

# ***HYPER-RURAL:*** **the end of urbanism?**

**Symposium: 21 - 22 November, Manchester School of Architecture**

**Formulating a creative rural sector response to the Government's Industrial strategy.**

The symposium documents the emergence of a new set of critical arts practices, architectural interventions and curatorial strategies in challenging rural and agricultural contexts, e.g. art and agriculture, art and pandemics, and art and the policy sphere, etc. Which are also being proposed as part of a wider arts and cultural sector engagement with issues in agriculture, rurality and the countryside; i.e. a reframing of future sustainable agriculture, food and rural development policies from new critical, aesthetic, intellectual and cultural perspectives.

It is also intended as an opportunity for artists, architects, digital practitioners, designers and curators, etc., to meet together and respond to two recent reports, which advocate some quite radical new approaches to our understanding of rurality, agriculture, safe food, environmental sustainability and the countryside.

*"Our current preoccupation with the city alone is highly irresponsible.. The countryside is now more volatile than the most accelerated city"*

In particular the 'Countryside' manifesto issued recently by international architect and urbanist Rem Koolhaas (OMA/AMO Rotterdam), in which he argues that the era of urbanism as the dominant focus for architecture, curatorship and arts and cultural policy, is now coming to an end. And that the countryside, rural issues, sustainable food and agriculture, farm animal welfare, etc., are becoming the vital new critical sites for future cultural, art, design and architectural practice.

*"What the BSE and FMD (Foot and Mouth) pandemics have also shown us is that agriculture and the rural are now important cultural responsibilities and, as such, they represent urgent and compelling new critical arenas for artists, digital media, architects, designers and cultural policy discourse to engage with."*

Similar arguments are also put forward by the Littoral Arts Trust in the New Creative Rural Economies report (Nov. 2018) which outlines a new strategic role for artists, architects, digital designers and the wider cultural sector in support of rural regeneration and the Government's (post-Brexit) Industrial Strategy. The report proposes a national creative rural economy investment programme and a major culture-led rural regeneration strategy, capable of addressing a wide range of likely future rural issues and challenges. Such as: climate change/flooding, public health/pandemics, rural social regeneration and, also delivering c. £1 billion p.a. for the national creative economy and the Government's Industrial Strategy by 2023; i.e. the New Economies of Sustainability.

## Programme:

### **HYPER-RURAL: the end of Urbanism?**

#### **Symposium, 21-22 Nov. Manchester School of Architecture**

##### **Tuesday 21st Nov. Day 1 Keynote addresses:**

**6.00 - 9.00pm** Benzie Theatre, MMU (Boundary Street West, Manchester M15 6BR)

**Stephan Petermann: OMA/AMO.** 'The advent of the Hyper-Rural and the end of Urbanism?' *'The countryside is now more volatile than the most accelerated city'*. AMO/OMA's pioneering Countryside international research programme. <<http://oma.eu/lectures/countryside>>

**Professor Ou Ning, GSAPP Graduate School of Architecture, Planning Columbia University.** *'Chinese cities have become insufferable'*. The Bishan Project: "Restarting the Rural Reconstruction Movement", *Post City: Habitats for the 21st Century*. The Bishan Project was a community-centered cultural project for rural revival, which was later closed down by the Chinese Government. <<https://www.arch.columbia.edu/faculty/525-ou-ning>> <<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/dec/02/chinese-artists-rural-rebellion-xi-jinping>>

Chair David Powell, David Powell Cultural Policy Research <<http://www.davidpowellresearch.co.uk>> [www.gpsculture.co.uk](http://www.gpsculture.co.uk)

##### **Wednesday 22nd Nov. Day 2 The symposium seminars**

#### **Practicing in the Hyper-Rural realm; proposing new aesthetic and cultural genres for digital, designers, architects, curators and artists in the post-agricultural rural sphere.**

**9.30 - 11.00 am** (morning parallel seminar programme, A - B)

##### **(A) Designing the Future Rural future rural landscapes, settlements & economies**

Stefan Petermann OMA/OSA - Rem Koolhaas International Architecture practice, Rotterdam; the Post-Urban <<http://oma.eu/lectures/countryside>>

Ben Stringer, SL University of Westminster Architecture Department; co-organised the 'Re-imagining rurality' conference in 2015. Part of the *Alturrurality* network a trustee for a city farm. <<https://www.westminster.ac.uk/about-us/our-people/directory/stringer-ben>>

Dr. Rosemary Shirley, Art Dept. MMU. 'Rural Mythologies: A Crisis in Representation' explores the proliferation of images of the rural that circulate through media, branding and everyday ephemera. It argues that certain forms of contemporary art practice are important in providing alternative, more complex and multiple visions of rurality. <<http://www.art.mmu.ac.uk/profile/rshirley>>

Chair: Richard Povall Director art.earth

##### **(B) New Rural Mobilities; rethinking rural tourism, culture and the post-agri. visitor economy**

Professor Ou Ning, Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture and Planning <<https://www.arch.columbia.edu/faculty/525-ou-ning>>

Dr. Alex Murdin, Rural Recreation Dorset <<http://ruralrecreation.org.uk>> RE-THINKING PLACE: WE ARE RIGHT TO ROAM: Economic, cultural and social strategies that wish to support rural creativity Matt McDonald Grizedale Arts Cumbria <<https://www.grizedale.org/projects/a-fair-land-9237>>

Helen Ratcliffe/Alan Smith Allenheads Contemporary Arts, 'Magnolia pastures' The discomfort of diversity - Looking through other people's eyes towards a dysfunctional theme. park. <<https://www.acart.org.uk>>

Chair: Dr. Martyn Hudson, Northumbria University Art Dept.

**11.30 am - 1.00pm** (Sessions C and D)

##### **(C) Art and agriculture; cultivating new metaphors for environmental and economic sustainability**

Presentations by some of the pioneers of art and agriculture projects in the UK and Australia - the new rural economies and landscapes of environmental sustainability.

Dr. Richard Povall Director [art.earth](http://art.earth). <<http://richardpovall.net>>

David Buckland Director Cape Farewell and FarmArt

<<http://www.capefarewell.com/latest/projects/rural-artist-residency.html>>

\*Dr Lucas Ihlein, ARC DECRA Research Fellow and Senior Lecturer in Creative Arts at University of Wollongong & Laura Fisher, Postdoctoral Researcher Sydney College of the Arts. *Sugar vs the Reef?* and the *Kandos School of Cultural Adaptation (KSCA)* art collective. Reimagining land ethics through artist-farmer collaborations in rural Australia. <http://www.sugar-vs-the-reef.net/> <http://ksca.land/projects/kandosbingara/>

Chair Ed Fox, HoD Landscape Design, Manchester School of Architecture

#### (D) Creative rural communities - promoting new rural crafts and cultural partnerships

Joss Allen Deveron Arts (Aberdeenshire) 'The Town is the Garden' <<https://deveron-projects.com/town-garden/>>

Laura Mulhern, Culture+ Business Skills Coordinator Dorset Arts Development Company, [www.theartsdevelopmentcompany.org.uk](http://www.theartsdevelopmentcompany.org.uk)

Zoe Fletcher, "the Woolist", PhD Researcher, Manchester School of Art [www.flockknitwear.co.uk](http://www.flockknitwear.co.uk)

Chair: Chris Bridgman, Artistic Director, Kirkgate Arts Cumbria (National Rural Touring Forum) <[www.kirkgatearts.org.uk](http://www.kirkgatearts.org.uk)>

#### Lunch 1 - 2pm

Afternoon parallel seminar programme, sessions I and II:

##### Session I (2.00 - 3.30pm)

#### RIOT, Big/Agri Data, and CaDRE - The Creative and Digital Rural Economy initiative

The emergence of rurally specific IoT - i.e. RIOT, the use of Big DATA in a wide range of rural service provision (health/telemedicine, education, transport and flood prevention); introduction for practitioners in the cultural sector to new developments in advanced agri-research spheres; e.g. e-Agri., <<http://www.eee.manchester.ac.uk/our-research/research-themes/>> precision agriculture, New Harvest <<http://www.new-harvest.org/>> bio-tech/agri-tech, AI, agri-robotics, etc.

Daniel Heery Cybermoor, <<http://www.beyondbroadband.coop/users/daniel-heery>>

Chris Carr Director B4RN, <<https://b4rn.org.uk>>

GROW Observatory, Drew Hemment (FutureEverything, Univ.Dundee) [www.growobservatory.org](http://www.growobservatory.org).

Suzannah Brecknock Geospatial Innovation Lead | CGI UK <http://cgi-group.co.uk>

Heath Bunting, digital media and environmental activist, Bristol. <<http://www.irational.org>>

Chair Iain Bennett BoP Consulting <<http://bop.co.uk>>

##### Session II (2.00 - 3.30pm)

#### After Agnes Denes: curating agriculture; towards a new rural art practice and aesthetic discourse

Dr. Deirdre O'Mahony, Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology. *Speculative Optimism : An archival Enquiry*. <https://merl.reading.ac.uk/event/speculative-optimism/>

Steve Messam, rural artist and curator, [http://www.stevemessam.co.uk/steve\\_messam\\_cv.pdf](http://www.stevemessam.co.uk/steve_messam_cv.pdf)

Paul Chaney PhD researcher Falmouth University <<http://www.paulchaney.co.uk>>

Chair: Jane Scarth Curator: Public Programmes Whitechapel Gallery, London

#### 3.45 - 4.45pm Symposium Day 2 keynote presentation:

##### The creative countryside: Policy and practice in the rural cultural economy

Key note presentation by Professor David Bell University of Leeds

<<https://www.geog.leeds.ac.uk/people/person/publications/?shortname=d.bell>>

#### Professor Michael Woods\*, University of Aberystwyth 'The Global Countryside' research project.

<<https://globalruralproject.wordpress.com/the-research-team/>>

Two leading UK Geographers and rural advocates address the concept of.. "the Future is Rural".

Respondents: Iain Bennett, BoP Consulting, Suzannah Brecknock CGI UK, and David Powell, GPS.

Symposium plenary 4.45 - 5.15pm \*pre-recorded presentations

## **Symposium registration and fees**

This for the Wednesday 22nd Nov. seminars. Includes the Tuesday evening lectures and reception.

Full rate **£45**

Concessions and student rate (Wednesday seminars) **£15**

To make reservations contact the symposium organisers directly:

**Littoral Arts Trust:**

**Ian Hunter - Celia Larner**

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**w [www.ruralculture.org.uk](http://www.ruralculture.org.uk)**

Symposium organised by the Littoral Arts Trust in partnership with Manchester School of Architecture

**MANCHESTER SCHOOL  
OF ARCHITECTURE**

