

Sheila C. Johnson Design Center
Parsons The New School for Design
Fifth Avenue at 13th Street

www.newschool.edu/sjdc

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Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Gallery

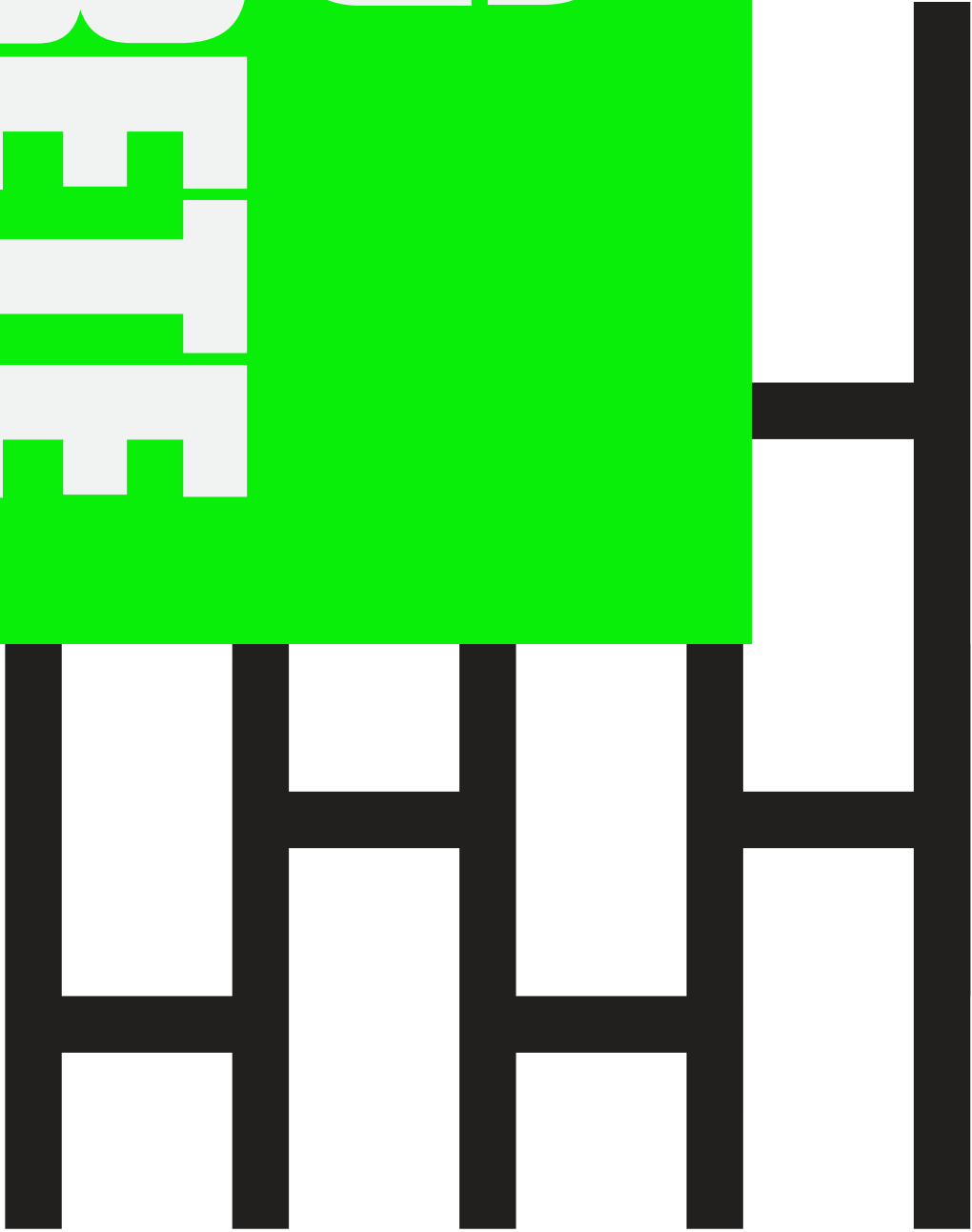
Open Daily 12–6 pm
Until 8 pm on Thursdays
Admission is free

**PUBLIC
PROGRAMS
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6:30PM**



**GARROT
GITY**

**LIVING
CONCRETE**



The turn toward urban agriculture, with its grassroots environmental and communitarian moorings, is a response to growing urban populations and crises in food and water infrastructures. These proliferating initiatives span the spectrum from backyard community plots, rainwater harvesting, rooftop gardens, and window boxes to greenhouses, functioning urban farms, and wholesale farmers markets. What they share is a claim to a stable and resilient life in the city and a repudiation of systemic precariousness. Universities have been no strangers to this field, participating through cooperative extension programs, on-campus greening initiatives, and through other forms of education, research, and the training of new generations. **LIVING CONCRETE/CARROT CITY** is a dialogic exhibition that connects curriculum, research, art, and design to urban food systems to examine the powerful potential for the university’s participation in its own urban context.

From the outset, we wanted the exhibition to be an invitation,

a “pre-text” for vigorous, rigorous, and omnivorous conversations that brought in young urban farmers, pioneering environmentalists, maverick educators, policy-makers, artists, social justice advocates, scholars, community gardeners, designers, and other “foodies” whose debate and discussion would enliven the gallery. Central to the exhibition design is a platform for public pedagogy, a space that will host lectures, readings, panels, classes, or function as a space for reading and reflection. With this porosity between studio, research and scholarship, community engagement, and professional expertise, we hope Living Concrete will act as what Joseph Beuys called a “social sculpture”: a beehive—and that, fortuitously, was his image—of collaborative, creative, and evolving social dialogue.

Nevin Cohen and Radhika Subramaniam
Curators



In the gallery, we placed creative, curricular, and research projects from The New School programs in environmental and food studies, design, and public policy alongside a traveling exhibit from Ryerson University, **CARROT CITY**. Curated by Mark Gorgolewski, June Komisar, and Joe Nasr, Carrot City explores the relationship of design and urban food systems, examining how urban agriculture and issues of food security influence architecture and planning, and how design can enable the production of food in cities. In a wide-ranging survey, Carrot City’s cases, which include a mix of conceptual, speculative, and realized projects, array across several scales—city-wide, projects concerned with building community and knowledge, home and rooftop projects, and a range of products that support urban agriculture in all these scales. The exhibit featured here is a selected version of Carrot City but the entire corpus of cases is available through a dedicated website.

This edition of Carrot City, collaboratively created with the curators from Ryerson, was selected to represent the possibilities of everyday urban agriculture. We maintain that everyday practices of food production and distribution in cities, in the actions of ordinary people in local neighborhoods, register as quiet but persistent challenges to the agro-industrial complex. Were attention given to making such small scale efforts more efficient and profitable, and more closely integrated into the city’s food infrastructure, it would be possible to revolutionize our very relationship to food and water, dissipating systemic inconsistencies, inequities, and insecurities. A counter to the seductive but dystopian designs proffered by some vertical farming proponents, we hope to stake a claim for the sustainable potential in the existing horizontal networks of the urban landscape, the fine-grained, human-scaled interlinkages of food, farming, and communities that exemplify what sociologist Thomas Lyson called “civic agriculture.”

LIVING CONCRETE, The New School component, features design studios, curricular, and research projects that map the scholarly and creative connections across the university. Often designed, built, or visualized by students under faculty mentors, and accountable to external “real-world” partners, they reflect the ways in which education can be nurtured and furthered by social concerns. In including such exhibits that are inherently exploratory, demonstrating moments of critique and learning, we intended to affirm our core intention to convene shared interests as a means of education rather than provide exemplary demonstrations.

The New School projects—in a variety of approaches and media—address the notion of civic agriculture, a fine-tuned sense of location, the everyday experience of place and people, and the shared responsibility to both that the practice of food production can foster. They also demand that designers reflect on their placement in this spectrum as participants. The projects installed here demonstrate the potentials and challenges in the links between design and

civic agriculture, the ways in which the networks of food and community can be mapped and visualized, and also include a multi-media exploration of the honeybee’s role in our ecosystem.

BRONXSCAPE, a design-build project, is depicted here through photographs and a model. Directed by David Lewis and other faculty in the School of Constructed Environments, and designed and constructed by students, its mandate was to create a physical site that might serve to infuse a sense of community among its users—in this case, the creation of an urban rooftop garden and outdoor kitchen in the Bronx for young adults transitioning out of foster care.

Three videos map the complex network that is Dennis Derryck’s **CORBIN HILL ROAD FARM**, an innovation on the community supported agriculture model that seeks to connect low income residents to the source of their food—a farm three hours from their homes in the South Bronx—through an ownership stake in the land. The installation connects three nodes: Derryck, a professor of professional practice at Milano, speaking about his design inspirations and the ongoing challenges; the residents in Hunts Point coming to pick up their weekly farm share; and the farmers in Schoharie County, New York, who delight simultaneously in knowing who eats their vegetables and in the discovery of new markets.

COOPERATIVE, a co-design course taught by three faculty at Parsons, is represented by three videos produced by students tasked with addressing a critical food system issue: the relative abundance of highly processed, unhealthy food in the bodegas that are often the most prevalent food retailers in low-income communities. Students had to interact with bodega owners, learn about their business needs, perceptions, concerns, and engage them in design thinking about alternative strategies for selling healthier items. The video on display, as well as a dialogue between student and faculty member, illustrate the challenges of bridging differences and grappling with preconceived notions in designing with others, highlighting challenges that other change makers, including food system activists, must address.

In an installation that cascades as the waters it studies, **BACKWATER FRONTWATERS** examines the waterscape of the city—the water courses that lie hidden beneath our concrete landscape (“backwater”) and the path each raindrop travels from source to sea across the built environment (“frontwaters”). It aims to reveal the opportunities that people have to alter the complex patches of space that make up the urban ecosystem and our relationship to a landscape that we may otherwise take for granted. In cooperation with Newark’s Ironbound Community Corporation and Newark Planning Department, as well as the Union Square Partnership and The New School, the installation features the design interventions created by students to change the function, structure, and meaning of these two patches of the urban ecosystem, building a garden for a natural dye micro-economy at The New School and a community garden in Newark.

THE FIELD GUIDE TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD ON THE LOWER EAST SIDE is, in the best tradition of field guides, an attempt to uncover the complex interrelationships among the elements of sustainability in a single neighborhood’s food system. Researched, written, and designed by New School undergraduates for a class in urban planning, it aims to lead residents and visitors alike to the food production, distribution, and disposal sites that comprise the food community. Armed with the guide, a visitor could tramp a few square blocks and follow the arc of a bunch of lettuce from greenmarket to restaurant to compost or trail a tomato from community garden plot to a garden cookout.

Two exhibits in the gallery illustrate the mapping process itself, growing accretively over the course of the exhibition. One is the **FIVE BOROUGH FARM** project, initiated by the Design Trust for Public Space, in which Nevin Cohen and other fellows engage in a multidisciplinary effort to design New York’s first citywide plan for urban agriculture. Based on a detailed analysis of the city’s current urban agricultural landscape, Five Borough Farm will develop evaluation tools and frameworks that measure, in quantifiable and reproducible terms, the ecological, social, and economic value urban

agriculture brings to the communities it serves and to the city as a whole.

An interactive element of this exhibit includes a visualization—in the form of a “decision tree”—of how public policies affect whether, where, and what one can farm in New York City, designed as a deliberately incomplete diagram. Visitors to the gallery are invited to submit their own questions about growing food in New York City that New School students will research and answer, providing an increasingly comprehensive map of the policy landscape affecting urban agriculture.

The second exhibit that will grow in the gallery is an **URBAN AGRICULTURE MAPPING PROJECT** for which students meet weekly in the gallery to plot the gardens, farms, compost sites, and interconnected organizations supporting urban agriculture in New York. Large maps of the boroughs, over the course of the semester, will gradually fill with markers that reveal the complex web of people, spaces, creatures, and things that comprise the food system, thereby making manifest the civic nature of agriculture in NY.

FARMING CONCRETE, a project directed by researcher Mara Gittleman, involving New School students and a network of volunteers, aims to quantify the food produced by community gardens in NYC. More than merely counting beans, the project also engages gardeners in thinking about their parcels in relation to the entire gardening network in NYC. The resulting interactive website, together with the logs and diagrams developed by the researchers and gardeners, presents a picture of an interconnected community of food producers with diverse and idiosyncratic interests, tastes, predilections, and garden patches.

Outside the gallery, a delicate graph of apples on the windows of the Sheila C. Johnson Center conveys the carbon emissions associated with the transportation of the fruit from various distances to the Union Square Greenmarket. Bless Yee and Rachel Nolasco, together with other students, in their first year Lab class at Parsons began by exploring sustainable farming practices at a Hudson Valley orchard and then, intrigued by the question of where food purchased locally comes from, measured the greenhouse gas emissions of four kinds of apples. **CARBON ORCHARD**, the visualization of that information, is meant to provoke questions of the provenance of our food and why knowing matters.

Colony collapse disorder has increased interest in and appreciation for the honeybee, a complex, social creature that humans depend on to pollinate most of our food crops. In New York City, a recent change in regulations removes prohibitions on beekeeping, rekindling an activity that heretofore was practiced only on the sly. *Apis mellifera*, the non-aggressive honeybee, formerly relegated to the agricultural underground, can now make a legal appearance, which it does, from rooftop to the gallery: *Bee-cam* provides a live, 24-hour video feed of the out-of-hive activities of the bees of Eagle Street Rooftop Farm, a vegetable, egg, and honey farm in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. Two other pieces in the exhibition consider the relationship between the honeybee and humans: **SPRAWL: COLONY** is a sound performance composed by Media Studies faculty member Melissa Grey that explores the frequencies of human communication that disrupt the lives of honeybees, highlighting the impact of human populations and other sources of human-produced noise on insects and other fauna; To this, Hugh Raffles, New School anthropologist and insectopedist extraordinaire, adds his comment on the urban bee. An extract from his book describes the intensely communal, communicative, social nature of bees while he also argues that if we bring bees more closely into our lives they may help us to build community and retain some of the sparkle of urban life.

PANELISTS

Kubi Ackerman is a Project Manager at the Urban Design Lab at Columbia University.
www.urbandesignlab.columbia.edu

Erika Allen is Chicago Project Manager for Growing Power in Chicago.
www.growingpower.org

John Ameroso was the County Extension Agent at Cornell University's Cooperative Extension and the Horticultural Specialist for Cornell University's NYC programs.

Tom Angotti is a Professor in the Department of Urban Affairs & Planning, Hunter College, CUNY.

Sarah Brannen is a Senior Policy Analyst for Food, Health, and Economic Development Policy, New York City Council.

Laura Briggs is Assistant Professor of Architecture and the Chair of Sustainable Architecture at the School of Constructed Environments, Parsons.

Jodi Callan is a Policy and Research Consultant at the Toronto Environment Office.

Majora Carter is a MacArthur "genius" Fellow, eco-entrepreneur, founder of Sustainable South Bronx, and broadcast personality.
www.majoracartergroupe.com

Stella Chao is the Director of the Department of Neighborhoods, Seattle.
www.cityofseattle.net/neighborhoods

Jerome Chou is the Director of Programs at the Design Trust for Public Space, New York.
www.designtrust.org

Ian Cheney is the creator and director of Truck Farm, a mobile community garden in Brooklyn. With Curt Ellis he runs Wicked Delicate, a documentary and advocacy project.
www.wickedelicate.com

Nevin Cohen is Chair of Environmental Studies and Co-chair, Tishman Environment and Design Center at The New School.

Laura B. DeLind has a joint appointment in the Department of Anthropology and the Residential College in the Arts and Humanities at MSU. She is co-founder of the Lansing Urban Farm Project.
lansingurbanfarmproject.blogspot.com

Dennis Derryck is Professor of Professional Practice at Milano The New School for Management and Urban Policy.
www.corbinhillfarm.com

Erin Fairbanks is a cook, and now student at Milano The New School for Management and Urban Policy, who also launched Farm Camp at Flying Pigs Farm in Shushan, New York.
www.farmcampnewyork.org

Natalie Fizer is a principal in Fizer/Forley, a research and design office which explores the production of both architectural and cultural artifacts, and part-time faculty at the School of Constructed Environments, Parsons.

Ben Flanner is Head Farmer at Brooklyn Grange, a commercial organic rooftop farming business in New York City.
www.brooklyngrangefarm.com

Thomas Forster teaches in the Food Studies program at The New School for General Studies and was former policy director of the Community Food Security Coalition.

Jean Gardner is Associate Professor of Social-Ecological History and Design at the School of Constructed Environments, Parsons.

Linda Goode-Bryant is a filmmaker and Executive Director of the Active Citizen Project.
www.thepeoplesplatform.com

Robert Gottlieb is Professor of Urban and Environmental Policy and Director of the Urban & Environmental Policy Institute (UEPI) at Occidental College in Los Angeles.

Tom Grace is a marketer working at the intersection of food, sustainability, and the Internet. He is currently helping Lulu's Local Food build a network of community entrepreneurs that connects family farms with local customers.
www.luluslocalfood.com, www.tomgrace.org

Daniel Hernandez is the Managing Director of the Jonathan Rose Companies Planning Practice.
www.rose-network.com

Katy Keiffer is producer and co-host at Heritage Radio Network.
www.heritageradionetwork.com

Pamela Koch is the Executive Director of the Center for Food and Environment at Teachers College, Columbia University.
www.tc.columbia.edu/centers/life

James Kuhns is a Coordinator of MetroAg Alliance for Urban Agriculture in Toronto.
www.metroagalliance.org

Judith LaBelle is the President of Glynwood.
www.glynwood.org

Gabrielle Langholtz is the Editor of Edible Brooklyn and Edible Manhattan.
www.ediblebrooklyn.com

Joe Lobko is the lead architect for both the Artscape Wychwood Barns and Evergreen Brick Works, and a partner at du Toit Allsopp Hillier | DTAH, Toronto.
www.dtah.com

Ian Marvy is the Co-Founder and Executive Director of Added Value and Herban Solutions Inc. in Red Hook, Brooklyn.
www.added-value.org

Alison Mears is an Assistant Professor of Architecture and current Director BFA Architectural and Interior Design, School of Constructed Environments, Parsons.

Michael Morris is a partner with Yoshiko Sato at the multidisciplinary architecture practice Morris Sato Studio in New York City and part-time faculty at the School of Constructed Environments, Parsons.

William Morrish is the Dean of the School of Constructed Environments at Parsons.

Eve Mosher is an artist who makes large-scale public projects to investigate and increase knowledge and understanding of environmental and social issues.
www.evemosher.com

Stacey Murphy is the founder of BK farmyards, a Brooklyn based decentralized farming network.
www.bkfarmyards.com

Joe Nasr is a co-curator of Carrot City and former Mellon Post-doctoral Fellow in Sustainable Food Systems at The New School.
www.ryerson.ca/carrotcity

Marion Nestle is Paulette Goddard Professor in the Department of Nutrition, Food Studies, and Public Health and Professor of Sociology at New York University.
www.foodpolitics.com

Annie Novak is founder and director of Growing Chefs and co-founder and head farmer of Eagle Street Rooftop Farm in Greenpoint, Brooklyn.
www.rooftopfarms.org, www.GrowingChefs.org

Fabio Parasecoli is Associate Professor and Coordinator of Food Studies at The New School.

Lara Penin is Assistant Professor of Transdisciplinary Design, School of Design Strategies, Parsons and co-founder of DESIS Lab (Design for Social Innovation Lab).
desis.parsons.edu, amplifyingcreativecommunities.net

Dan Pitera is Associate Professor, Architecture and the Director, of the Detroit Collaborative Design Center at the University of Detroit Mercy.

Harry Rhodes is the Executive Director of Growing Home in Chicago.
www.growinghomeinc.org

Mark Gregory Robson is Dean of Agricultural and Urban Programs and Professor of Entomology at the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences at Rutgers University.

Nancy Romer is General Coordinator of the Brooklyn Food Coalition and Professor of Psychology at Brooklyn College, CUNY.
www.brooklynfoodcoalition.ning.com

Wally Seccombe is the Board Chair, Everdale Organic Farm & Environmental Learning Centre in Ontario, Canada.
www.everdale.org

Mary Seton Corboy is the Co-Founder and Chief Farm Hand of Greensgrow in Philadelphia.
www.greengrow.org

Andrew F. Smith is a writer and lecturer on food and culinary history who teaches Culinary History and Food Writing in the Food Studies Department at The New School for General Studies.
www.andrewfsmith.com

William Solecki is Professor in the Department of Geography and Director of the CUNY Institute for Sustainable Cities.

Jaime Stein is Coordinator of the Environmental Systems Management Program at Pratt University.

Tattfoo Tan is a New York based artist whose most recent project is S.O.S.—Sustainable Organic Stewardship.
www.tattfoo.com

Marcel van Ooyen is the Executive Director of GrowNYC.
www.grownyc.org

Joshua Viertel is the President of Slow Food USA and co-founder and former director of the Yale Sustainable Food Project.
www.slowfoodusa.org

David Vigil is the Farm Manager and Volunteer Coordinator at East New York Farms, Brooklyn.
www.eastnewyorkfarms.org

Domenic Vitiello is a professor of city planning at the University of Pennsylvania and is founding president of the Philadelphia Orchard Project.
www.phillyorchards.org

Karen Washington is a community and food activist, President of the New York City Community Garden Coalition, and a member of La Familia Verde Garden Coalition in the Bronx.
www.nyccgc.org, www.lafamiliaverde.org

Perry Winston is an Associate at Magnusson Architecture & Planning PC (MAP) and teaches a course on Urban Agriculture at Pratt Institute.
www.maparchitects.com

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The original Carrot City exhibition was organized under the auspices of the Department of Architectural Sciences at Ryerson University, Toronto.

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Kristina Kaufman

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Jiwon Lee

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Graphic Designer

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Isaac Friedman-Heiman

Jacqueline Xin Le Hon

Veranai Srilapa

King Tong

John Wanzel

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