



Urban human-nature partnerships

A PHOTO EXHIBITION

Today, people are increasingly living in cities all over the world. The global triumph of cities has gone in line so far with a hunger for goods and resources. This greed is based on an understanding of non-human nature as object which can be controlled, manipulated, and dominated by us humans. Yet, through climate change, the massive loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystems, it becomes increasingly noticeable that this exploitative relationship in the long run will lead to crises that we can no longer control.

The idea of urban human-nature partnerships develops new positive images of the cities – cities that are based on the principle of reciprocity and the relying on a mutual exchange through giving and taking. In such a reciprocal relationship, human and non-human nature meet at eye level, recognize each other's needs and take care of each other. Our photo exhibition aims to inspire the viewers about different facets of urban life that might represent responsive partnerships with nature.



Susanne Müller

is doing her PhD on individual human-nature resonance as a positive solution for sustainability transformations. Hereby, she combines sustainability science with insights from psychology and psychotherapy. Theories and concepts such as Indigenous ontologies, mindfulness, and transpersonal psychology play a significant role in modelling intrapersonal processes towards living in harmony with nonhuman and human nature.



Jessica Hemingway

is a senior researcher at the *Leibniz Institute of Ecological Urban and Regional Development* (IOER). She earned her doctorate from the *Dresden Leibniz Graduate School*, focusing on climate change adaptation among local governments. With a background in psychology and city planning, her expertise lies in integrating social sciences, particularly environmental psychology, with action planning. She is a proponent of urban environmental acupuncture, a method that involves small-scale, strategic interventions. This approach incorporates green infrastructure, such as parks, green roofs, and urban gardens, to enhance ecological resilience and improve the quality of urban life.



Martina Artmann

is professor for green infrastructure at the *University of Applied Science Weihenstephan-Triesdorf*, Freising and leads the Leibniz-Junior Research Group *URBNANCE* (urban human-nature resonance for sustainability transformation) at the *Leibniz Institute of Ecological Urban and Regional Development*, Dresden. She is driven by her curiosity about how rational science can be interwoven with spirituality and transpersonal practices that can strengthen our relational capacities to connect with our inner and outer nature in an accelerating world.





Getting to know each other: “What do you look like?”

Rose garden, Germany

In order to develop a resonant relationship with a counterpart, it is important to get to know each other like – in this case – children getting in touch with roses.

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Clean and healthy mobility

Dresden, Germany

Fostering a good cycling infrastructure helps to keep cities clean and their inhabitants healthy.

© Susanne Müller



Central Park and a green roof

Central Park, New York City

Here you can see Central Park from the Rockefeller Center rooftop. This is one of the most beloved and famous parks in the world. The real estate located near the park are some of the most expensive. Highlighting the importance individuals place on being in proximity to urban green space.

© Jessica Hemingway



At eye level

Dresden, Germany

Western humans tend to view themselves above nature and not only in terms of size. Yet, aiming for an urban human-nature partnership, also insects deserve attention, appreciation, and care.

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**Save an animal
by eating vegan food
every day**

In a vegan restaurant in Kassel, Germany

Why is empathy in our culture only reserved for certain animals, such as for our beloved cats or dogs? Why do we violently dominate and exploit supposed farm animals who are feeling and intelligent beings as well? Through a vegan lifestyle, we can overcome speciesism and co-create human-nature partnerships with all animals. A plant-based diet supports planetary health. It is a basic pillar for a world in which human and more-than-human nature likewise can thrive, and values of justice, care, and compassion are nourished in everyday practices.

© Martina Artmann



Healthy and sustainable food

Sucre, Bolivia

Following a healthy plant-based diet can help to lower carbon emissions and foster individual cognitive and emotional capabilities.

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“Erntedank”
(Autumn Harvest Celebration)

Church in Dresden, Germany

Germany’s Thanksgiving is mostly a Christian celebration. However, it dates back to pre-Christian pagan times. It’s a time to show thanks for the garden harvests of the farmers mostly in rural areas. In my church the harvest is also distributed to churches directly in the City of Dresden. The women villagers create these wreaths with flowers and plants harvested from their gardens every autumn. I think it’s an important time to reflect on nature and whether or not the meteorological conditions have allowed for a bountiful harvest.

© Jessica Hemingway

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Leibniz Institute of Ecological Urban and Regional Development



A bench visitor

Rose garden, Germany

When talking about bench visitors, many people would instantly think of a human person. Instead, we call towards an integrative understanding of persons for all living beings.

© Susanne Müller



Two horses out to pasture during sunset

Small town on the outskirts of Dresden, Germany

Humans and animals often enjoy nature together. I was out for a walk and was enjoying the sunset together with these two beautiful horses. Still in the back of my mind I'm wondering what in an anthropogenic world the true environmental impacts are of caring for such large animals.

© Jessica Hemingway



Dog in a meadow

Small town on the outskirts of Dresden, Germany

The enjoyment nature brings is not only important for humans but also for our furry friends. Here is a picture of my dog Terre enjoying the breeze and the cornflowers.

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***Pink flowers, Foxglove
or Digitalis Purpurea***

Seifersdorf, Germany

Foxglove, while beautiful, can be used to treat heart failure or high blood pressure, but it is poisonous if consumed directly. Nature can be both life-threatening and life-saving. I took this picture without initially knowing what the flower was or that it is highly toxic, which made me aware of the importance of not only enjoying nature but also being knowledgeable about it. Our connection to and understanding of nature can be crucial for our survival.

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Not only humans use the path

Dresden, Germany

In this picture, you can see ducks claiming paths for their usage. Future just cities need to consider more-than-humans' interests.

© Susanne Müller



Insect hotel

Savelangen, Sweden

Here, an insect hotel is built into the façade of the building. This demonstrates goodwill on the part of the builder and shows that insects are being considered. If we are to preserve the biodiversity of insects, we humans need to take the insect and animal world into account much more often in our building standards.

© Jessica Hemingway



Child playing at a lake

Säter, Sweden

Children seem to be innately drawn to play in nature, especially near lakes. My children always want to take a dip in the water, no matter how cold it may be.

© Jessica Hemingway

Go to flea markets, avoid buying new things!

Hamburg, Germany

Buying used objects at flea markets offers a great opportunity to carefully handle the precious resources

© Susanne Müller





Painting of a sun on a wooden fence

Dresden, Neustadt, Germany

The importance and significance we place on nature in our everyday lives, especially among children, is obvious. This makes the disregard for nature in policy and economic decisions difficult to understand.

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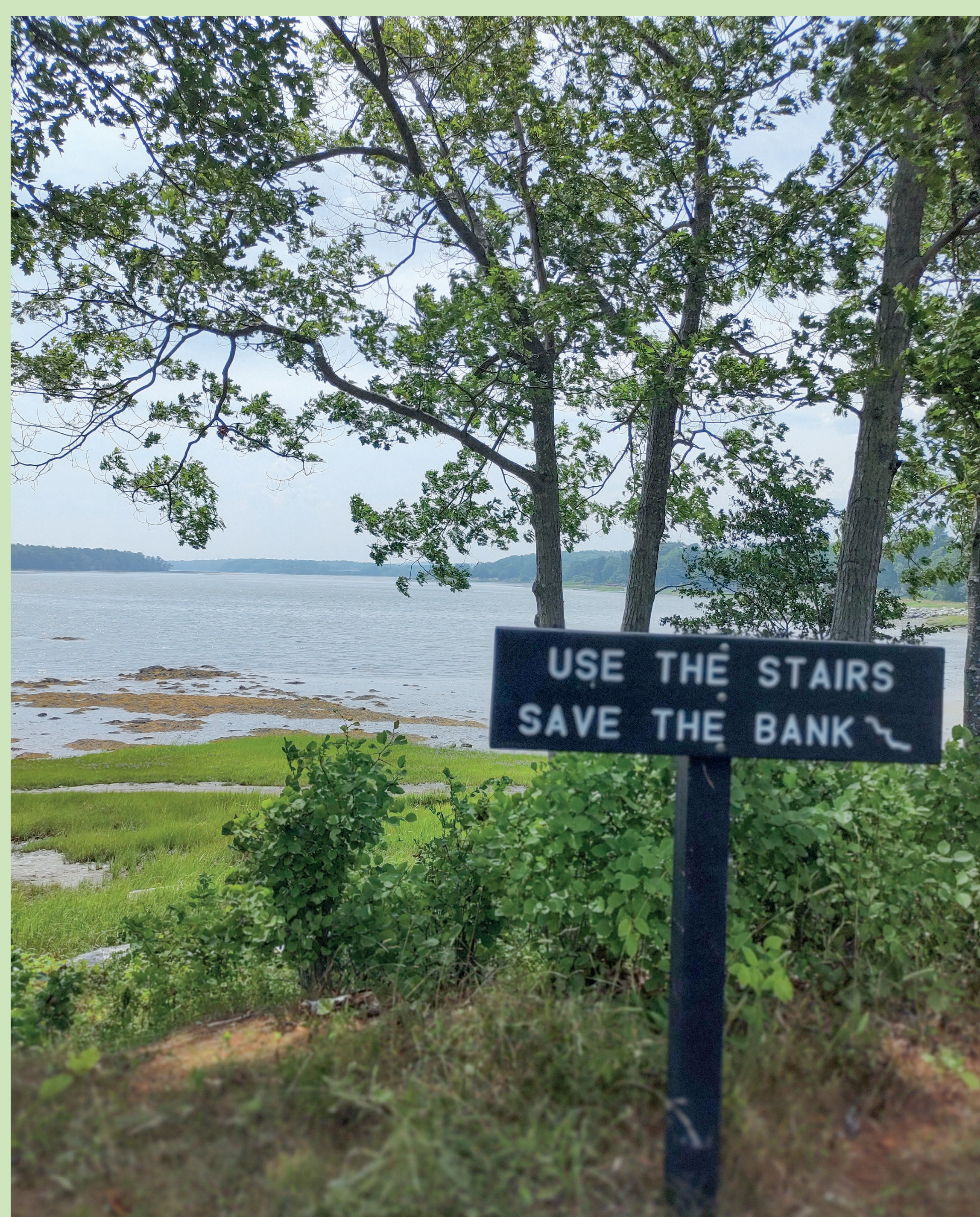


Bicycle at a farm store

Freeport, Maine, USA

This is a quaint photograph taken at a farm store located at a campground in the State of Maine, USA. If you look at the sign, it reminds me of just how much is taken from nature: eggs from the chickens, milk from the cows, honey from the bees, vegetables from the earth, and meat from the animals. It makes me wonder how much we are giving back.

© Jessica Hemingway



Use the stairs – save the bank

Freeport, Maine, USA

Here is a sign asking visitors of the park to take the stairs instead of walking on the bank. This is to protect the bank from erosion and preserve the natural features of the park. Something as simple as where humans walk can negatively impact the environment. The sign is a plea to minimize this negative impact and demonstrates human concern for the environment. However, visitors to the park have to decide whether to obey the sign.

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Effective prompting for
garbage recycling

Hamburg, Germany

Recycling garbage is crucial
for a circular economy.

© Susanne Müller



Broken nature graffiti

Dresden, Germany

On my train ride home, I saw this graffiti near a construction site. As it turns out “Broken Nature” has been an international thematic exhibition of design projects, that attempt to bridge and or restore the connections between humans and nature. An exhibit at the MoMA in NYC for example highlighted how design and architecture might jumpstart constructive change (e.g. regenerating coral reefs, feeding the planet or fostering social change).

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