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A Futuristic Greenhouse Grows in Old City Philadelphia Architect-Designer Jenny Sabin Creates an Ecologically Savvy Greenhouse for the 21st Century.

Philadelphia, PA, August 19, 2011— How do you create an ecologically savvy greenhouse for the 21st century? “Look to nature,” says Jenny Sabin, an architect and designer. Sabin, a 2010 Pew Fellow was cited for her work “at the forefront of a new direction in architectural practice.” She applies insights and theories from nature and science to the design of material structures.

Sabin has designed and built a 52’(l) x 14’ (w) x 12’ (h) greenhouse for our carbon-conscious age in the Jefferson Garden of the American Philosophical Society (APS), just around the corner from Independence Hall. It is a striking work of art and also the centerpiece of *The Greenhouse Projects*, a series of five distinct but inter-related programs this fall at the APS Museum inspired by the current exhibition, *Of Elephants and Roses: Encounters with French Natural History 1790-1830* (<http://www.apsmuseum.org/elephants-and-roses/>).

Empress Josephine Bonaparte, a skilled botanist featured in the exhibition, had glass-roofed, coal and wood heated greenhouses constructed on her Malmaison estate in order to grow flowering tropical plants and exotic fruits and vegetables sent to her by French explorers in Asia, Africa, and the Americas.

In contrast, Sabin’s digitally-designed pre-fabricated greenhouse has no glass, no heating system, and utilizes an time-honored method of controlling temperature using 125 brightly-colored acrylic cold frames. The greenhouse is constructed entirely of recycled and recyclable materials, from the boardwalk floor to the curving ribs of the structure covered with growing clematis, scarlet runner beans and Black-eyed Susan’s. The result is a dynamic urban green tapestry that could be re-created in a small backyard.

Architects and designers have always looked to nature. Buildings that mimic biological forms are not a new idea, but in the 21st century, advances in cell biology, engineering and materials science have made drawing from nature a more precise science. Sabin, a member of the faculty at Cornell University’s School of Architecture, Art and Planning and Peter Lloyd Jones, a cell and molecular biologist at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine have created Sabin+Jones Lab Studio (<http://www.sabin-jones.com/index.html>) a unique avant-garde model for innovative sustainable design. “New tools allow us to explore complexity in a new way,” says Sabin. “We can examine natural forms and then use visualized data to help build bridges across the disciplines.”

Inside one wall of the greenhouse, Sabin has created a “Cabinet of Future Fossils”—a riff on the cabinets of curiosities maintained by naturalists from the Renaissance to the early 19th century. Sabin’s “collection” features digitally generated ceramic, organic-looking objects created using 3D printing techniques that mirror the advanced generative process used to create the greenhouse.

Jenny E. Sabin is an architectural designer, artist, and educator. Her research, teaching, and design practices focus on the contextual, material, and formal intersections between architecture, computation, and science. Through the visualization and materialization of dynamic and complex datasets, Sabin's trans-disciplinary approach to design has generated a body of speculative and applied work that aligns crafts-based techniques with digital fabrication as well as questions related to the body and information mediation. She is Principal of Jenny Sabin Studio LLC, an experimental architectural design studio based in Philadelphia. Sabin is an Assistant Professor in Design and Emerging Technologies in the Department of Architecture at Cornell University. Sabin was the first non-scientist member of the Institute for Medicine and Engineering (IME), University of Pennsylvania. Sabin is also a founding member of the Nonlinear Systems Organization (NSO), a research group at started by Cecil Balmond at PennDesign where she was until recently Director of Research.

The Greenhouse and "Cabinet of Future Fossils" was commissioned by the American Philosophical Society (APS) Museum. It officially opens to the public on September 9, 2011. It is the centerpiece of five large-scale public programs presented by the Museum this fall under the title *The Greenhouse Projects: Five Takes on an Exhibition*. Supported by a generous grant from The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage through the Heritage Philadelphia Program, each Greenhouse project interprets the historical themes and objects in the exhibition *Of Elephants & Roses* and connects them to contemporary issues.

Information

Greenhouse and Exhibition Hours

September & October

Wed, Thurs, Fri. 10 am – 6 pm (to 8 pm on First Friday)

Sat & Sun 10 am – 4 pm

November – December 14, 2011

Thursday – Sunday 10 am – 4 pm

All Greenhouse Projects events are **free** and open to the public.

The Greenhouse Projects are funded by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage through the Heritage Philadelphia Program.

Downloadable digital images available at <http://www.apsmuseum.org/press/>

The American Philosophical Society (APS) Museum

When Benjamin Franklin decided, in 1743 to establish America's first "learned society," he called it the American Philosophical Society (APS) because he and his friends practiced the objective study of nature and called themselves natural philosophers. Now we'd call them scientists. But the word "philosophical" stuck.

Today the APS Museum presents ambitious exhibitions that explore the intersections of history, science and art in new and thought-provoking ways. Displays include scientific specimens and instruments, art works, maps, 300,000 books, and some 11 million manuscripts from the Society's treasure trove of important collections that trace American history and science from the Founding Fathers to the computer age.

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