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Sheila C. Johnson Design Center

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To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to confirm that Living Concrete/Carrot City exhibition, on view from September 29-December 15, 2010 at the Sheila C. Johnson Design Center at Parsons The New School for Design, meets the criteria set forth in AASHE's STARS Reporting Framework for Innovation Credits.

Living Concrete/Carrot City explored the crises and potentials in urban food systems through local practices of food production, connecting the triangle of design processes, food systems and communities.

The exhibition was a unique two-part model founded on a cross-institutional dialogue with Carrot City: Designing for Urban Agriculture from Ryerson University in Canada that deals with the relationship between urban farming and urban design and their reciprocal impact. Living Concrete, the New York component of the show, generated a series of exhibits from within the New School that specifically explored the relationship of urban agriculture initiatives to their local communities and examine the potential and impact of design interventions. It showcased design interventions and pedagogies that reconnect people and food production while simultaneously transforming neighborhood livability, health and the environment.

The exhibition was also conceived of as a platform for discussion rather than a series of exemplary exhibits. Panels were convened every week within the gallery itself on topics ranging from Design, Media and Advocacy to Politics and Creative Action in Urban Agriculture, bringing in scholars, planners, activists, film-makers, artists, designers, cooks, farmers, gardeners, scientists and policy-makers as panelists and audience members in robust discussions. Over the ten weeks of the show, about 700 people attended these sessions, with several attending it with the regularity of a course offering. In addition, professors and researchers made work-in-progress presentations during the course of the exhibition to explore teaching strategies and on-going research and courses on related topics held their class sessions in the gallery.

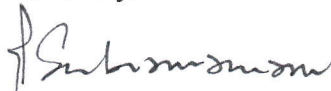
Given the vast spectrum of interest in sustainable food practices, the contribution of this exhibition was three-fold:

1. In terms of content, it placed the emphasis squarely on everyday practices of food production and distribution and in the sustainable potential in the existing horizontal networks of the urban landscape. A counter to the seductive designs proffered by vertical farming proponents, Living Concrete argued that localized, small-scale efforts, if made ecologically sound, efficient and profitable, have the capacity to revolutionize our very relationship to food and water while dissipating systemic inconsistencies, inequities and insecurities.

2. This argument was elaborated in the curatorial concept underlying the show which linked sociologist Thomas Lyson's coinage "civic agriculture" and Joseph Beuys's influential formulation of social transformation and individual creativity, "social sculpture". Translated into the design of the exhibition itself, the gallery became a two and a half-month "open university", a platform for public pedagogy that engaged with projects, community initiatives and innovations, designers and artists around New York. Students from a "streaming culture" laboratory course live streamed the sessions. When no events were being held, this central area was a resource room with books, reading packets for each session and a screening area.

3. Connecting critical scholarship and design to the lively conversation around New York to a more global survey of design innovations, Living Concrete provided a singular pedagogic context to examine the necessary links between research and practice and to articulate the social relevance of the university to its local community.

Sincerely,



Radhika Subramaniam

Director/Chief Curator, Sheila C. Johnson Design Center