

# Harvest

## in the CITY



In 2010, more people live in cities than in rural areas and thus the need to cater to the nutritional needs of the city is on the rise. Projecting new thoughts into our nourishment, farming is given a serious focal point as part of the sustenance of our future.

Words: DANIEL SCHEFFLER  
Images: © DESIGN INDABA

**E**nvision this: you've just arrived home from work. You've put your leather brogues up on the couch and are sipping from the glass in your left hand, your right hand reaching for a snack. Your mind trails to an unusual, unfamiliar place; the life process of things that surround you: *your* things, the things that fill, enrich and clutter your life.

Thoughts as to the origin of these products start to fill your head, becoming understandings of how modernity has removed our comprehension of organic processes:

the majestic cow that lived and breathed and ate grass until shedding its skin for the leather your brogues required. It is farming, or at least a farming function, that was involved in the products; these items at hand – the shoes and the couch, the drink and the food.

A forward-thinking development of a newfangled aesthetic has emerged with nimbleness and virility, rooting itself as a farm vernacular. A new lexicon of thinking and expression has developed from the understanding of austere farming. With the world searching for a new concept of luxury, the beacons of

hope now rest as space, time and stillness. This propels the new human back to his roots and foundations by speaking a language of care and mindfulness. Nature no longer exists as an intangible fragment of the world but rather as a deluxe investment. And by giving nature an economic value or pinning a currency to it, not only is it an investment, but an investment that will accrue. The cost and pay back from a financial perspective will prevail in due time.

Thus, emerging globally, are self-sufficient farms that are off the grid. And what becomes interesting here is translating this

into urban homes and apartments.

The rise of the peri-urbanite and the urban farmer is happening with great esteem. An estimated 800 million people around the world are involved with urban farming. Thus, cultivating, processing and distributing food in an urban sphere could be the future vision for catering to people's food requirements.

With the advancement of urban farming comes a whole new observation of the community. Decades ago, Marshall McLuhan popularised the term "global village," a new movement where the world becomes even smaller and the global village becomes a commuter taxi filled with information. Information and aid is what, nowadays, gears our lives.

Creative Consultant, Jaco Jansen Van Rensburg believes that farmhouses and their language are becoming more important as cultural ambassadors leading to new thinking in terms of constructing homes. These facilitate and meander towards helping the urban farmer enrich and curve around structures of steel and concrete, feeding even more into a new reflective state surrounding farming, and the way farming will be 20 or 40 years from now.

The inspired "Protofarm 2050" project, commissioned by The International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) at last year's World Design Congress in Singapore, is a project that certainly has an Orwellian truth and vision about it. The brief given was to generate forward-thinking prospective situations on any topic. This year's Cape Town-based Design Indaba chose farming as a topic, looking to absorb information about food security and resourceful environmentalism. The next logical move was to commission a group of radically pioneering thinkers to this project. And so Futurefarmers, 5.5 designers, Dunne&Raby, Revital Cohen and Frank Tjepkema were to generate the vision of farming in the year 2050.

By looking at this uniquely

collaborative vision of what could be, Futurefarmers proposed using old container ships to create floating farms and gardens where diet, water and psychological needs are taken into perfect, unified consideration. Designers 5.5 created city guidebooks with urban recipes (eating rats and cockroaches included). Dunne & Raby believe in designing for the overpopulation and embracing a new kind of activist who wants to keep

innovation and forward thinking by turning protofarming into a viable and usable reality? By looking at urbanites the solutions swarm. Building an inner city conservatory with vegetables and green shrubs on your balcony and a greenhouse that is in your courtyard; these become realities and viable options when your thinking translates into action. Philosophically, positive change in the world originates from spiritual



species wild. Also looking into synthetic biology where plants are modified to become digestible and nutritious and humans' digestive systems are engineered to absorb cellulose. Revital Cohen feels that form follows function and that by replacing your appendix with an artificial energy generator, the human body will become the farm: thus the appearance of Homo evolutus, where man creates and designs his own evolution. Frank Tjepkema forward thinks to a self-sufficiency that leads to self-containment, where farms can exist completely off the grid, for example, making theme parks useful by turning them into farms and thus providing thrilling eco-tainment.

In an African context, how can we as South Africans proactively utilise

development in the individual filtering across into cultural, technological and environmental development. South African designer Haldane Martin argues that even furniture can encourage spiritual development through digital technology.

Thus the onus rests on you, the brogue-wearing, couch-sitting individual processing your ideas of a new life. The emotional satisfaction of picking fruit from your home garden as opposed to off the supermarket shelf becomes an elixir. In a revolution for the self-combining form, achieving gratification is the next step towards happiness; finding a stomping ground that is beyond the obvious going green, buying green or even thinking green, but takes back the power by being truly self-sufficient. ✿



# The Fluid Contours of Jazz

Judith Sephuma

The euphonic allure of music embodies a vibrancy of effervescent emotions and sensual feelings that can only be explained from an essentially intimate perspective. Jazz forms a nest of wondrous musical exploration for the genuine connoisseur, and the overhasty daredevil. A thrust of syncopated beats, the calculated misshaping of timbre, and toying with polyphonic ensembles climaxes with improvisation as if alive.

Words: DANIEL SCHEFFLER

Images: © espAFRIKA; CAPE TOWN INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL; AARON FARRINGTON

Since the beginning of time man has made music; has felt rhythm and stealth inside his skin. He simply amalgamated sounds in his mouth, with his carnal body and then with worldly instruments. This vivacious expedition is where jazz opens its odyssey. As man evolved, so his music desires patterned his worlds. The commandments of music no longer exist; the shapes have changed by arriving at a new world where commingling is a state of jazz being. Undefined and nebulous jazz is sentient as it functions as a gasping organism. Forever changing its contours and stature, it allows for liberation in music and being.

Slavery was rife in the early 1800s, when a million West Africans were shipped to America, their strong tribal musical traditions taken along with them. On Sundays, slaves hosted lavish festivals featuring African drums while rhythms reflected African speech patterns and the use of African pentatonic scales. A century later, with the abolition of slavery, the freedom of African Americans represented the tenacity for exploration and a revitalised new

world. African Americans were, for the first time, able to pursue careers in entertainment, which saw performers such as Ernest Hogan explore avenues like ragtime with its characteristic, syncopated rhythm. It is said that jazz birthed in the ghettos of New Orleans after the stifling influence of European music drove music lovers away from form and towards hoopla. Ragtime spilt down the red-light districts of New Orleans like truth, filling the city with parades of musical dare and charm long before ragtime became sheet music for the piano. The critic Joachim Berendt defined jazz as a "form of art music which originated in the United States through the confrontation of blacks with European music."

By the 1920s, jazz flowed upstream to Chicago and New York with the seeking of an African American version of Gatsby's American Dream. The 1930s delivered swing; music with an easy flow but flourishing rhythm. Bennie Goodman and Count Basie were the bandleaders of the time, achieving widespread fame. In synchrony, Louis Armstrong bestowed his foundational influence on jazz, modifying the focus from collective improvisation to solo



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Lira

artists. As an eminent singer with nimbleness in his ability to improvise with true expression in melody and lyrics, Armstrong rightfully is a world music ambassador. With the dawn of the 1940s bebop, Charlie Parker flowed loosely across America as he converged melody and harmony. Though bebop formed around the structure of having a set start – called “a head” – and ending, everything that happened uniting those moments was pure improvisation.

With the arrival of Miles Davis, jazz could no longer be considered just music. It had emerged as a marvel of subcultural and cross-cultural understanding of the world. Davis's artistic deftness to utilise ritual space and symbolism to form narratives and musical parlance is what gives jazz the ability to grow intuitively. What Davis gave to jazz along with his personality, controversial behaviour and all-embracing interests was the experiential feasibility of improvisation.

With a dramatic split in the jazz world, the development of acid jazz and free jazz and even punk jazz left throats hoarse with commentary. The relaxation of orthodox jazz and the ability to conjure modernity in jazz allowed for new movements and developments. Even heavy metal



Vusi Mahlasela

started to infuse itself into jazz and delivered its message with harder tones and more insecurities than before. Electronic sounds tried to contain jazz with their rigid structure though jazz always seemed to prevail as a wild medium of expression.

In a contemporary sense, the traditional role of jazz artists is changing too. Diana Krall, for instance, has moved from being coy and sensual to taking on a role as producer of Barbra Streisand's latest album; another indication of the dexterity of jazz as a construction medium, infusing its ability and strength into popular music and a global artist's album. This gives additional new blood to artists such as Michael Bublé, who modernise the scope of jazz into an easy-listening sphere with a focus on vocal and a touch of rock.

In an African context, Luanda-born Paulo Flores uses his music to take in personally suffered tribulations and expose the heinous war of his home country. He investigates the vocal reflections of his music through his use of Portuguese and the Kimbundu language, rearing a unique and crystallised perspective on African jazz.

South African artist Vusi



Paulo Flores

Mahlasela's expertise and skill seem to be horizons stretched. With a style fusion of folk, world, blues and soul, Mahlasela represents a kaleidoscope of jazz consciousness, allowing his creativity to dance into poetry and expressions of his life escapades.

Female comrade Judith Sephuma takes inspiration from her dreams; her lyrics reflecting a deep nurture of creativity, while songbird Lira is raising the grandeur with extreme radio play and glamorous media attention. With visions of Europe and exploration abroad, Lira weaves her life experiences into her music, winning her much acclaim and awards in every musical sector.

Jazz possesses the capability to reconstruct and assimilate influences from varied musical styles and inspirations, which releases debates about the alpha and the omega of this genre. Jazz allows for, even encourages, the questions “does it have a real tangible end” and “does it start somewhere within a construction of music?” It promotes a world where new ways of seeing and even more explorative ways of hearing can be felt and inherently scrutinised. It is the tool of music that can allow you to envision a place where freedom exists and breathes. ❀