

To The Skandalris Award Committee:

I am writing to nominate Amy Franceschini for the Skandalris Award for Entrepreneurship in Design + Visual Arts. I have known Ms. Franceschini for fifteen years, first in my role as chief curator at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, in downtown San Francisco, and in my current position as director of the Nelson Gallery and Fine Art Collection at the University of California, Davis. In this time, in which I have worked closely with her on several projects, I have found her to be one of the handful of most original and talented artists I have worked with in the course of a thirty-year career. I am continually amazed at her energy, sophistication and integrity in bridging the worlds of design, fine art and social engagement. Equally amazing is her international network of collaborators, the global reach of her ambition. Finally, Amy's commitment to using her considerable and acclaimed design skills toward furthering environmental justice rather than pursuing commercial rewards is highly admirable and a career model I often point out to my students. As a designer, Amy's projects go beyond problem solving-- they provide open frameworks that allow users to become both individual and collective participants in a work.

She is a leader and visionary in her field. Victory Gardens 2009+ (VG2009+) is an example of her ability to assemble teams, build a campaign and foster civic engagement. The program included online mapping and social networking tools, printed matter, gardening kits, flags, custom designed garden bikes as well as a city-funded program that planted a garden in front of San Francisco's City Hall in the summer of 2008. VG2009+ is an example of an innovative program that educates and serves our city's citizens. The program has garnered international press and quite possibly influenced the current garden at the White House. Victory Gardens 2008+ received international press and nationally was in the New York Times, Time Magazine, and on many National Public Radio stations.

Franceschini founded Futurefarmers, an interdisciplinary design studio, in 1998. Futurefarmers has been recognized internationally through awards including the ZKM Making Things Public, Transmediale New Media Award, and the Ars Electronica Golden Nica, as well as exhibitions at the Whitney Biennial, the San Francisco and New York Museums of Modern Art, and the Cooper Hewitt. In 2006, Futurefarmers began a collaboration with a scientist from the Biological Science Team at the National Renewable Energy Lab in Golden, Colorado. Together they have developed a decentralized research tool to be distributed to high school students to educate and participate in "big" science. *Lunchbox Laboratory* is a working prototype that was exhibited in *Design and the Elastic Mind* at the New York Museum of Modern Art. This project serves as a tool to teach students about the processes of algae-hydrogen production while simultaneously providing a way for students to contribute to and propel the science by identifying hydrogen-producing algae strains. This was an important project, in that, it brought out the processes that so many times remain behind the closed doors of privately funded research labs. Through this collaboration a new, light-sensitive material was discovered that has revolutionized research in this area.

In addition to her teaching appointments at the University of San Francisco and the California College of Arts, Amy continues to create temporary, nomadic schools as a means to critique institutional learning. Futurefarmers hosts an artist-in-residency program that offers a platform for collaboration and research. The program has hosted over 22 artists from 12 countries and forms the basis of a distributed network of collaborators. In 2004, she co-founded Free Soil, an international collective of artists, architects, writers and researchers. Together they have exhibited internationally and maintain a blog that serves over 30,000 people per month. Free Soil has received funding from the Danish Arts Council in 2004, 2006 and 2009 to research the environmental impacts of the high tech industry.

As this brief career summary indicates, Amy is a force of nature who is defining what is possible in a committed career of activism, design and art. It is a pleasure of my life to watch her mind at work and a privilege for all of us to be of support to her.

Sincerely,
Renny Pritikin