010 – 2020

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• Abstract (300 words):
With growing evidence of climate change as witnessed in 2020 with record breaking high temperatures, wild fires, floods accompanied with food disruption from field to city, brought about by pandemic situations there is heightened reason to consider urban farming as a contribution to healthy cities

In the past decade interest in Urban farming has accelerated. It has primarily been argued as a contributor to the environmental wellbeing of our cities. In contention to these benefits there is evidence to suggest that if climate change is the sole issue to be solved then the city would be better served by solar panels rather than urban farming. This paper argues for a broader perspective, that considers the connectivity of our cities issues, and beyond the environmental impact to include design for human & societal wellbeing in our cities.

This paper reflects on ten years of ongoing urban farming experimentation in the city of Shanghai, China. This design led project reframed the complex problem of climate change and the city, and viewed it through the lens of the circular economy with intention to design for an alternative future vision of healthy cities. In this way roof top
farms were designed with intention to contribute to transformation towards sustainability with values of openness to continuous experimentation, a learning culture, iteration and immersion in the local community food eco-system.

An urban farm, has been found to participate in a city’s wellbeing, in multiple ways, and importantly beyond its environmental impact reduction. It is able to change normative ways of being, create alternative relationships, ways of learning, sharing, educating and enable alternative experiences within communities: In this way the uniqueness of each and every urban farm is designed. The essence of an urban farm builds on its collaborative relationships and porosity.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Susan Evans is a PHD candidate in the school of Design at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Her focus is on transformations towards Sustainability in the context of a circular economy industrial model. She started her career as a mathematician then onto Global Advertising. Previously, a member of prestigious EU research and development projects, Fraunhofer institute, VP in global advertising with world leaders including Saatchi and Saatchi and Publicis London, FCB and Young and Rubicam San Francisco, CMO and consultant to Silicon Valley digital start-ups and world leaders including Intel, Volvo, Pepsi-co. More recently featured in the Guardian 50 global social-entrepreneurs; receiving extensive coverage for her work in China: includes prototypes for future resilient cities, launched urban-farming in China, established cross-disciplinary spaces to inspire innovation and collaboration across Policy Makers, Citizens and Enterprise.