ABSTRACT:
Futurefarmers is a group of artists and designers working together since 1995. They are teachers, researchers, designers, gardeners, scientists and engineers with a common interest in creating work that challenges current social, political and economic systems. They are sure another world is possible. Founder, Amy Franceschini will present work of the collective as well as her independent work.

BIO:
Amy Franceschini is an artist and educator whose work has at its core cross-disciplinary research with a focus on how humans impact the world we inhabit. Her work encourages new formats of exchange and production, many times in collaboration with other practitioners. These works often provide a playful entry point and tools for an audience to gain insight into a deeper field of inquiry – not only to imagine, but to participate in and initiate change in the places we live. Amy founded the artists’ collective and design studio, Futurefarmers, in 1995 and Free Soil in 2004. Her solo and collaborative work have been in international exhibitions at ZKM, Whitney Museum, the New York Museum of Modern Art and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco. She received her BFA from San Francisco State University, MFA from Stanford University, and is currently an Assistant Professor of Art + Architecture at University of San Francisco and visiting artist at California College of the Arts. She is the recipient of the Artadia, Cultural Innovation, Eureka Fellowship, Creative Capital and SFMOMA SECA Awards.

ABSTRACT:
The Education for All initiative has resulted in unprecedented numbers of students enrolling in school in low-income countries. Classes are crowded with children of uneducated families, who are often taught without textbooks and by teachers of limited education. What instructional aspects to prioritize in such conditions and how? The educational principles of higher-income countries have limited relevance. However, answers may be found in 20th century cognitive psychology research as well as the more recent neuroscientific findings. The research is translational, but it provides an information-processing framework and reliable policy advice on how to improve the education of the poor. Dr. Abadzi will present the salient issues and pertinent research, using videoclips from the classrooms of many countries.

BIO:
Helen Abadzi is an education specialist at the Education for All Fast Track Initiative (EFA FTI) secretariat. By background she is an educational psychologist with a doctorate in general-experimental psychology from the University of Texas at Arlington (1983). She has worked at the World Bank for 23 years, 14 of them at the Independent Evaluation Group. As an evaluator, Helen visited completed projects financed by the Bank in many countries and learned a lot about making instruction more efficient in the schools of the poor. A particular issue that requires attention worldwide has been the acquisition of reading (and also math) skills by the poor.

In her current position Dr. Abadzi tries to disseminate cognitive neuroscience research that is applicable to the education of poor students in low-income countries. Helen, who is originally from Greece, is a polyglot and learns the languages of the countries she works on. Thus she has been able to follow reading research and issues pertinent to many languages and scripts and to understand what is being taught in classes. She has written a number of books and articles on cognitive neuroscience implications that have been quite influential, particularly with respect to reading fluency. She is often invited internationally to make presentations of her findings, which she enriches with videoclips from classrooms around the world.