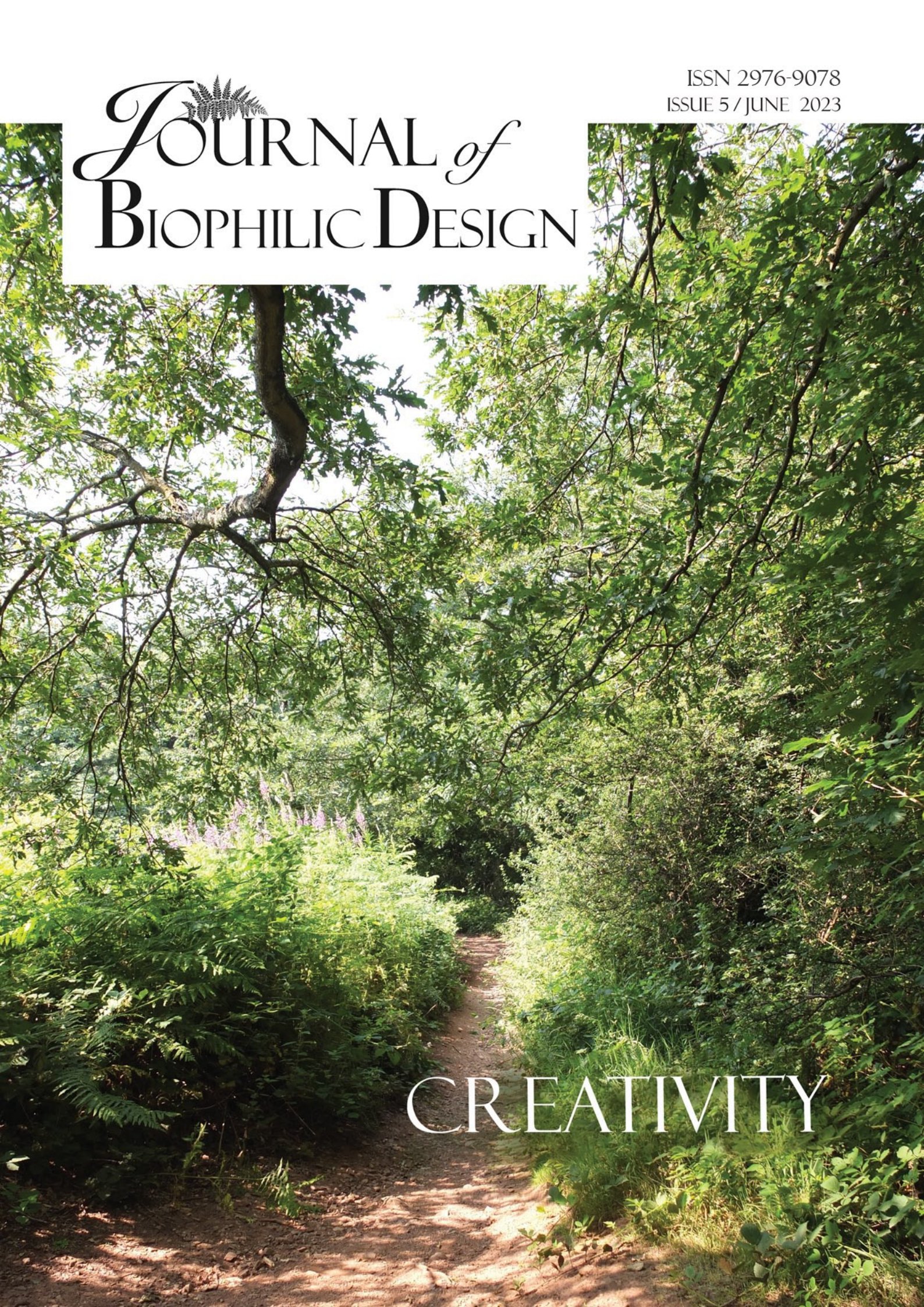


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JOURNAL *of* BIOPHILIC DESIGN



CREATIVITY

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Coming up ...

- ISSUE 6, August/September 2023 – BLUE MIND
- ISSUE 7, October/November 2023 – EDUCATION
- ISSUE 8, December 2023/January 2024 – WELLBEING
- ISSUE 9, February/March 2024 – NEURODIVERSITY
- ISSUE 10, April/May 2024 – ENVIRONMENT
- ISSUE 11, June/July 2024 – LEISURE/HOTELS
- ISSUE 12, Aug/Sept 2024 – RETAIL
- ISSUE 13, Oct/Nov 2023 – CHILDHOOD
- ISSUE 14, Dec/Jan 2025 – THIRD AGE
- ISSUE 15, Feb/March 2025 – LIGHT
- ISSUE 16, April/May 2025 – SOUND

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WELCOME

Welcome to the fifth edition of The Journal of Biophilic Design.

Nature is such an inspiration on so many levels, from offering up texture, colour, shape, smell, sustainability, design, biomimetic ideas right through to giving us space, light, and air to think, breathe and create.

In this issue, we opened out the concept of “Creativity and Nature” and we have a beautiful issue as a result. Looking at how wool for instance can provide us with wonderful sustainable rugs to snuggle around us or how strong hardwood trees provide solidity and longevity under our feet. We also celebrate the flower in our plants section, with pressed flowers and Roman crowns.

Throughout this issue you’ll be taken on a bit of a journey. Allow your mind and time to meander awhile through a garden of ideas.

Every field of work needs some element of creativity, and that’s true wherever you are on the work chain. You can be looking at strategy or the next shoe design, working out a complicated data driven solution or needing to persuade government to adopt a policy. In every instance creativity gives us the edge. There is a reason people employ design, PR, marketing and strategy agencies, we all know the value free-thinking and creativity brings to a business. What we forget is that for every one of us, we have an extra source of

FREE inspiration cloaking our earth. And that is our natural world. Do you remember the last time you took yourself out of the office or your house and went for a walk in the woods, along the tow path, across the park? When you had that revelation, some glimpses into a solution. Nature allows your mind to be free, to wander, to just be. There are no judgements, preconceptions, it just is. It lives and breathes just like us. Being close to it, watching the undulations of branches in the wind, the lofty jumps of squirrels in search of food or the protective calls of birds in the trees, something sparks an idea in our minds, some kind of recognition that helps unlock solutions to problems that seem a thousand miles away.

In this issue as always, we look at the science behind how our brains relate to seeing and being immersed in nature. Just what happens to our little grey cells when our senses are enlivened by nature, whether that’s seeing, touching, smelling, feeling, tasting, experiencing nature.

This is an issue to savour, to pick up and ruminate on, to take to heart, to be inspired by.

Vanessa Champion PhD, AMRSPH
Editor and Founder

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HIGHLIGHTS

Each edition of The Journal of Biophilic Design has regular sections. We highlight them here so you can navigate your way around the Journal. If you would like to contribute to a future edition, please do contact our editor we would love to feature your research and case studies.

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Details of our contributors can be found on our website. Each edition of The Journal of Biophilic Design is published every other month. Next issue’s focus is **Blue Mind**.

Sign up for [our newsletter](#) on [our website](#) to be reminded when the edition is out. Don’t forget you can read this on [your Kindle](#) as well as buy a beautiful full colour printed edition to keep and refer back to, contact us for direct links.

If you would like to sponsor the Journal please contact us. Future editions will focus on Blue Mind, Education, Wellbeing, Neurodiversity, Environment, Leisure, Retail, Childhood, Third Age, Light, Sound

CREATIVITY

Biophilic Art

“Nature is an endless source of creativity and the rapid ascend of biophilic design has given craftsmen, designers and artists the ideal playground to express originality, creativity and innovation in new and sustainable ways like never before.”

Paola di Legge

Nature-themed wallpaper and wall art are increasingly being utilized by biophilic designers thanks to their proven stress-relieving effects as they engage people's minds effortlessly. The use of living or preserved natural materials in interior décor has become a much-loved feature of commercial and residential spaces thanks to the amazing sensory and textural elements that never stop to fascinate.

We see more and more buildings with a feature living wall outdoors as well as preserved moss walls indoors; the physical closeness to the natural elements gives us that much needed sense of connection to nature, especially in highly urban environments.

A preserved moss wall introduces natural elements in a visually pleasant way with the aim of making people feel close to nature. They are beautiful features and require zero maintenance as the moss and plants have been previously preserved to last many years with zero maintenance needed.

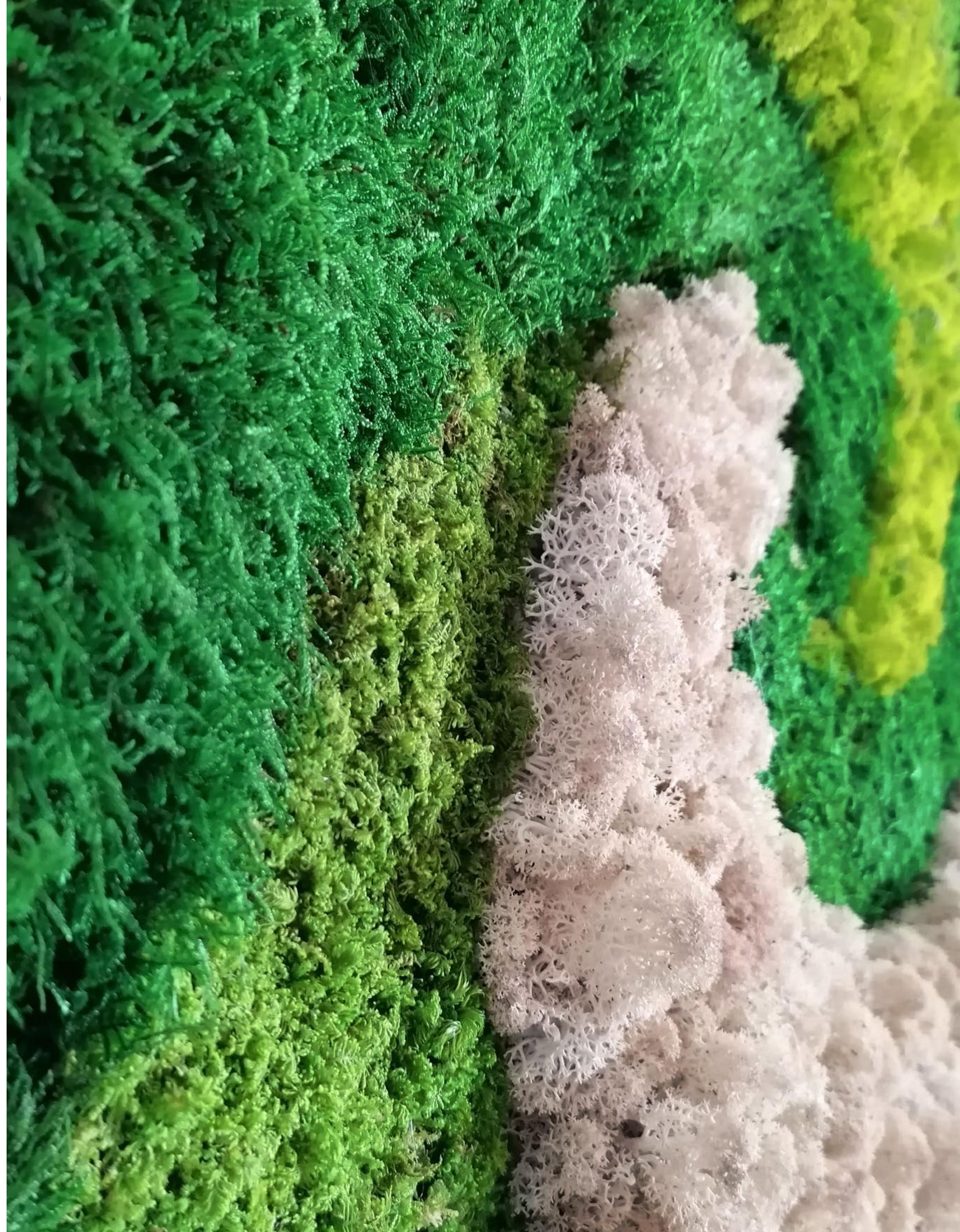
Those preserved plants have also become a special medium for artists to create beautiful, tri-dimensional, biophilic wall art. But how does biophilic artwork differ from a moss wall?

What is biophilic art?

While a “plain” moss wall certainly adds a beautiful element of lush greenery into a space, biophilic artwork involves a creative spark coming from the artist's imagination that utilizes the same means (the plants) as brushes to create a unique piece with a strong imaginative and aesthetic appeal.

Since founding Ninfa Studio – a biophilic art studio based in Dublin, Ireland – we aim to convey the sense of awe and connection to nature through biophilic wall art entirely handcrafted with 100% natural, sustainably harvested and preserved natural elements.

Organic materials like ferns, moss, lichens, mushrooms, branches, are used to create natural sceneries – like the “Woodland Sanctuary” – that become a “window into the woods” where to get lost – even just for a few minutes – during the busyness of our day. That's the feedback we hear again and again from our customers, *“It's truly an escape to look at every day while on conference calls – it transports me somewhere else!”* The enjoyment of being able to connect to the natural world while working from home, it's a luxury that we want to become a common feature that make us feel happier and healthier in our biophilic homes.







Inspiration

Nature has been one of the main sources of inspiration for artists since the beginning of times, biophilic artists take inspiration from nature in different ways which creates a galore of styles to enjoy.

For us, the process itself of making art – handling a bun of moss or a fern, cleaning the moss from the soil, cutting the piece to size and finding its place in the artwork – is such a serene and inspiring experience in itself. Nature used as brushes to create something unique sparks an amazing flow of creativity that is reflected in the final piece.

Our personal inspiration are organic shapes, topography, fractals and abstract representation of natural phenomena. Our best seller and most contemporary design has a unique inspiration story: “Hope” was born in March 2020, when the world stood still and humanity felt the same, intense feelings of being part of something bigger. The energies of nature affected everybody’s lives at the same time, life forces diverging towards the same goal, the permanent connection of humans to their innate natural being...

An awe-inspiring effect

Our contemporary designs have a strong effect of colours and motion, the textural aspect of the natural materials creates interest from a close-up perspective as well as from a faraway point of view, where colours and textures blend to create a sense of movement and mystery, reminding us of the awe we feel when we’re in nature. These awe-inspired feelings develop into an emotional human-nature connection and awareness of our responsibility over our planet.

The aim of biophilic art is to awaken the senses and become present IN and WITH nature. Everytime we engage with a biophilic artwork, we naturally pause and appreciate our presence in the world through feelings of wonder, beauty, astonishment and the entirety of positive effects that nature has on our body and mind.

Biophilic art helps us feel our primitive perception of our natural selves, challenging our sense of separation from the natural world and making us feel centred, balanced and reconnected to it.



A full sensory experience

The intense visual impact of biophilic art is supported by a unique sensory experience provided by the strong textural and tri-dimensional aspect of it. Moss art is not only a visual joy, it can also be touched, smelled and explored with the senses, creating a sensory experience like no other and allowing a stronger connection with nature.

We also create **sensory walls**, combining a variety of organic textures and colours to stimulate the senses through the touch and smell of a multitude of natural materials. From the fluffiness of reindeer moss to the dryness of bark, from the patterned dried mushrooms to the softness of the moss textures. Our sensory walls have flourished in private homes as well as offices, commercial and healthcare sectors. Our first sensory wall was installed in a nursing home, with amazing feedback on the effects on the patients: “We’re delighted

to have this wonderful sensory wall art in our nursing home, they are amazing tactile pieces for our residents to enjoy visually and tactically. Thank you for bringing nature indoors in a meaningful way”.

Other interesting insights from our corporate clients indicate that biophilic art in the workplace is like a “*breath of fresh air*” for the employees, who find it “*restorative and stimulating*” at the same time. Employers also found in moss art the ideal choice to create regenerative spaces for employees to soothe the minds and spirits within the building. In addition to the much-proven benefits of biophilic design on employee’s productivity, creativity and overall wellbeing, our corporate clients mentioned that moss art is “*a beautiful way to feed their soul, the tactile experience is a unique feature that everybody appreciate, nobody ever gets bored or offended by nature, it’s a perfect example of inclusivity in office design*”.

<https://www.ninfastudio.com/>



Growing Metal

In conversation with Andrew Findlay, artist blacksmith

**Tell us about your art and what you do?
Can you share your story, how you came
about becoming an artist blacksmith?**

Looking back to childhood I had always been fascinated by plants and flowers, the shapes, the colours, the scents. The fact that some could hurt you, like brambles and nettles, or even poison you like deadly nightshade added to the wonder. My favourites were the climbers, like ivy, honeysuckle, bindweed, runner beans and pumpkins. I found the intertwining stems so graceful and beautiful. I loved drawing them in junior school but seldom got good marks as I often went 'off piste' and abstract, but my Ma, who was a great amateur painter, gave me a lot of encouragement. After having grown up in London I became a psychiatric nurse in a large hospital as a first job, with a particular interest in art therapy. I decided after a few years

I needed a change so I re-trained as a welder and was employed by a company that did a lot of repair work around local parks and gardens. Some of these spaces had amazing Victorian ironwork gates and railings and having to get up close and personal with them in order to carry out repairs, I just couldn't fathom how some of the

more graceful organic components were made with the metalworking knowledge that I had. An older welder at the firm's workshop told me they were made by blacksmiths, and I, like most people in the 1980's, assumed that blacksmiths were exclusively involved in shoeing horses.

I went to the library and looked up ornamental blacksmithing, found several books on the subject and my mind was blown with the potential of the process for creating delicate yet strong plant forms. The idea of hammering and manipulating steel bars on the anvil after heating them in a coal forge filled me with excitement and I started experimenting in my lunch hour with a hammer and a gas torch.

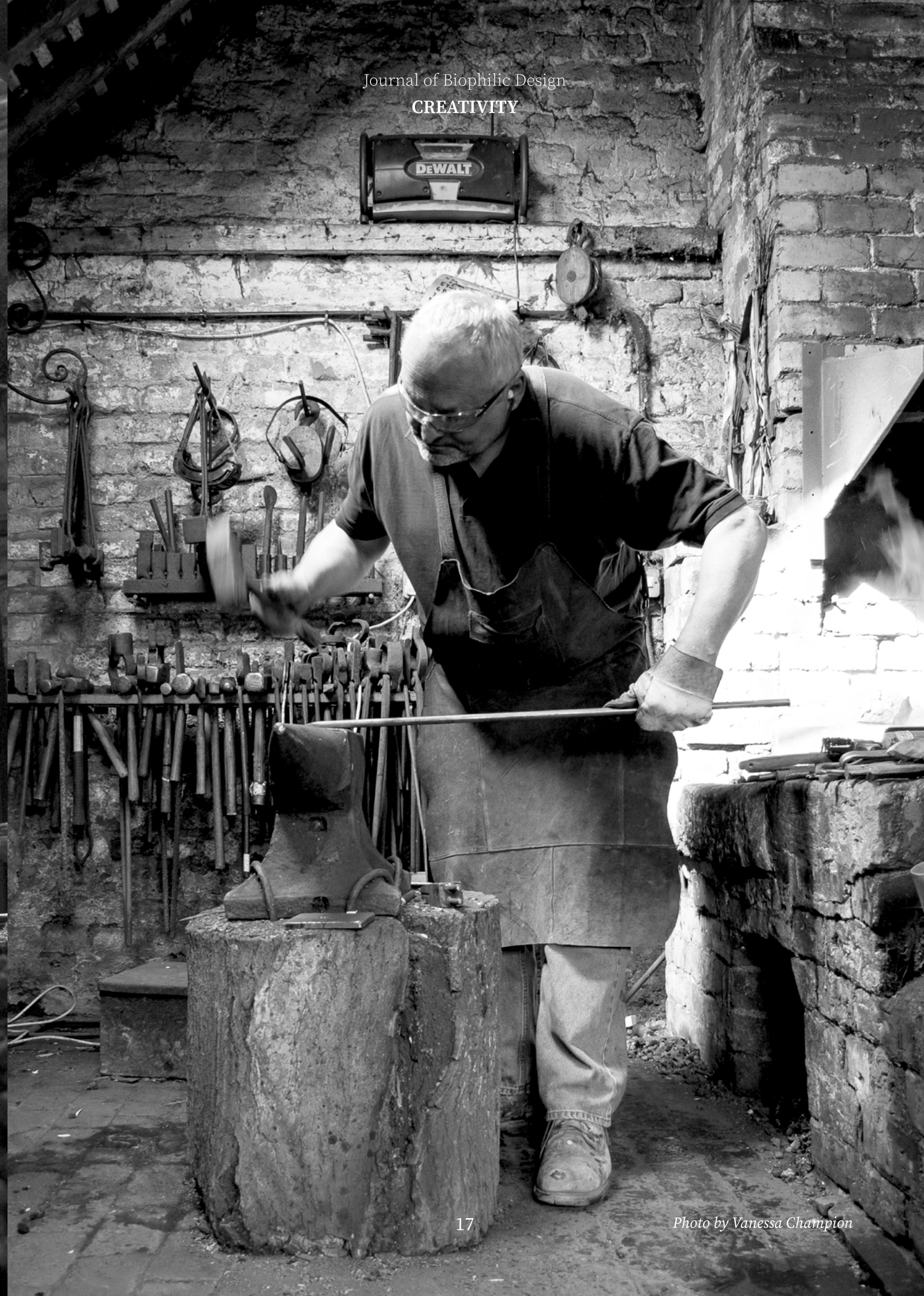
Several years later I moved from London to a very rural and secluded part of Wales and set about teaching myself blacksmithing. I went to visit the few remaining smiths who did the kind of work I was interested in making and they were very generous in sharing their knowledge. I also did a very inspiring course at West Dean College under the tutelage of James Horrobin, a creative genius and expert in the field. I became self-employed in 1984 and still love making forged metalwork nearly forty years later.

What is it about nature that inspires you?

Apart from the obvious beauty of it all, spending time in nature also inspires a sense of awe. This feeling that the world is so much bigger than you can comprehend leads to 'expansive thinking' which allows

one to consider different perspectives and can lead to innovative ideas. This could explain why so many artists – from Ansel Adams to Henry David Thoreau to Georgia O'Keefe – have found spending time in nature essential to their work.







What is your creative process, do you see something, sketch, then create or a bit of both when you've got the metal in your hands. Do you visualise it?

With architectural work such as gates, grilles, railings etc. the design process begins with a site visit where many photo images are taken detailing the location of the prospective metalwork. Other images are taken of the site as a whole, concentrating on existing architectural and landscape features.

These are then studied and after several sketches a design evolves that presents my style of work in a way that complements the space and somehow relates to what is already there, for example if the grounds of the house have a beautiful Ginkgo Biloba tree or perhaps an Acer I may reflect that, or elements of it, in a pair of gates. Sometimes, rather than matching the architectural style of a house it is good to

create a contrast which can have a softening effect on a building that has many straight lines and right angles. This 'symbiosis' of soft, organic, flowing ironwork in a hard environment can be difficult to achieve but is very satisfying. The Secession Building (Secessionsgebäude) in Vienna is a good example. When a design is achieved on paper, sample pieces are made in the forge for the client's approval. Making these samples also helps in estimating the time it will take to complete the work.

I have over time established very good working relationships with several design companies and after a few years they get to know my style of work. I am often shown the space and virtually given free rein to design something fitting. I also make one-off sculptural pieces, such as vessels inspired by water lilies, often in forged bronze. These pieces give me a lot more freedom of course and I can be more spontaneous during the making process.



How does it make you feel, when you step back and see how you've made something so hard into something so fluid and beautiful? The flowers, stems, intertwining of leaves look so real. I imagine it looks so beautiful from the inside looking out too, like real plants growing up on the outside?

The joy of taking bars of steel, a hard, dead, intractable material, heating them to a near white heat and transforming them into delicate growing, wrapping stems, leaves and flowers using powerful but controlled blows by hand on the anvil or with my power hammer (a machine that gives repeated controllable heavy blows) is my prime motivation. Working in sympathy with the material rather than just using brute force yields lovely results, and you really get into the flow state. There is an alchemical magic to the process that is both fascinating and addictive. I also love the fact that ironwork, if strongly made and correctly treated, will need no maintenance and will last for many decades. A famous Italian Artist Blacksmith, Simon Benetton, once said 'steel bars have the spirits of plants and animals locked within, and it is my job to release them'. Revisiting childhood once more, what other job gives you the opportunity to play with fire and hit things with big hammers?





You have created some stunning work, can you tell us about a couple of projects please?

50 Glebe Place, Chelsea, was designed in the 1980's by David Bristow of the London design company Sedley Place Ltd. for and in collaboration with the advertising mogul Sir Frank Lowe. His talent and vision were extraordinary and he was a great admirer of the work of Antoni Gaudí. I was asked to make the very ornate doors to the building during a refurb in 1997. The design was

loosely inspired by a 16th century panel in the V&A ironwork gallery. They were interesting as they had to have age built into them, so every piece was given a pitted texture by hammering and then rusting with acid to give the desired effect. There were some complexities to deal with as a pair of integral glass doors had to swing open independently, but on the same hinge assembly as the main doors. I also made the floral roof crests surrounding the sculptures on the roof, as well as interior and exterior window grilles and handrails.



Opulent villa on the Palm Jumeirah in Dubai

In 2008 I was asked to create a large amount of decorative metalwork for an opulent villa on the Palm Jumeirah in Dubai, by the international interior and landscape design company Burega Farnell LLC who are based in Singapore. Partner Richard Farnell had seen an image of a small section of one of my gates in a copy of House and Garden magazine and decided that style was what was needed for the villa. After meeting Richard and the clients in London and going through over twenty large scale drawings I took the plunge and agreed to take on the project, despite it being over 4000 miles away. With a small team of skilled

smiths, 90 ornate interior and exterior window grilles were created along with 2 hemispherical domes, interior doors, a huge chandelier, other lighting and furniture, all in a distinctive 'seed pod and climbing fig' style that was designed specially for the project. Also made were many metres of railings and two spiral staircase balustrades in a twisted bar style that loosely resembled bamboo. Indeed a whole south facing wall was covered in this style of bar as it resembled a bamboo roller blind and made a very effective sunshade. Perhaps the icing on the cake was a pair of main entrance doors and a 4m square window grille forged in solid bronze. The project took 3.5 years to complete and was shipped over in 4 full size containers.





What do you like most about the creative process?

To be able to express my love of nature and convert my ideas and dreams into three dimensional forms in a seemingly magical medium, hot-forged steel.

You have an amazing forge. Can you describe it to us a little?

I have been the resident blacksmith at Eastnor Forge for 28 years. The Forge is part of the Eastnor Castle Estate in Herefordshire and was purpose built as a forge possibly in the late 16th century,

although like many ancient buildings, it has had parts added to it over the years. Primarily used for the shoeing of the agricultural heavy horses on the estate it has been in virtually continuous use since it was built. This is rare as most old forges were either demolished to build garages and petrol stations or converted to houses. I sometimes feel the ghosts of previous smiths looking over my shoulder to see if I am doing a good job! Now, rather than being a place of shoeing and agricultural repair, it resembles a strange kind of florists as there are always organic components, flowers and leaves littered amongst the ancient tools and equipment.





Does where you live and work inspire you?

I live with my wife Hazel about 3 miles from the Forge in the foothills of the Malverns, a mile up a wooded track, in an old gamekeeper's cottage. I am surrounded by nature in all it's glory in all seasons, so am constantly being suffused with natural inspiration. A very pleasant way to live and work. Hazel has a great knowledge of plants and herbs having been a soil scientist and is also an astrologer, she makes great suggestions for what I should make, she is the first person I go to if I'm not sure something I am making is 'right'

What are you working on at the moment? Or any recent work you'd like to share?

I have just completed a balustrade for a beautiful barn conversion using separate oak 'saplings' for the vertical bars, I designed these so they could be attached to the very wonky beams and look natural in situ.

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SPACE FOR CREATIVE THINKING IN THE WORKPLACE

“Spaces in nature always had reputation among people as places to go to think, study, discuss, and create. As humans adopt these natural spaces as a kind of “space for creativity” designers try to bring nature inside for creative thinking and learning.”

Prof. Dr. Christine Kohlert

1 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT FOSTERS WELLBEING AND CREATIVITY

The combination of materials, curves, and natural light represent elements of biophilic design that bring nature indoors and take advantage, for all the space's users, of some of the benefits natural environments offer for getting in the frame of mind for creative thinking. Natural light, views of water and even indoor fountains, curves like those found in nature, colours that resonate with our outdoor experiences, and warm woods that allow us to reminisce about a walk in the forest are features of natural spaces we as human beings feel comfortable with.

Research proves that green offices increase the work engagement of employees by making them more cognitively, emotionally, and physically involved in their work. Natural spaces and greenery make a difference as well as offering places for contemplation, rejuvenation, and learning. This is essential for creativity and wellbeing to be productive and healthy, to deliver creative and innovative solutions.

2 SPACE FOR WELLBEING AND CREATIVITY

Environmental psychology is becoming an important part in designing new workspaces for the knowledge worker of today. Experiences in the physical world influence human thoughts and behaviours, which means wellbeing at the workplace and care for people is an important factor to take into consideration when planning working and learning spaces for the future. Physical, functional, and psychological comfort in the workspace is a necessity for knowledge workers.

But what is most important here is that the underlying idea of making working and learning spaces in which we are happier and thus more creative has caught on and has even become an imperative for companies designing new workspaces or altering existing spaces. We must ensure that people live and work in environments that nurture their wellbeing and free their mind.





2.1 Optimism – fostering creativity and innovation

Optimism is critical to creativity and innovation because it influences a wide range of behaviors such as seeing the big picture, exploring ideas, being open to others, taking more risks and facing difficult tasks.

It is important to allow choice and control over where and how people work and create spaces that allow personalization and individual customization. Settings and spaces must make employees feel supported in their work and help build trust.

2.2 Mindfulness – being fully engaged

Mindfulness is about balancing the intense pace of life with being fully present in the moment. In the context of technology, workspaces need to help workers manage the cognitive overload and be fully present in the moment.

Spaces need to be created that help people connect with others without distractions or interference. People must be able to control their sensory stimulation and find places that are calming, through the materials, textures, colors, lighting, and views.

2.3 Authenticity – being really yourself

The dimension of authenticity, is the freedom to be who you are, at work as

well as away from work. People need spaces where they can feel a part of the organization's culture, while feeling encouraged to express their own ideas and values.

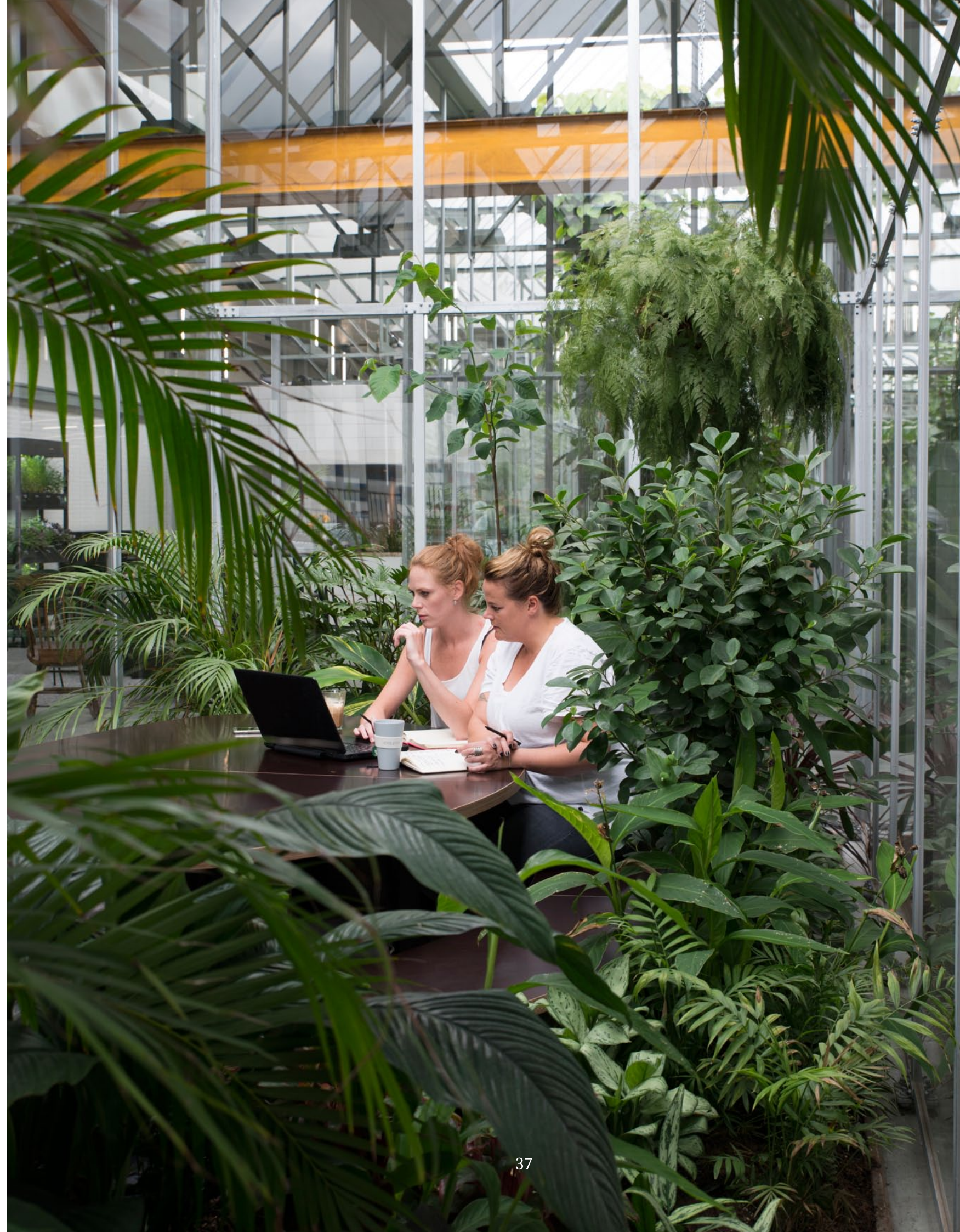
It is important to create spaces that help people feel comfortable to express themselves and share their ideas, incorporate informal, non-constricting environments with a home-like feel and design areas that help people connect their personal values to the brand values.

2.4 Vitality – having “get-up-and-go”

The last of the six dimensions of wellbeing, vitality, is about how the mind and body function as an interrelated system. Among the most important aspects of creating vitality in work environment are our sensory experiences. All our human senses play a role in influencing our physical and mental states, like light, sound, and touch in a workspace.

It is important to have choices for employees where to work and that support frequent movement, which is fundamental for sustaining vitality.

Bring nature in with daylight, views, ventilation, patios, etc, support active, healthy lifestyles with centrally located stairways, outdoor walking paths, etc. Think of adjustable furniture and include cafés with healthy food choices.





3 CONCLUSIONS

Each of these dimensions can be translated into multiple design choices for physical space aimed at enhancing specific elements of wellbeing and foster creativity.

These six dimensions suggest four definite behaviors associated with wellbeing and creativity in a workspace that space design must support. These four behaviors are: Communication, Collaboration, Concentration and Rejuvenation.

A key driver, as much research shows, has to do with providing flexibility for future employees with respect to when they work and where that work takes place. Flexibility and their own time management lures people in a job, but is not enough to keep them there. For that a lot of engagement and motivation from the leadership is required and most important: TRUST.

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<https://www.dreso.com>

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Images

Double slash (Architects: Drees & Sommer)
Peter Neusser

Google Jungle Lounge at Google Zürich, Switzerland, (Architects: Evolution Design)
Photographer: Peter Wurmli

Interior garden at the Joolz Headquarters, Amsterdam Noord, Netherlands (Architects: Space Encounters) Photographer: Charlotte Odijk

Natural Spaces, London, UK Photographer: Christine Kohlert

Amazon Headquarter Seattle (Architects: NBBJ)



IN CONVERSATION WITH THE MOUNTAIN

The dialogue between nature and artist

Odile Smith

Who of us has not stopped in awe in front of some of the incredible marble sculptures that have been created throughout history?

Be it by Michelangelo, by Bernini, or even the more recent contemporary artists such as Jan Fabre and so many more.

Is it the perfection of execution, the creative expression or is it the overall talent of the artists that have created a relationship with the material such that they can transform it into something we consider beautiful?

Marble is a natural material, it comes from the heart of the mountain, the heart of nature, and is transformed by the heart and hands of talented artists and craftsmen.

So what is this special relationship and how is it nurtured?

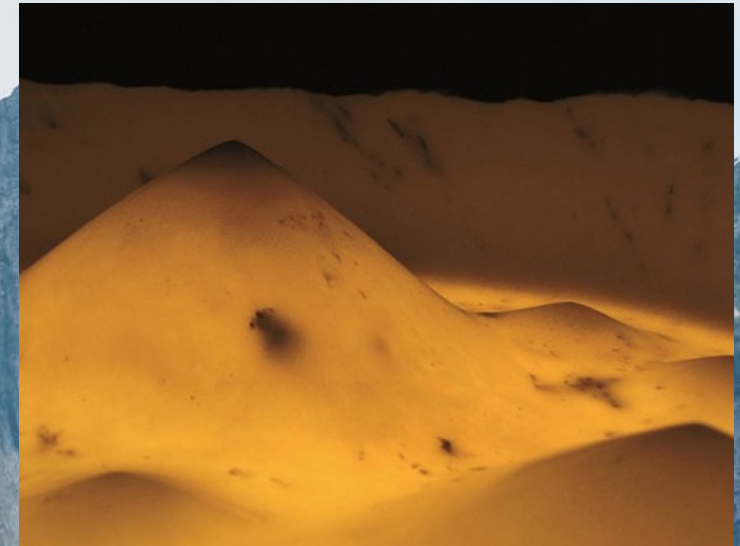
I sat down with a dear friend of mine Luciano Massari a sculptor and director of the Accademia delle belle Arti of Carrara Italy but also a native of the Apuan Alps.

He has been walking these mountains since birth, sculpting the material since he was a teenager so I asked him:

What is the relationship between the mountains, the material, and the artist?

Mr. Massari explained that being a native and being part of the territory does change your approach; your conceptual approach to your creative and poetic process. A territory that has a 7 km radius between the Apuan Alps and the sea, undoubtedly influences the relationship with the materials.





"... if you approach the manipulation of the material (marble) and choose it as the material of your choice for your poetics, for your logical expression, you cannot be satisfied with going to a laboratory deposit and taking out a block; You need to experience the mountains. You need to relate to the mountains at all times of the year and at all times of the day you have to live it thoroughly and then over time you will understand this material and listen to it

Nature gives us a gift that has taken millions and millions of years to form but also gives us a responsibility, to put something intelligent within this material."

Mr. Massari explained that the actual material used for sculpting is just a small fraction of the mountain, except for large commissions. It is usually retrieved as a by-product of the quarries and more often than not, the pieces of marble are found among the debris that the mountain



itself gives back to the community. Although frequent visits to the quarries are fascinating because you can speak with workers and understand everything that goes into having a piece of marble to create from, it is even more important to maintain your personal connection with the mountain.

"I regularly walk up the Apuan mountains to immerse myself in the beauty of nature; you can only try to be a part of it. Watching a beautiful sunset or sunrise, walking in the rain - nature is giving you a gift, but also a lot of responsibility. It's up to you to decide what you're going to do with it, so you must first have a clear idea of how you want to express yourself.

As a native of the area, you have your own dialogue with the mountain and what it gives you. You know the material and technique, but above all, you have a deep connection with it and must listen to what it has to say."

According to Massari, this is quite different for "outsiders". Very often, many artists even among the most famous, give their drawings to artisans who are super artisans who give their hands to the service of creating for artists.

However, this is a different kind of sculpting because according to Massari

there is a different awareness, a different relationship between the designed object, the craftsman, and the marble itself.

"For us "locals" it is a different research, we have an in-depth knowledge of the area of Carrara and the neighbouring basins, that together are rather large. We are well aware of the materials that are suitable for sculpting and where to find them, which in my opinion makes all the difference. I find it to be an incredibly engaging activity; I started sculpting marble when I was 14 years old and I'm still passionate about it to this day."

As the director of the Accademia of Belle Arti, Massari emphasizes the importance of passing this message on to their students. Beyond the technical aspects, it is crucial to nurture one's relationship with nature and the surrounding environment; to make the most of the gift that the mountain has given us without necessarily needing to extract new blocks of marble.

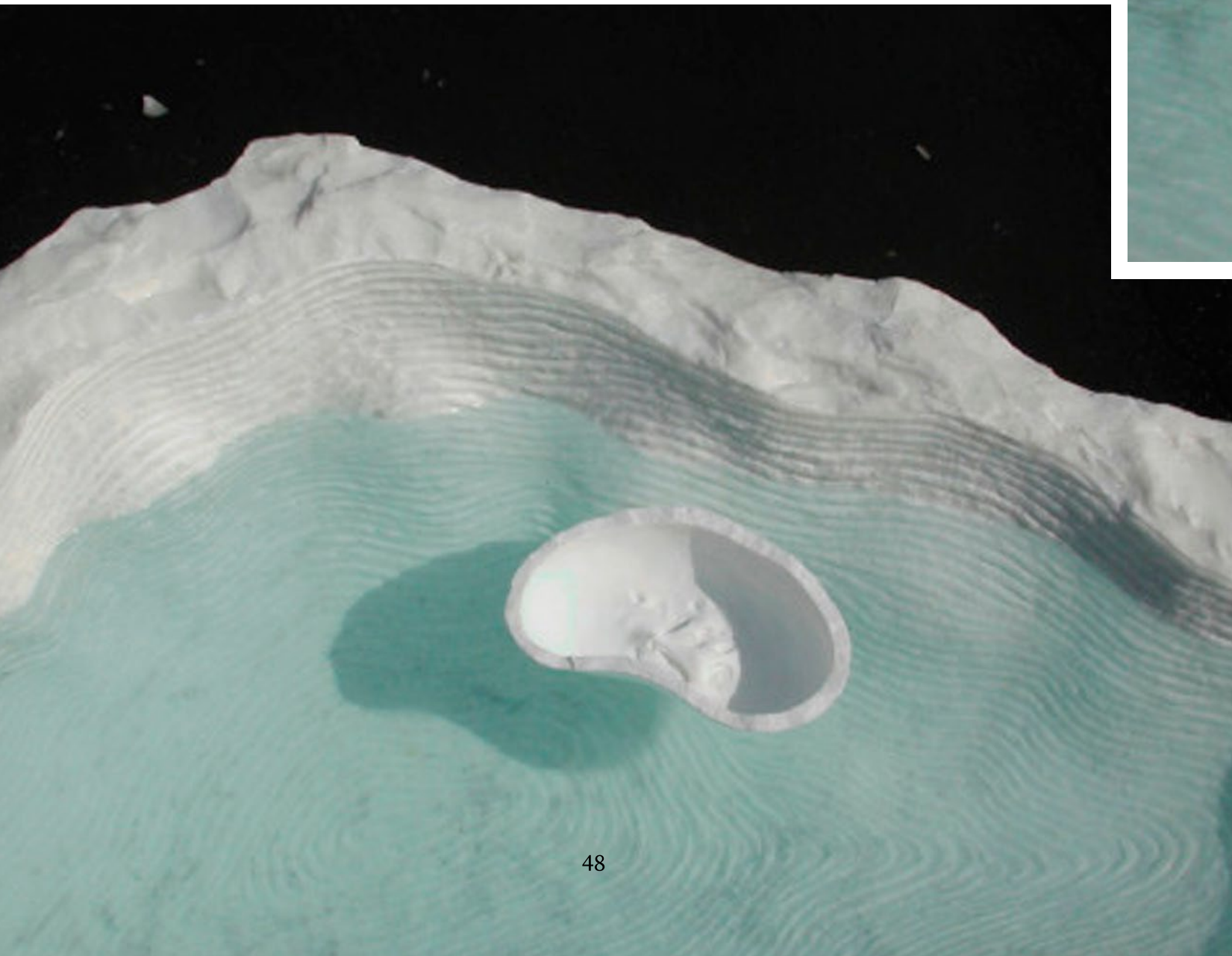
In short, I would translate it as ‘Create with what Mother Nature has already given you’.

If you’ve ever read the book ‘This is Magic,’ you’ll be familiar with the concept that ideas and creativity are actually floating in the air and need to be grounded in a place where they can be expressed.

According to Massari this imagination and creativity swivel in your head until you find a place where everything falls into place and you can identify its collocation very very well.

In his visits to various deposits where you can find marble coming from all over the world, Mr. Massari explains that he cannot but stand in awe of what nature creates.

“I go there to witness the spectacle of nature – its unparalleled colors, beauty, and diversity. Standing before this spectacle and taking it all in, nature then relaunches your thoughts many times over. If you know how to grasp it and choose to listen to it in accordance with your conceptual idea, it will feed into and develop it. At that point, you create a dialogue with the material and with nature so that you can choose the right piece of material for your work.”



It’s a dialogue because you have your imagination and Mother Nature has hers. She proposes it to you discreetly, and if you’ve developed a bit of sensitivity and allowed yourself to be influenced, the conversation will continue. Sometimes I set out to find a nice block of statuario marble – beautifully white – but instead, I find a block that has movement in the veins. Sometimes even in these colored materials that come from Carrara, I see an applicability that I hadn’t originally thought of. Then I think that maybe the concept I had in mind also needs a bit of dynamism, color, veins, and movement.”

And so the dialogue begins ... it is a two-way conversation.

Bringing the outcome of these conversations into our spaces can only enhance our connection with nature even more because these art pieces are themselves the result of a dialogue with nature.

For more information:

<http://www.lucianomassari.com/>

<https://www.accademiacarrara.it/it/docenti/massari-luciano>

www.thebioplichub.com



Biophilic Interiors

Organic woods, stone, marble, and raw edged metals for the creation of Biophilic designed homes.

— CASE STUDY —

Nº1 Belgravia

Acouter

Interior design and wellbeing are inextricably linked. The home has long been associated with refuge, somewhere to relax after a stressful day or a private space to reflect. Scientists have undertaken studies on this topic and found that specific colours, accessories, and trends can evoke people's positive and negative emotional responses. For example, access to natural light can energise people, whilst decluttering can help reduce feelings of being overwhelmed. In addition, biophilic interiors focus on incorporating daylight, organic materials, and nature, with biophilia proven to have been shown to reduce stress, improve sleep and evoke a positive atmosphere.

The latest example of how wellness and biophilic design was used to create a timeless serene property within London was our project in the heart of Belgravia. Creating a property ready to sell, it was imperative from the client that we emphasise bringing the outside in whilst creating a luxury escape for the homeowners. An example of this was on the basement level of the property. A set of architectural doors leads you to a hidden sanctuary garden, overseen from the spa steam shower room, allowing you to be at one with nature through a set of glazed windows.





CREATIVITY

The latest example of how wellness and biophilic design was used to create a timeless serene property within London was *our project in the heart of Belgravia*. Creating a property ready to sell, it was imperative from the client that we emphasise bringing the outside in whilst creating a luxury escape for the homeowners. An example of this was on the basement level of the property. A set of architectural doors leads you to a hidden sanctuary garden, overseen from the spa steam shower room, allowing you to be at one with nature through a set of glazed windows.

Working closely with the private developer on the townhouse for over two years; the journey from concept to completion has been such a delight to see, providing an interior worthy of any discerning clientele. Drawing on the significant expertise of the designers and artisans, Accouter turned the ideas into a reality. The result is incomparable and by far the most superior property of its kind in the area.

THE BRIEF

Reflective of the brief, Accouter wanted to bring the outside in with a biophilic design. Throughout the space planning and renovation, the views and vistas throughout the house were carefully considered when designing the townhouse falling perfectly in place to Accouter's key theme that would continue throughout the property.

Secondly, Accouter wanted to create a family home that would house the perfect balance of a refined but timeless palette with moments of effortless drama, allowing the property to be a unique piece of art in itself.





Finally, it was essential for the property to have flexible entertainment areas. The space planning and renovation centred around creating adaptable zones within the house that would be used for both smart and informal, intimate entertaining.

THE DESIGN

Nº1 Belgravia is a perfect example of where providing interiors with timeless features has been embraced by using finishes and textures of natural forms and earthy hues. Hand-sourced marble was selected to reflect the sophistication and serenity the property would exude, with the tonal hues aligned with statement patterns and antique brass finishes combined to create tailored functional zones within the property.

“Our client approached us to provide an interior worthy of any discerning clientele. Our brief was very much to create a chic, elegant and timeless environment, a haven within the hustle and bustle of our modern city. We turned the vision of our designers and artisans into reality. The result is beyond bespoke, seamlessly fusing creativity with practicality in this Belgravia family home.”

Esra Kumbasar, *Design Director*

<https://accouterdesign.com>

@accouterdesign



Photography – Taran Wilkhu:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/17m0xhjKKmLG3vbgzNFtJxvL_kZkCMhS_?usp=sharing

Five Ways to Nurture Creativity at Work

“The three most in-demand skills in business are creativity, emotional intelligence and problem solving.”

Mark Shayler, owner at Ape
Thinker, doer, creator, speaker, author

Maggie Procopi, Workplace Trends

Designing for creativity is a very popular subject right now.

I can't help but think this is a reflection on the state of the education system, especially in the UK, which has removed the encouragement of creativity in our young people. Mark Shayler's description of the most desirable skills in the workplace

only emphasise the sadness of this, not just for business but for peoples' wellbeing and happiness.

It will take a while, but the Education Sector will mend itself eventually. Bring back the arts and Nature, I hear you cry!

But, in the meantime what can we do to foster creativity at work?

LIVE,
WORK,
CREATE

1 Provide a varied environment

Creative thinking doesn't emerge in a stale environment. Quirky, Googlesque type furnishings are great for stimulating conversation, but we also need variations in lighting, temperature, and privacy. Views outside (especially green ones) and outside space itself are important. Plus, furniture, dividers, whiteboards and planting that can be easily moved about help create a range of spaces that can be changed often.

2 Give people a choice of where to work

No matter how great your office space is, working from home or a third space (coffee shop, co-working office, client offices etc) is refreshing and can be highly convenient. The jury's out on the need to be in the office on a Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. But most of the workplace consultants who come along to Workplace Trends conferences wouldn't recommend it for space efficiency reasons, among others.

3 Create new experiences

Awaydays are good for this. Creative ideas might not come during the action, but most certainly will in the days after, or even on the way home. I believe the 1980s favourites of clay pigeon shooting and driving days are still a thing, but instead think about getting out into nature, a gentle hike, or a stately garden perhaps. That's much less expensive and probably

more effective in getting people to engage. Also arrange time for different teams to meet, either socially, on a trip, or just in the office. It's good to talk.

4 Encourage individuality

Hire diverse talent. Don't have a dress code, other than clean and tidy. The days of the establishment tie are thankfully (largely) gone, but let's go further and banish the Alan Sugar type dress code of The Apprentice. Let people know their individuality is appreciated and valued.

5 Allow for downtime

An expectation of constant busy-ness, or the appearance of it, won't be rewarded by creativity. People need quiet time for contemplation. Sparks of imagination also occur often during moments of boredom, so think about sharing out the mundane everyday tasks in the office: washing up, sorting out the fridge, tidying the book shelves, caring for the plants. Hands up – who wouldn't absolutely love to see the CEO in a pair of washing up gloves?

I hope you find these steps useful.

Mark Shayler will be our keynote speaker at the upcoming Workplace Trends' The Sustainable Workplace Conference.

sustainableworkplace.co

RAPTURE & WRIGHT

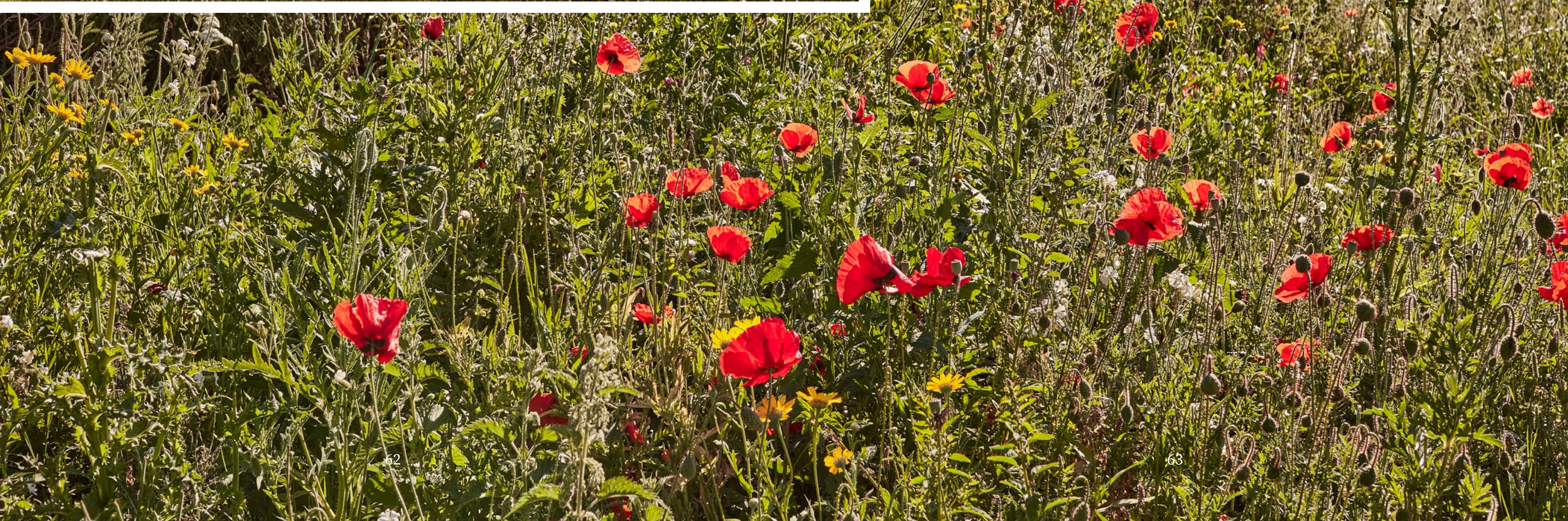
The Fabric of Nature

Peter Thwaites

When we started Rapture & Wright in 2004, our mission was to create a different sort of fabric company. One built upon the philosophy of creating beautiful fabrics and wallpapers, well made by hand in our workshop, while leaving the smallest possible imprint upon the environment. At the time, the weaving and printing industry was being savaged by offshoring. Companies were chasing profitability by manufacturing abroad and our strategy seemed out of step with the market.

Rapture & Wright are one of the few remaining studios in the UK to print by hand, our production methods are slow in comparison to high-speed industrial manufacture. Hand printing is hard physical work, but the results have a quality born of a thorough understanding of technique and the materials, subtle changes in pressure and constant communication between printers.







As a creative studio, inspiration for our designs comes from everywhere. A phrase in a book, a scrap of antique fabric reworked nature of course. I have to keep sketch books and scrap books of ideas, references, jottings, and articles torn out of newspapers and magazines. Our designs tend to develop over time, the route is rarely straight forward. More often than not, the initial idea for a design has undergone several changes of direction, additions, and edits until it finally reaches the point where we are happy to take the design to artwork.

From farming to manufacturing, chemical and engineering development has increased efficiency and lowered prices – but the cost to the environment was

never factored into this equation.

Our belief is that by adopting a more holistic view of our manufacturing process we are able to have an oversight of the entire production process, from the sourcing of the materials, through in house manufacture, to the disposal of waste and the impact upon and support for the community in which we work. Like many small Artisan businesses, we follow a path of progressive, incremental improvement and patient investment, the ultimate goal being to develop a production strategy that is not just sustainable but regenerative.

In 2010 we implemented a sustainability timeline for the business.







The development of our ground-breaking print studio in 2018 was a huge boost. Our investigations revealed that there were no existing methods readily available to treat print waste sustainably. Central to our sustainable production plans has been the development of an ecological print waste treatment system. The first print works in the country (possibly the world) to install such a system, it is designed specifically to break down our print waste within the natural environment, through a series of living ponds.

When designing the system, we worked on the age-old environmental principle that “in nature there is no waste – one organism’s waste is another’s food.” Therefore, we could utilise a wide range of Flora and Fauna (Bacteria, Microorganisms, invertebrates, fungi and plants,) to consume nutrients, in this case – our print waste.

By providing the correct balance and mixture of Flora and Fauna, we have also been able to create a wider habitat

to support creatures higher up the food chain such as fish, birds and mammals. The more complex the food web, the greater the efficiency, effectiveness and flexibility of the treatment system.

In addition to cleaning the wastewater, these living ponds and the surrounding area, have regenerated into new habitats for a diverse variety of indigenous wildlife from insects and butterflies to waterbirds and larger mammals.

The most recent addition to our sustainability plan is the installation of a 50Kw photo voltaic system with battery storage. This covers the entire power needs of our print manufacture and design studio.

We believe that this integration and contemporary adaptation of centuries old environmental science, with 21st century technology and habitat re-generation could be part of a blueprint for manufacturers around the world in the future.

raptureandwright.co.uk

ART in the Workplace: Is this the key to exceptional creativity?

Becky Turner

Picture this:

You've spent all day at work, sat at your desk staring at your screen, thinking about ways to overcome that niggling problem that's been brought your way. It needs a new, innovative solution, something you've not tried before, but the ideas just won't come to you – no matter how hard you direct your attention to problem solving. You leave the office feeling deflated, with the mounting pressure on your shoulders to come up with that golden nugget of an idea – but you just keep going round in the same uninspired circles.

When you get home, you put your dog on the lead, take a deep breath, and off you go for an evening stroll to unclutter your busy mind and settle into the evening. You become immersed in the natural world around you; the crunch of dirt under your feet, the sound of birds tweeting, the cold breath in your lungs and the warm evening sun on your face. You feel your mind wander freely away from the day you've had at work. And that's when it comes to you, that lightbulb moment, that crazy idea that might just be the perfect solution to your niggling problem.

When we really think about it, is it any wonder that when we remove ourselves from sterile, man-made environments and get outside, that we can access more creative ideas? Especially when we consider that the vast majority of our human evolution occurred when we lived harmoniously immersed in the natural world – this is literally where we developed our cognitive ability to creatively solve problems. But what specifically about being in, and around, nature helps us think creatively?



Attention Restoration Theory (ART), first described by Kaplan and Kaplan in 1989, offers one possible explanation for this phenomenon. The theory suggests that exposure to natural environments has a restorative effect on the mental fatigue we experience when our attention is being intentionally focused, for example, on finding a novel solution to a problem as aforementioned. According to Kaplan and Kaplan's theory, the four stages that enable us to achieve restorative outcomes are:

1. Clearing the mind

The stage where we passively detach ourselves mentally from the worries, troubles, and thoughts that are demanding our energy and attention.

Allowing them to fade further away from our attention, we are left with a clearer mind. (There is a reason someone might leave a heated argument on impulse to 'go for a walk and clear their head'!)

2. Recovery from mental fatigue

After a physical workout, our muscles are fatigued and we need recovery time to restore our energy. This is an accepted part of the exercise process. However, it is less widely accepted (or even considered!) that our minds also require recovery following a period of focused attention on a task – mentally, we're fatigued and connection with nature offers those restorative properties.

3. Soft Fascination

Once we have a clear, relaxed mind, the natural world around us engages us in passive, low-stimulation curiosity and attention. Different to 'hard' fascination where you're engaged in a stimulating activity, such as watching TV, soft fascination allows the mind to wander and introspect.

4. Reflection and Restoration

Through time spent in a natural environment, we experience an innate sense of relaxation, attention restoration and space for reflection. To achieve this, however, Kaplan and Kaplan detail certain prerequisites for the experience in the natural environment.

These four components are; **being away** – a psychological detachment from your day-to-day worries or thoughts; **fascination** – as with the 'soft fascination' previously discussed, this is the passive attention given to something in your environment, such as the sound of wind in the trees, or water flowing; **extent** – the quality of immersion and engagement experienced in the natural environment, ensuring you feel relaxed, comfortable and safe; **compatibility** – the sense of affinity and enjoyment towards your environment is critical for it to have restorative properties, it must be an environment that you, as an individual, choose to experience out of intrinsic motivation.

In relation to creativity, ART suggests that taking a mental break from focused, intensive attention we give a to a task and taking some time to experience nature offers restorative benefits to our capacity for attention. On one hand, following this recovery period we are better able to return our directed attention to the problem at hand with a 'clean slate', a fresh mind that feels energised. On the other hand, the stage of 'soft fascination' may enhance our capacity to realise novel solutions to persistent problems.

Whilst we can acknowledge that it may not be possible, or appropriate, to take a nature walk in the middle of the working day – particularly in more urban, city-centre, or industrial settings - we shouldn't discount our access to ART within our working environments. There are ways in which, through intentional integration of the principles of biophilic design, the physical workplace may enable us to integrate ART into the creative process. Consider providing enhanced views of

nature, either through window access or through visual imagery, incorporation of natural plants, creating distinct enclosed areas within the workplace that feel 'different' to the normal working environment – areas with a strong visual biophilic design affiliation, natural light and soundscapes, planting and a sense of space (which may be through imagery on walls) where possible. Whilst this is an artificial solution to the experience of nature, the principles of ART remain, and the restorative benefits accessible to those who need it.

So next time you're sat at your desk, staring at your screen, hoping that the creative solution will 'just come to you', don't wait until your evening walk for mental recovery and restoration – take yourself into a space where you can experience nature, whether that's lunch in the park, a stroll in the woods, or through integrative biophilic design in your workplace.

<https://www.claremontgi.com>



Bisca

A NATURAL STEP UP

A staircase should first and foremost get you from one floor to another in comfort – but with the right design and materials it can be a thing of real beauty.

Richard McLane

Until recently, the staircase was an aspect of the house that was often overlooked and underestimated. A plain, uninspiring timber staircase tends to remain unnoticed and is merely a way of moving between floors. Replacing it with a bespoke design, specifically created and made for the space it sits in, has the potential to completely transform a room. The entrance sets the tone as you enter a home, and the choice of materials play an enormously important part in the design.

A bespoke staircase can be the perfect way to bring the natural world into a home or commercial environment. Richard McLane, Design Director at Bisca, a bespoke staircase company, understands the value of sustainable and biophilic design, and creates stunning staircases that not only look beautiful but connect people with nature.

McLane believes that a staircase should be more than just a means of getting from one

floor to another. It should be a piece of art that creates a sense of harmony between people and their surroundings. By using sustainable materials and incorporating natural elements in a design Bisca creates staircases that are one-of-a-kind.

“Timeless design has been at the forefront of Bisca’s mission since its inception – creating beautiful staircases for interesting people. The vision is to design for a more sustainable future. We have done a lot of soul-searching as a team on how we can bring a more sustainable approach to a luxury product. It is an ongoing process of making small, incremental changes to the business and working closely with our trusted supplier base to reduce our overall environmental impact. The bespoke nature of our process can also lend itself to integrating found materials into our pieces, where legacy and provenance are important.”

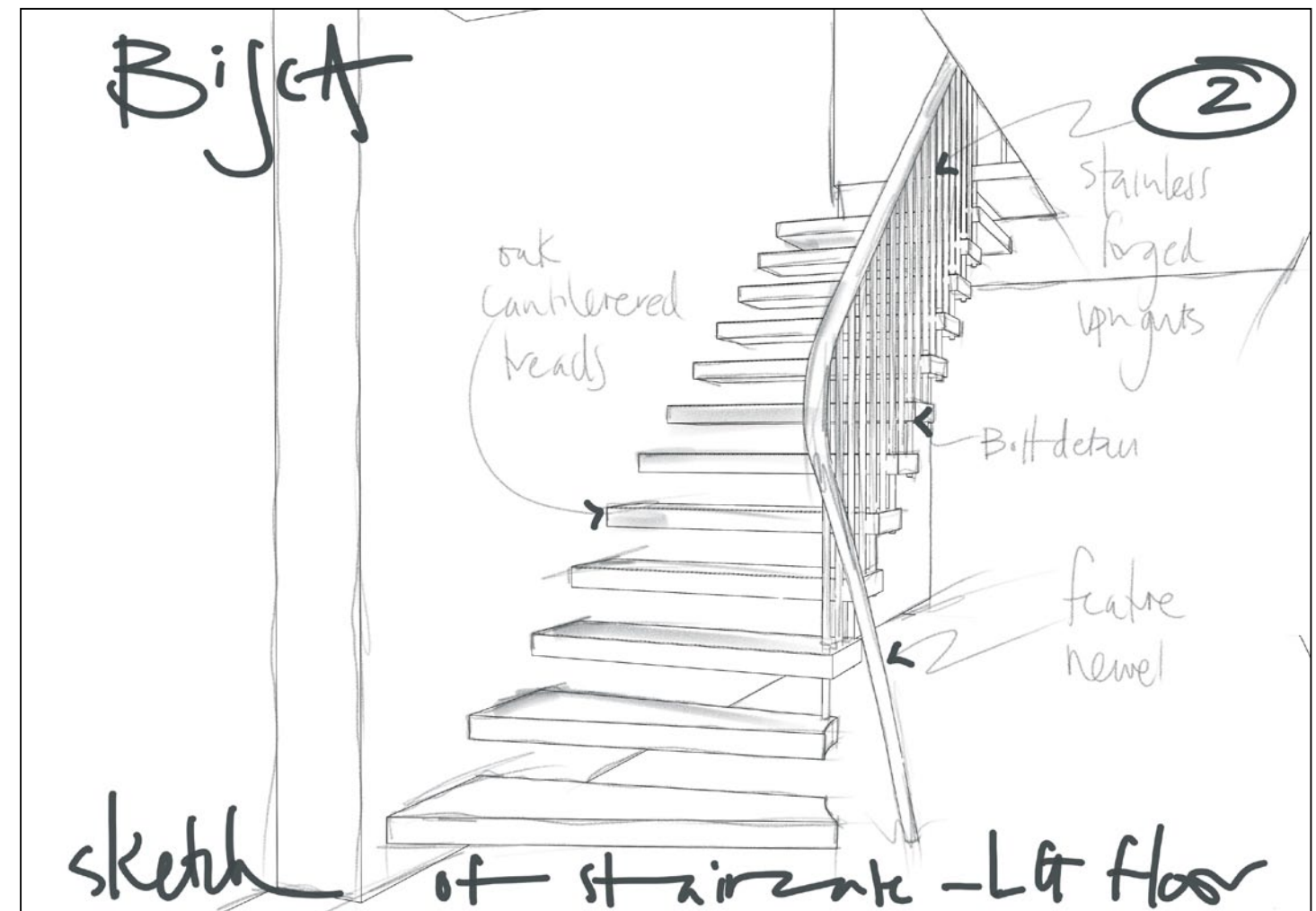
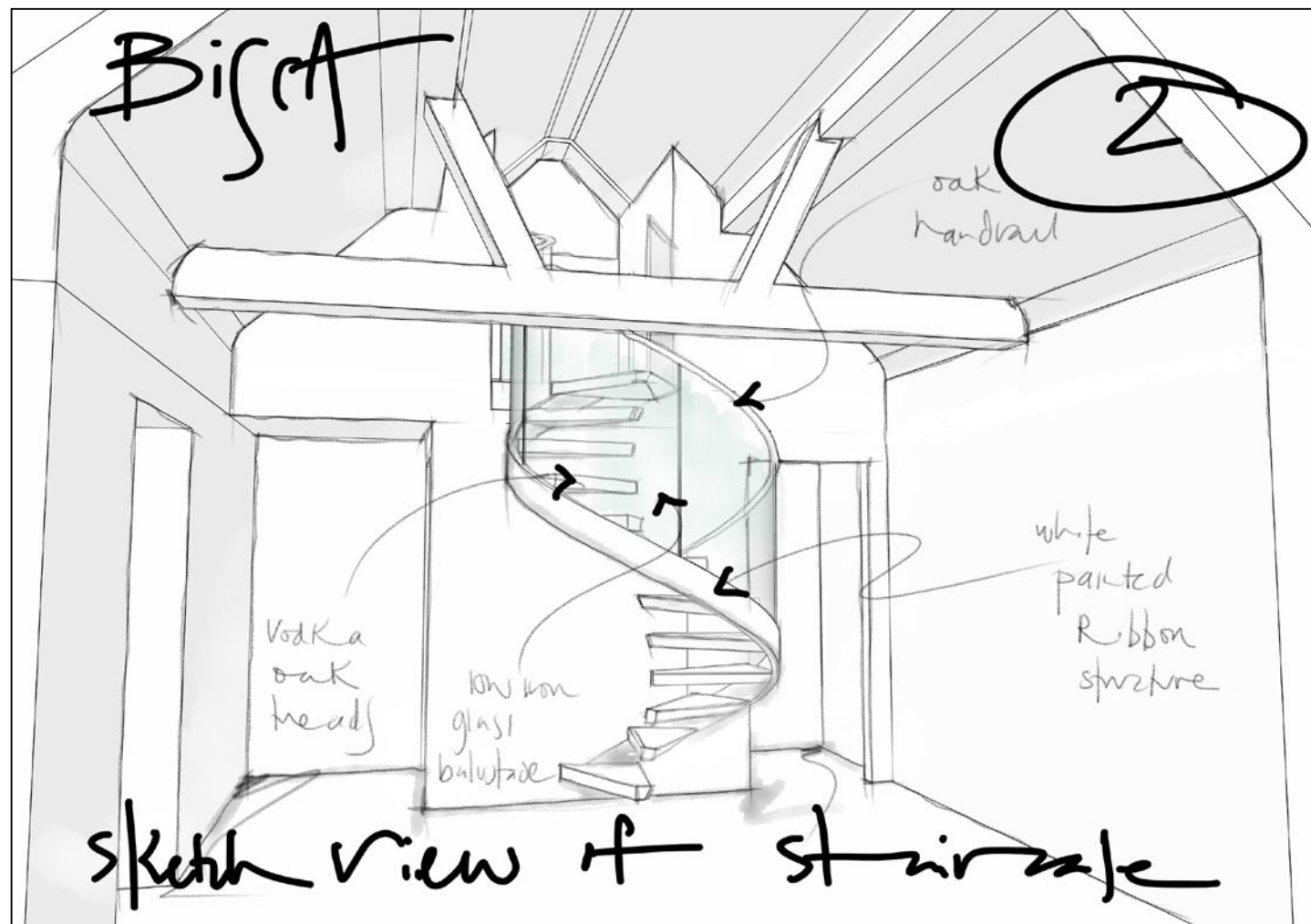
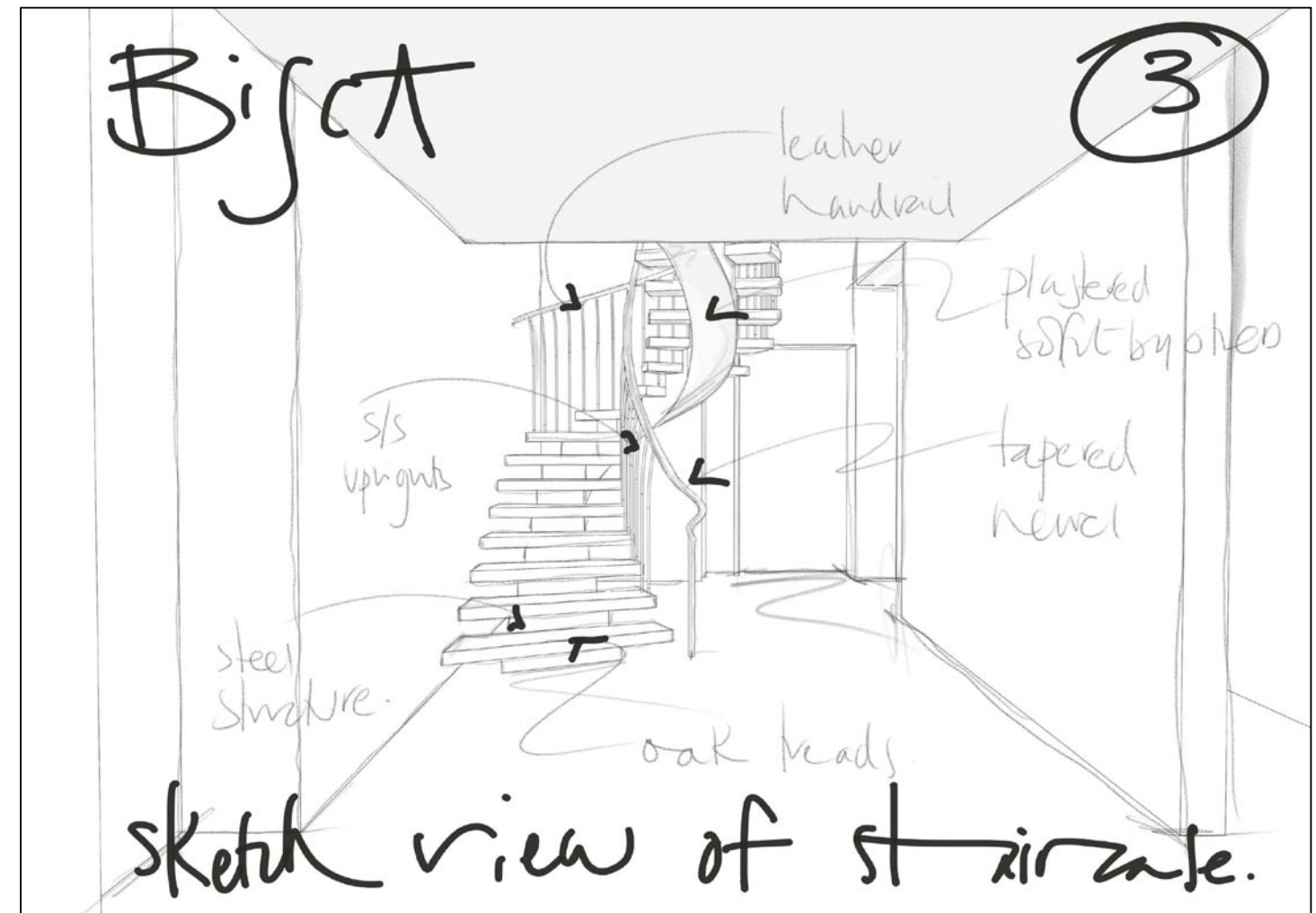
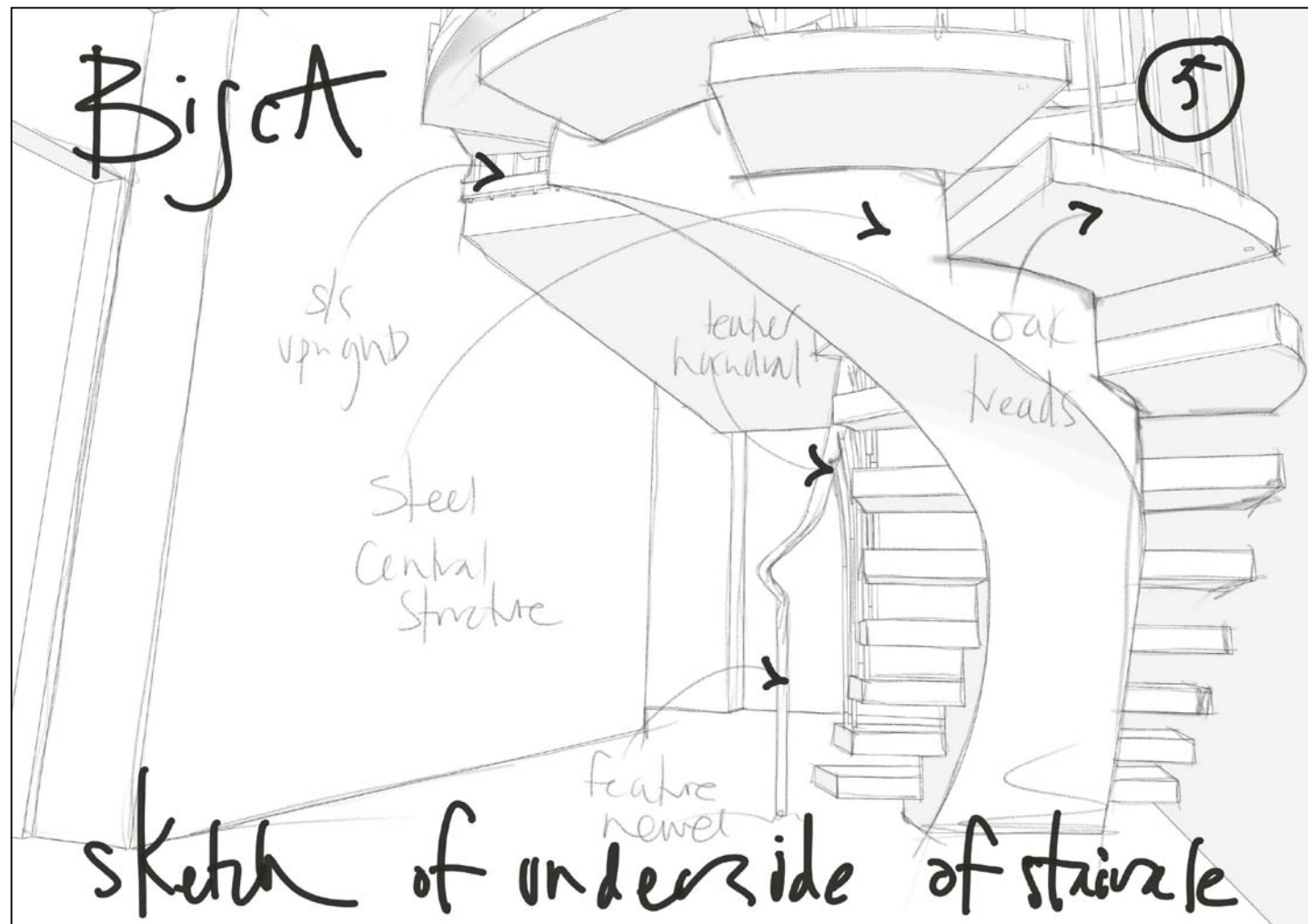
Richard McLane

Founder and Design Director, Bisca









The choice of materials plays an important part in design and Bisca individually procures all components for each bespoke design placing a strong emphasis on sourcing materials responsibly and locally. The company also works with reclaimed materials, which adds a sense of history and legacy to each project. By integrating reclaimed materials Bisca creates unique staircases that reflect the client's personality and the natural surroundings of the space.

One of Bisca's designs features a single

oak trunk approximately 400 mm in diameter as a spine for a staircase in a restaurant. A second staircase in the same venue has an oak branch as a handrail complete with branches and twigs to soften the balustrade of mild steel uprights handcrafted in Bisca's own workshop. In recent barn conversion chunky treads of Green Oak were stacked on top of one another in a helical fashion for a staircase from ground to first-floor, finished with a balustrade comprised of a leather handrail mounted on coppiced hazel uprights.



For projects where a rustic, aged look is desired, Green Oak can be an excellent material choice. Green Oak is often chosen for reasons of provenance or to fit with original timber, its natural patina helps to blur the boundaries between old and new. Green Oak has been used in several projects including barn conversions and extensions to period properties.

A farmhouse renovation features 150-year-old reclaimed Greenheart Timber, originally used as harbour props at Hartlepool Dock. The design was conceived around the dimension of the harbour props, cutting and shaping the treads which were cantilevered from the wall. Each piece of timber was surveyed and hand-selected for its character, complete with fissures and cracks which emphasised its previous role, with butterfly keys to maintain structural integrity. The open treads let maximum light into the hallway

and allow views of the countryside. The final element further strengthening the connection to the surrounding environment is a stone feature tread. The stone, originally part of the Baltic Chamber Arch demolished in 1996.

Another project involved repurposing oak from old vodka barrels to create a rustic-looking staircase that complements the heritage of a listed property. The staircase features hand-forged and blackened steel uprights and a leather handrail. The painted stringers support the treads without drawing attention away from the rustic design.

Biophilic design has a growing influence on staircase design. *"There is an increased demand for natural and reclaimed materials in the past five years, adds McLane, "nothing can replace the beauty of nature."*

www.bisca.co.uk



SOLIDWOOL

Solidwool is a small, forward-thinking company with a sensitive approach to how design and the materials we use impact our planet. Solidwool creates considered, sustainable design with an unbreakable link to nature - turning the way people have always worked with wool on its head.

Andy Guard
Creative Director

Using hardy British fleece from ancient breeds, we make all our products at our workshop in Devon. The result is Solidwool – a strong, unique composite material. Think fibreglass, but with wool.

Created with the ethos of taking the unwanted and turning it into something beautiful, Solidwool was started in 2013 with a vision to design without compromising our environment. Since 2020 Roger Oates Design has nurtured and developed the business, re-engineering the material and re-designing the Hembury Chair. Solidwool now contains twice the amount of wool, and half the volume of bio-resin, meaning this incredible composite has an even higher natural content.

The journey of Solidwool began when we heard stories about the iconic Lake District breed, the Herdwick. Their wool is a by-product of sheep farming. Unable to sell it, farmers were resorting to burning the wool as the value of the fleece was less than the cost to shear the sheep. Hearing these accounts, we set out to turn this unwanted fibre into sustainable design with purpose. To rewrite the story of not only the Herdwick but other undervalued breeds, and help this incredible, natural fibre find its value again.

When first seeing Solidwool it is hard not to be drawn in, the natural fibres of the fleece shine through. Strong and smooth to the touch yet at its heart, wool. Using wool as a base material led us to take a considered and sensitive approach to the other materials we use. We source our Ash legs from a local woodturner who uses sustainably gathered British wood, and the frames are made using recycled steel. With these elements, each material breathes life into the other, building a gentle connection between nature and our homes.











With the Herdwick, we produced a captivating dark grey composite, where the lighter guard hairs stand out on the surface. The beauty of this fleece led us to look for other British breeds whose wool is undervalued. After many trials we launched our Welsh Mountain composite with its striking marbled appearance, formed using the fleece from both the black and white Welsh Mountain sheep. As a company we are continually working on new projects, our latest reuses waste wool from Roger Oates Design to create a recycled Solidwool material with endless possibilities.

With two stunning wool composites, we have added to the Solidwool family launching a new Hembury Side Table and Stacking Hembury Chair, both conscientiously designed to showcase the raw beauty of our materials. Building on this, we were delighted to launch Solidwool in sheet form, offering a unique material for designers looking to invite organic textures and elements into commercial settings, workplaces and homes. With these new additions, we continue to work towards making our composite the most sustainable it can be, whilst celebrating our environment and materials through our passion for design.

Solidwool
www.solidwool.com



Design for the senses

Design is part of the soul of nanimarquina, this is what has allowed us to achieve our goal: to create products that transmit comfort and wellbeing to their consumers.

Nani Marquina, designer and founder, nanimarquina

Nature has long been a source of inspiration for designers who seek to capture the beauty and functionality of the natural world in their designs. The patterns, colours, and textures found in nature evoke a sense of harmony and balance, creating a connection between people and the environment. This connection is central to Spanish rug company nanimarquina, whose designs are rooted in the unique relationship between the natural material used and the craftsmanship of the maker to create a rug which speaks to the senses.

With a keen interest in the way design affects our behaviour, from a physical and emotional perspective, nanimarquina approaches the design process through observation, intuition, and discovery. There is a great emphasis on using traditional craftsmanship as a way to explore new techniques and materials and the company regularly collaborates with well-known designers to expand and widen its perspective. Oftentimes, a new creation is developed in close

collaboration with the master weavers, whose fount of knowledge is unmatched. In this way, innovative design is married with age-old tradition and techniques, preserving, and renewing the cultural heritage of the rug makers.

Through the use of natural materials which include wool, jute, nettle, and linen, nanimarquina's rugs celebrate the unique and individual beauty of nature. No two pieces are exactly the same, the natural variation adds a distinct character to each product. Natural materials have been used in design for centuries, and their popularity continue to grow as people become aware of the importance of wellbeing and sustainability. The company's sustainability strategies shape its global actions, making sure its treatment of people, use of materials, processes, and techniques are respectful to our world and the environment. By developing a measurement, deduction, and offset programme, actively choosing a net zero carbon future, Nanimarquina is one of the first rug companies in the world to hold Climate Neutral certification.





In 2022, nanimarquina introduced Re-Rug to its range, a circular collection created from the decision to use leftover wool generated by its suppliers. The initiative is the result of a long research process to develop a way to recover leftover wool scraps to create a new yarn suitable for weaving. Each Re-Rug uses 1kg/m² of reprocessed wool, thereby directly helping to reduce unmanaged waste, as well as reducing CO₂ emissions. The repurposed wool makes a unique-looking marbled yarn which is hand-loomed using a Dhurrie technique to make strong and durable rugs with a flat structure. Nani Marquina explained: *“The trademark of this collection is the intention to preserve the irregularity and tonal richness of leftover wool. This challenge led us to experiment with new processes through which we have managed to maintain multiple colours.*

Instead of trying to sort the heterogeneous piles of unclassifiable wools, we have chosen to accept them as they are and shred them. The result is a rug with a unique, vibrant marbling effect.”

Nanimarquina’s focus on creating a connection with the senses through textures, fibres and colours is further evident in its Wellbeing collection. Designed by Ilse Crawford for nanimarquina, the Wellbeing collection adheres to strict criteria established at the onset of the design process to use nothing but natural, sustainable, and local fibres spun by hand without the use of bleach or dyes. The collection, which includes rugs, cushions, a throw, and a tapestry, follow Crawford’s philosophy of creating design for all senses, engaging an emotional response as a route to wellbeing.









Textiles play an important part in creating sensory interiors. All products in the Wellbeing collection were designed to add warmth, comfort, and softness to a room with a focus on tactility, materiality, craft, and quality. Using traditional manufacturing techniques and crafted detailing, each piece is made by hand by artisans with whom nanimarquina has longstanding working relationships. All materials used have been sourced as close as possible to where the products are made – Afghan wool, nettle, hemp, jute, linen, Tussar silk, cork, wood, and raw cotton. By creating a conscious production, unexpected beauty was discovered in the way different fibres and loom techniques were applied to create something new – another example of how nature and natural materials play a starring role in the creativity process.

One of nanimarquina's best-selling rugs to date is Tres – a rug which combines fibres in varying thicknesses and skilfully blended tonal colours to create wonderful depth and texture in a highly distinctive but at the same time infinitely useable design. Tres is defined by three independently made pieces joined together resulting in a combination of colours and textures in one rug. The collection pays tribute to the art of weaving, with an appreciation of the beauty found in the smallest detail.



New models have been gradually added to the Tres family, including Tres Vegetal. Working closely with the skilled artisans who weave, knot, or tuft nanimarquina rugs by hand is a central part of design and product development for the company. The partnership between the craftspeople and the design team constantly unearths new ways of applying and adapting ancient rug making techniques and traditional material – a way of working Nani Marquina often refers to as ‘low-tech innovation’. Tres Vegetal is made in jute, a sustainable fibre which is lightweight yet resistant and 100% biodegradable. It flourishes in many tropical regions, including India where the rug is made.

Jute is one of the strongest vegetable fibres available, with natural insulating and antistatic properties, ideal for use in rug making. When hand spun, jute varies in thickness and structure and the irregularity of the fibre gives Tres Vegetal its beautifully textured appearance.

Sustainability is becoming an increasingly important consideration in design as more people become aware of the impact their purchasing decisions can have on the planet. By using natural materials, designers can create products that are not only visually appealing but also environmentally responsible.

nanimarquina.com



Workplace Trends

Conference: 18 October 2023, London & Online

The must-attend conference for workplace professionals who want to design and manage attractive, productive and healthy modern workplaces.

Join our friendly audience of around 150 (+ many more online) workplace occupiers, managers, consultants, HR, FM, and suppliers this 18 October!



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www.workplacetrends.co



THE SCIENCE BEHIND BIOPHILIC DESIGN

Creativity, Nature and Science

Nature gives us a creativity boost!

Dr Sally Augustin

The findings that follow are place-independent; they hold, and can be applied, whether people are at home, in a corporate workplace, at a co-working site, or somewhere else entirely. Also, always remember, that a lot of creative work, even tasks that have officially been delegated to a group, is actually done alone – the material in the next few paragraphs is relevant to both solo and group work areas. And spaces that support creativity are great areas for innovation, as well.

Research conducted to the highest standards by neuro-, cognitive, and social scientists, worldwide, makes it clear that people are most apt to think creatively in spaces that:

- Feature the colour green. Looking at the colour green has been tied to enhanced creative performance. Among all the greens available, those that are not very

saturated and relatively light are the best options. These sorts of greens, an example of which is a sage green with lots of white mixed into it, create the optimum atmosphere for knowledge work generally – one where people are calm and collected enough to focus on whatever they're endeavouring to accomplish, but not so relaxed that they fall asleep – and the use of a light colour on walls makes a space seem slightly larger than it does when a darker one is applied – that impression of extra size is generally a plus. How many of us, particularly at home, are toiling away in a space that seems overly large?

- Bring nature views front and centre. Whether out the window or on the wall/desktop (in a photo, artwork, etc.), nature views help us both mentally refresh and to think more creatively. Most people don't have too many

options or opportunities for changing the view outside their window, but if you'll be looking at nature art or photographs, you have lots more ability to customize your "view." Gazing at a meadow on gently rolling hills, with groups of trees and water in sight is best, but lots of pictures "work."

- Showcase a few in-space plants. Having a few indoor, potted plants in view as we think enhances our creative performance. Some of us need to exercise a little restraint with the plants, however. Too many ups the visual complexity, or visual clutter, of the space we're in to stress-inducing levels, which destroys our ability to think creatively. The key to plant-use success is to curate a set of two or so plants that are in view at any one time, with each of those plants being maybe a few feet tall, although smaller or slightly larger can work as well. The plants that will pay off, creativity-wise, are green and leafy, ones that have gently bending stems.
- Are suffused with natural light. Natural light, without glare, is a sort of magic elixir for human brains, upping our mental performance generally and our creative thinking in particular.
- Include warmer, dimmer light. When that natural light isn't available (it does get to be night time everywhere, eventually), relatively warmer and relatively dimmer lighting is likely to enhance our creative performance. The artificial light that you decide to use should always be the sort that might come from conventional light bulbs, the sort that you can buy at a regular store any day of the year – the bright red and orange and green and blue bulbs that

are sold for holiday decorations stress people when put into everyday use.

- Feature natural materials, such as wood grain and stone.
- Aren't cluttered. Moderate visual complexity and enhanced professional performance go hand-in-hand. But what is moderate visual complexity? It's using a well-managed set of colours and shapes in design elements, furniture, etc., and making sure that there seems to be some sort of apparent plan in how a space comes together. Was this definition helpful? Probably not. So here's a rule of thumb to use: Research has shown that residential interiors designed by Frank Lloyd Wright have moderate visual complexity, so keep them in mind as you design and de-clutter. And don't try to cheat the visual complexity gods! Gathering stuff up and putting it into a container, cabinet, drawer, etc., with transparent sides does nothing for you creativity-wise. You don't need to throw away things that are personally meaningful to you, you can rotate a few into view each month, putting the same number out of sight when you do.
- Don't scrimp on the curves. Seeing curves in the world around us, on the edges of furniture, in table shapes, etc. has been tied to enhanced creative performance. When you're selecting from multiple rug options or wall coverings, etc., choose the ones with the curlicues not those in which triangles, hexagons, etc., form their straight line shapes into designs.
- Cut out the distractions, audio, visual, and otherwise. Distractions=stress=>degraded creativity.

- Smell right. A space is more than what it looks like. Researchers have determined that people are more creative when they smell cinnamon-vanilla. You knew there was a good reason to buy that cinnamon bun, didn't you?
- Ventilate from the right direction. Intriguing studies have shown that when the air flowing from HVAC systems blows on the fronts of our bodies we think more creatively than when it hits our backs.
- Sound good. Studies link hearing the sounds of gently moving water to enhanced professional performance and all sorts of positive outcomes. Tune the soundtrack (via online options, for example) to quietly, quietly playing nature soundtrack backdrops, the sorts you might find online that feature burbling brooks, gently rustling leaves and grasses, calm bird songs, to encourage creative thinking.
- Provide options. When people feel that they have a comfortable level of control over their physical environment, all sorts of good things start to happen in our heads, one of which is thinking more creatively. "Options" means we have a couple of situation-reasonable choices to choose from, not scads of choices. For example, the lighting in a conference room should have 4 to 6 preset options that combine light colour and intensity and not rotary dials that people could potentially use to tune into any technically possible colour and intensity of light. Research has shown that sometimes groups get a burst of creativity from simply relocating from one space to another; all else being equal, change alone, and the ability to decide to make a change, can be a plus. Groups and individuals get a creativity boost if they have privacy when they want it, and having privacy when desired is a sort of environmental control. Privacy is different from being distraction free because privacy indicates a certain level of "say" in what situations people find themselves. A person, for example, may not be able to hear or see other people, and therefore be distraction free, but if other people have the power to determine if the first set of individuals can see or hear them, there is no privacy, and it's privacy that provides the big creativity pay off. Research has also linked being reclined with creative thinking, but reclining is clearly better at some stages of the creative process (e.g., those that don't require much laptop typing) than others. So, providing people with the option to recline is particularly desirable.
- Align with the task at hand. When people don't have the tools they feel they need to do whatever they've planned, they're stressed and stress destroys creativity. Research has also directly tied task-space design consistency with enhanced creativity. Having needed tools is consistent with having creative thoughts.
- Are awesome. Feeling awed makes us more creative, and we can be awed by a number of things – and the same thing can awe us multiple times. Big is definitely awesome, but just as awesome as something that is very large, such as the inside of a cathedral, is the use of hard to work materials or exquisite workmanship.





- Seem “well-proportioned.” Taller ceilings and larger spaces/rooms have been tied to more creative thinking, but don’t go too big. Ten foot ceilings are great, creativity-wise, but by the time ceilings get to be 12-feet tall they may be sending the signal “formal place” which can encourage people to act in, well, a more formal way, which can thwart creativity. We link very tall ceilings to formal locations because in the course of our lives, when we’ve experienced them, we’ve been in a “dignified” setting, a government or cultural site lobby, for example.
- Welcome walkers. A space facilitates walking when it gives people a place and a reason to walk – and when people get a move on they are likely to think more creatively. Walkways are possible indoors and out. Long hallways can become galleries, fit for a stroll, and alternate routes to refreshment hubs, etc., that allow for a few more steps can boost user creativity.
- Give outdoor access. Outdoor access, in cities, suburbs, and countrysides, has been tied to enhanced creative performance. Build in balconies and other outdoor spaces, even if you’re in the heart of the city, if you’d like to think even a little bit more creatively.
- Communicate nonverbally. One of the most powerful ways that a space can support creative thinking is by communicating to users of a space, either symbolically or via actual words that it is an area where creativity will be especially prized. Naming an area the “Creativity Zone,” for instance, does the

trick here, but so does using whatever creativity-linked symbols members of the group will recognize. If when a team is working creatively they say that they’re in “Blue Sky Mode,” for instance, art, or whatever, in spaces for creative thinking that feature clouds can be in order.

- Speak “nostalgia.” When nostalgic thoughts come to mind, people think more creatively – so get out those images of past camping trips and birthday parties!

Experiences that put us in a positive mood make it more likely we’ll think creatively and preferred experiences are apt to do just that. So, if you’re working on a novel or a clever explanation for the tax folks about why some expense really should lead to a tax deduction, make sure you’re smelling the scents you like to smell, looking at your favourite art, etc.

When we’re thinking about spaces where we’re more likely to think creatively, it’s important to keep in mind that space design all by itself doesn’t determine if we think creatively or not. Even if you do all the things noted above, you still won’t think creatively about quantum mechanics if you don’t actually know anything about quantum mechanics, for example.

There is so much neuroscience evidence to apply when developing creative spaces that it all couldn’t be presented here – and new research is being published on this topic all the time – look for future articles on this topic at The Space Doctors.

The Benefits of Woodgrain

As you ponder your re-design options keep the benefits of using natural materials – wood, stone, linen and cotton, etc. – in mind. Working natural materials into spaces is an important tenet of biophilic design. Particularly positive results ensue from using materials – such as copper and leather – that develop a patina over time, with biophilic design, showing that you’ve aged gracefully is definitely a plus.

The use of visible woodgrain has been studied in project after project, and it always gets good grades. Seeing wood grain (on floors, walls, furniture, etc.) has been tied to:

- Feeling less stressed (regardless of age, this works for both youngsters and oldsters and those in between) – even reducing our blood pressure. Oak office furniture can be a great stress-buster.
- Being in a better mood and feeling less mentally tired.
- Better mental performance, in general, and enhanced concentration and also creativity, in particular.
- When bedroom light bounces off a wood grain ceiling we fall asleep faster.
- Finding a space more appealing and also comfortable.

Humans love glossy surfaces, but glossy floors can be perceived as slippery by the not-sure-of-foot, especially if light hits them in a way that leads to glare.

For best results, use wood with a warm finish, such as oak.

... but do not use too much woodgrain. The benefits of seeing wood grain top out when about 45% of the visible surfaces (floors, walls, furniture, and elsewhere) feature visible wood grain.

Plan in Nature Sounds

There are oodles of benefits from hearing nature sounds as you live your life.

You may not have added a nature soundtrack already because you think they’re hard to find or expensive. Not so! Search “nature soundtracks” on your Internet browser of choice and you’ll find options that will please your ears and brain as well as your wallet.

Why is working in nature sounds worth the effort?

- They speed our recovery after we’re stressed and help us feel generally less tense and/or anxious. Our mental and physical wellbeing get a boost in the right direction.
- Hearing natural sounds revitalizes our brains after we’ve run down our stocks of mental energy doing something that’s brain energy intense such as focused thinking, such as knowledge-type work. Listening to nature sounds is good for our cognitive performance (and our creativity) in general.
- Nature sounds are also particularly good at helping block the sounds of people talking nearby.





Nature sounds should be played quietly, at barely perceptible volumes. The best sorts of natural sounds to add to a place are of gently moving water (think: burbling brook), peacefully singing birds, and quietly rustling leaves and grasses. No screechy parrots! No hurricane force winds or rains! No lions or tigers or bears growling!

If you're stressed turn on the birdsong. Ratcliffe confirms the value of nature soundtracks. Via a literature review she determined that "nature is broadly characterized by the sounds of birdsong, wind, and water, and these sounds can enhance positive perceptions of natural environments presented through visual means. Second, isolated from other sensory modalities these sounds are often, although not always, positively affectively appraised and perceived as restorative. Third, after stress and/or fatigue nature sounds and soundscapes can lead to subjectively and objectively improved mood and cognitive performance, as well as reductions in arousal. . . . not all nature sounds are regarded equally positively. . . . [for example] Bradley and Lang (2007) measured 167 sounds. . . . Some natural sounds, such as water and birds, scored relatively high on pleasure while others, such as growling, were rated as less pleasant. . . . Hedblom et al. (2014) observed that combinations of bird sounds were rated as more pleasant than the sounds of a single species."

Introduce Nature to your children

There was a recent study by Li and Sullivan who determined that when "Perceived childhood nature exposure was calculated as a cumulative score based on the perceived nature in residential surroundings from up to three childhood home locations weighted by duration of residence. . . . [that] Children who had lower levels of nature exposure grow up to exhibit a high tendency to miss subtle sensory stimuli (low registration), and this sensory processing pattern in turn is associated with lower levels of affinity to nature and creativity. . . . These findings offer implications for designing child-friendly cities that facilitate sensory explorations and cognitive development."

Dongying Li and William Sullivan. 2022. "Contact with Nature in Childhood and Sensory Characteristics in Adulthood." In Anjali Joseph, Lindsay McCunn, and Sharmin Kader (eds.) *Health In All Design: Promoting Health, Equity, Sustainability and Resilience Through Environmental Design; Conference Proceedings (53rd Annual Conference of The Environmental Design Research Association)*. Environmental Design Research Association; Washington, DC, <https://www.edra.org/page/publications>, p. 327.

Eleanor Ratcliffe. 2021. "Sound and Soundscape in Restorative Natural Environments: A Narrative Literature Review." *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 12, 570563, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.570563>

Natural Scenting

Cinnamon isn't just for Christmas! That cinnamon smell, for example, can be particularly handy to have around if creative thinking is important to you (and for most of us, it is, whether we realize it or not – have you tried to reason with a teenager recently, for instance). Rigorous research has indicated that even the faintest whiffs of a cinnamon-vanilla smell boost our creativity – and in the Western world, no smell is probably more linked to holiday good times with family and friends.

When you're scenting, at the end of the year or any time, subtlety is your friend. Too much and people feel manipulated (too too much can also make any of us feel sickened).

When you're fine-tuning how much scent there is in a room, start by adding the littlest bit – the effects noted here ensue when people don't consciously perceive a smell and when their nose have become bored with it, gone "nose-blind" to it. Ask a friend or more over and ask them what they think of "what you've done to the place." If people spontaneously talk about the scent you've added, reduce the amount present and have over another set of friends. When no one mentions a smell, ask people if they can identify the scent in your home; when only about half of those present can, you've hit the scent "sweet spot."

All the scent-thinking-behaviour links noted in this article have been derived from rigorous, scientific investigations and may or may not align with aromatherapy traditions.

Beyond cinnamon, other scents to consider include:

- "Good" smells in general, however, you and your comrades define them, boost mood.
- The scent of orange fruits makes us feel less anxious. So do floral odours such as jasmine and hyacinth and vanilla.
- The odours of lemon, mango, and lavender relax humans. A bonus: smelling lavender also boosts our trust in others nearby (well, that's usually a good thing).
- Smelling rosemary helps our memories work well (which again, is usually a good thing, but a less positive outcome when your feuding cousins all accept your invitation to holiday brunch). The odours of common garden sage and peppermint have the same effect on us.
- Our mental performance gets a boost when we smell lemon and if we're doing something that's mentally boring peppermint can be good to smell (if you send out holiday cards that you address by hand, sip peppermint tea).
- We sleep more efficiently (deeply) when we smell jasmine and our mental performance gets a corresponding boost for the next day.
- If you need to get some sort of physical work done, putting up those holiday decorations, for example, smell grapefruit, tangerine, peppermint, or eucalyptus. To keep working at that decorating more effectively, and to feel less tired when you stop, it's good to smell peppermint.

- We feel thinner when smelling lemon and heavier when smelling vanilla – set your party menu accordingly. A related effect: when we smell a scent we link to warmth (such as cedarwood) we eat fewer calories and when we smell an odour we link to coolness (such as eucalyptus) we eat more.
- Want to help people not smoke at your party: make it smell like peppermint.
- Green apple scent leads to a space seeming larger; if you have a tiny home some green apple air freshener is likely in order. So do odours that bring open spaces to mind, such as the smell of the seashore.

There are lots more tips, research and advice over on www.thespacedoctors.com



CREATIVITY AND PRODUCTIVITY

“The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking out new landscapes, but in having new eyes.”

Marcel Proust

“The most beautiful experience we can have is in the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion which stands at the cradle of true art and science.”

Einstein (in Nelson, 2018)

Professor Derek Clements-Croome

Health and wellbeing are the roots of human work productivity as they set our energy levels to carry out physical and mental work. In his article entitled ‘Groupthink’, Jonah Lehrer (*The New Yorker* Volume 87, January 30, 2012) says there are two types of brainstorming – a free-for-all exchange of ideas in a structured environment, and a random, unplanned debate. He believes only the latter really works. However, some people prefer to work alone – often introverts – and they can be very creative. Composers and writers work creatively often in a one-person setting. Engaging work is important to individuals, to companies and to the nation but with the advent of artificial intelligence many routine jobs will disappear but this will open up many more opportunities for more creative work to emerge and so now we need to think more about creativity, not just productivity¹.

The layout and arrangement of spaces in buildings play an important role in easing

communication between people. People like to be able to control and arrange their workplace in various interesting ways but diversity and connection with nature are important factors whether occupants have allocated workplaces or not. Diversity can be viewed in different ways. It may mean artwork on walls, views to the outside or colour tones – all are things that absorb one’s attention, even though they are transitory, and engage the human sensory system; however, it can also mean a certain amount of ‘creative clutter’ or untidiness if not arranged in an orderly way.

Building 20 at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) was replaced in 2004 by the Stata Center designed by Frank Gehry. Building 20 had a reputation for being one of the most innovative spaces because it fostered brainstorming that threw up many creative ideas even though the walls were thin, the roof leaked, and the building was boiling hot in the summer and freezing cold in the winter.



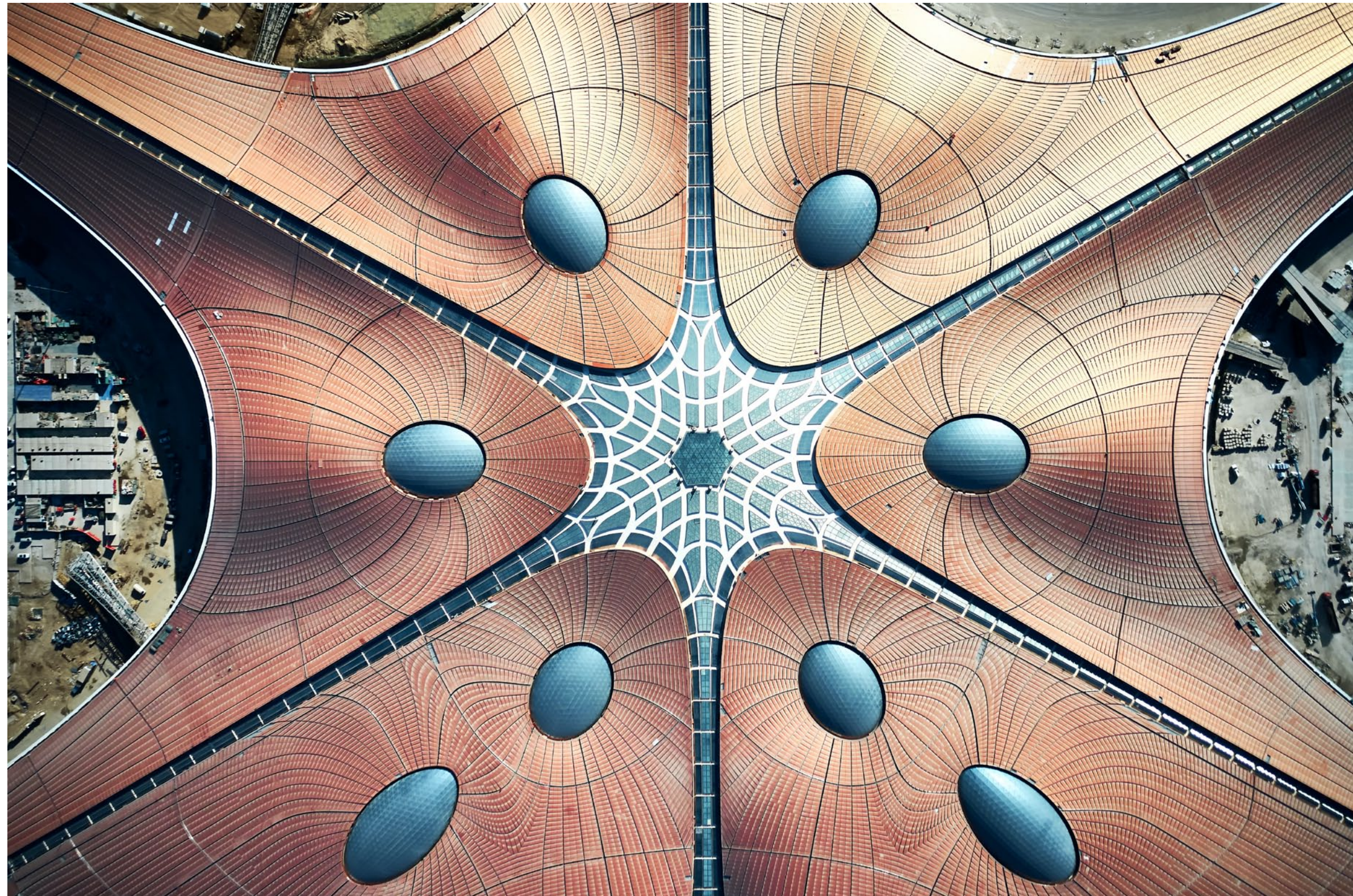
Over time it housed many famous names like Noam Chomsky and Amar Bose and the space encouraged people with different diverse backgrounds to intermix. 'Mingle space' is so important. I have not been able to ascertain if the modern Stata Center benefits the people who work there in the same way that Building 20 did. One can argue that you can be creative anywhere, but we also know that the built environment can attract people to work in attractive and engaging places. This can trigger the possibility of gathering a diverse working population in an organization. Lehrer points out that the late Steve Jobs created a similar environment with Pixar's headquarters 'so that Pixar's diverse staff of artists, writers, and computer scientists would run into each other more often.'

E.O. Wilson, in his book *The Origins of Creativity* (2017), believes creativity is sparked when there is interplay between those professing either arts, humanities or natural sciences, rather than keeping them separate, thus not only enhancing their bodies of knowledge but encouraging intermingling imaginative threads of thoughts with unusual and unexpected pathways of connectivity.

So again this is another kind of diversity and one which mixes people from different backgrounds. Today, however, occupants do not always have a prescribed workplace. In offices like the EDGE Deloitte building in Amsterdam everyone uses an app to plan their day in the office which includes selecting a location to sit. Planning space in buildings has become more fluid and flexible.

What stimulates the mind not only to create compositions in music, paintings, sculptures, architecture and poetry, but also to originate new ways of thinking out problems, whether theoretical or

practical? My candle holders at home are simply marrow bones that I have used in cooking; my dinner companions often say how creative that is but it was an idea that flashed across my mind in a completely unstructured way. This is an everyday happening but then I say to my friends, open the score of, say, Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni* and see real creativity on a



colossal scale. But what was going on in the minds of Mozart, Beethoven, Goethe, Michelangelo and the many geniuses who inspire us today? They were not always happy people – do we need a certain amount of chaos in the mind to trigger creativity? They seemed to have a tap to switch on to deliver a creative imaginative flow but sometimes it remained

stubbornly off, as happens when authors get 'writers block'. Hopefully we do not have to be sad and unhappy always to be creative. We do learn from each other, for example Bach learnt from Vivaldi in writing some of his music. Leonardo da Vinci could be creative in several spheres, spurred on by his very keen sense of focused observation.

A chapter by Gorb and Gorb in *Biomimetic Research for Architecture and Building Construction* ed. Jan Knippers et al., (2016) entitled 'Insect-Inspired Architecture: Insects and other Arthropods as a source for Creative Design and Architecture' shows

that biophilia and biomimetics can indeed motivate and generate creative ideas. It is as if nature loosens up the mind and takes us away from fixed ideas and the strictures of regulations to a more visionary state of mind.²



It is claimed that Einstein said, 'The true sign of intelligence is not knowledge but imagination.' Certainly, a free-ranging imagination and perhaps a deep curiosity about the world and ideas plus a sense of discovery or invention are needed to be creative. Everyday activities like dealing with vast amounts of fast information via emails for example do not promote creativity but rather tire out the mind. We need to begin to understand more about creativity. What is divergent, intuitive, and convergent thinking for example? How are people inspired? I believe ideas gestate in the sub-conscious in what is often referred to as an incubation period but at other times one gets a sudden Archimedean flash or eureka moment of inspiration.

Carson (2010) in her book *Your Creative Brain* argues for seven brain sets to maximize imagination, productivity and innovation.

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| Absorb | - opening up the mind to new ideas and experiences |
| Envision | - using imagination |
| Connect | - divergent thinking to generate multiple solutions |
| Reason | - the logical ordered mind |
| Evaluate | - judging the value of and testing ideas and concept |
| Transform | - creativity that can spring from negativity |
| Stream | - thoughts flow in a harmonious and systematic way |

Our knowledge about the brain and mind is increasing rapidly so that our understanding about how we think, how we concentrate and how we get distracted is becoming more evident. Consciousness is the interaction of the world and the

mind and so has remained elusive but the knowledge from neuro science is already bringing greater insights into what is happening in our minds when we think and act in various ways. Salutogenic environments are ones that help to stimulate the mind. The intention is to design for producing ideation or creative environments. Csikszentmihalyi in his 2004 TED lecture advocated the concept of 'flow', which refers to a person being fully immersed with energized focus on an activity. Understanding these issues will increase creativity and productivity.

Creative minds have always been with us but are now needed more than ever to meet the challenges of the world we live in today and those we will live in tomorrow.

An example of a space designed to nurture and encourage creativity is the Rawthmells Coffeehouse at the Royal Society of Arts in London, opened in 2018. The coffee-house culture is not new and, has been prevalent in Paris, Vienna and Budapest for centuries. The intention is to foster creative thinking and collaboration by providing spaces which make it easy to meet and share ideas. All-day dining, various patterns of spaces, changing wall displays on which one can write ideas, and a programme of events to stimulate participation are all features intended to make a vibrant space which has vitality. Spaces can energize people

This article is reprinted from *Designing Buildings for People, Sustainable Liveable Architecture*, (Crowood Press 2020) pp.63-67 by kind permission of the author Professor Derek Clements-Croome.

<https://derekcroome.com>

Notes

¹ Research that is measuring the environmental impact of nanomaterials is described in *Physics World Focus on Nanotechnology and Nanomaterials* (2019). “Transforming to new technologies presents several difficulties. Changing cultures an outlooks is not easy to bring about. Some of the difficulties include recruiting and continual upskilling and training staff to deal with the new methods. Budget constraints. Selecting the most appropriate technologies which give value disruption to a company during change. Negative perceptions and concern over technology illuminating jobs. These factors cause concern an can impede innovation.”

² Wood contains lignin, which absorbs solar radiation. By removing it, this leaves cellulose nanofibers which, when stretched, emit infrared light at all angles. The result is that more heat is emitted than absorbed, thus giving passive cooling. The vibration and stretching treatment of the fibres increases the strength and the toughness of the wood too. This research is by Liangbing Hu at the University of Maryland and a spin-off company, Inventwood would is commercialising the technology (Hu’s research is outlined in *Physics World*, August 2019, p.5.



Can Workplace Design Really Enhance Creativity?

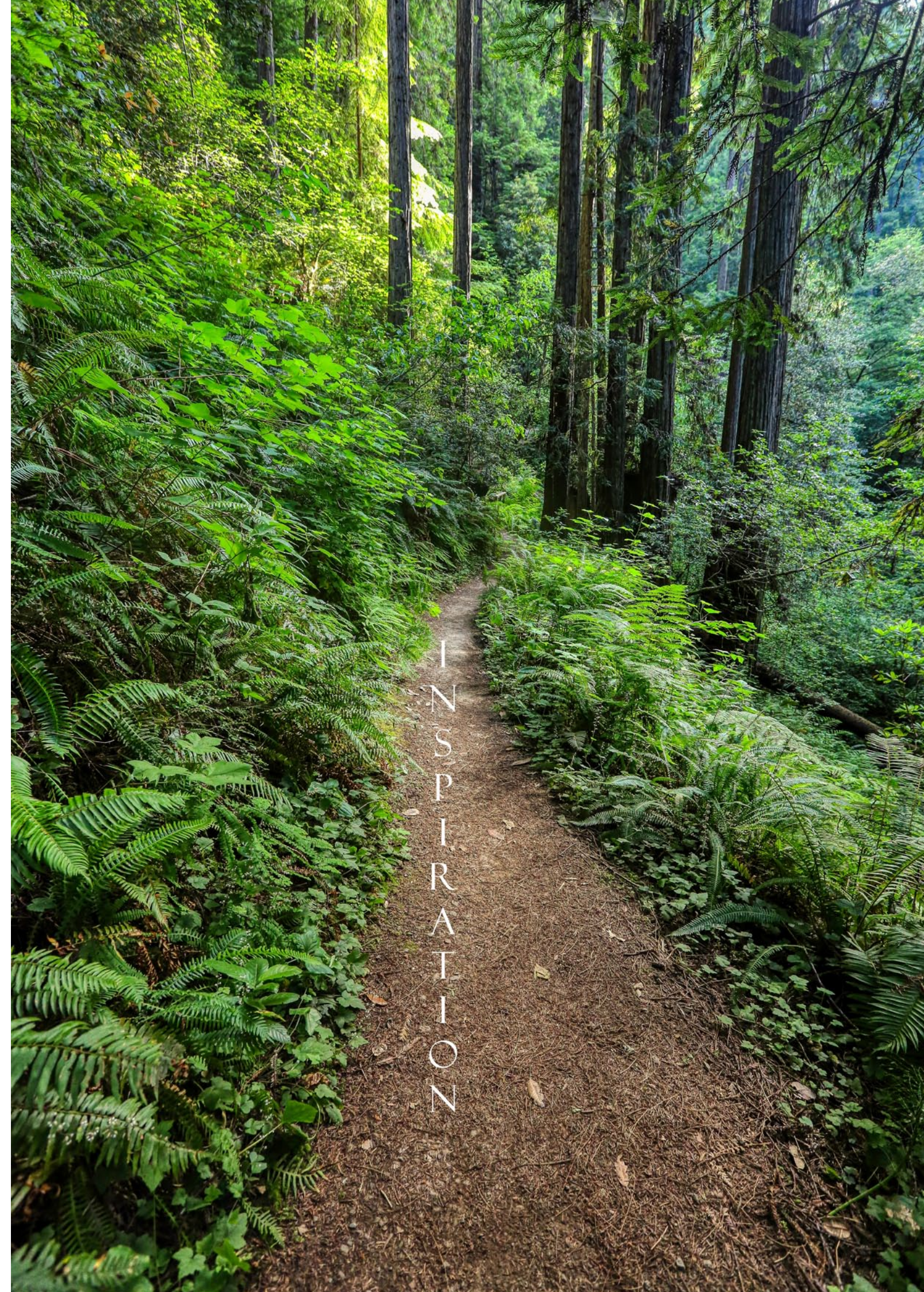
“Creativity is a hot topic with workplace designers. A stimulating, colourful, quirky, fun and buzzy office (sometimes including bean bags, slides and even trampolines) is often thought to contribute towards creativity and innovation. As such spaces set the tone for informal serendipitous interactions. However, studies show that the creative process not only involves people coming together to share and test ideas but requires long bouts of time in solitude thinking through and developing those ideas.”

Nigel Oseland, Workplace Unlimited

Consider where you are most creative or where you have your best ideas. It's no coincidence that Archimedes had his “eureka” moment in the bath. Research and my own workshops reveal that many people have their eureka moment in the shower. So, it's ironic that some people have their best idea in the shower but then rush to catch their train to the office. Other activities, such as walking the dog, jogging in the park or driving, are also frequently reported as ideal situations for inspiration. It may therefore be better to spend the morning in solitary non-sedentary activities to develop those original ideas before meeting with colleagues to share and validate them.

Some researchers believe that ideas come to us during lone activities because we are functioning in auto-mode, where we are predominantly focussed on a mundane, repetitive or routine task. Jonathan

Schooler, of the University of California, asked volunteers to complete a divergent thinking task before and after three exercises with Lego. Divergent thinking tasks are used to test creativity and a favoured exercise is the number of uses for a common household object. Schooler found that the participants came up with more imaginative uses for a house brick when they were conducting a mundane task (sorting Lego) rather than doing a complex task (building a Lego house) or doing nothing at all. Such researchers believe that working in auto-mode results in a transient dip in the frontal lobes. Ordinarily the frontal lobes work hard – problem solving, making decisions, memory, language and planning are just a few of their functions. The transient dip, or brain blinking, is linked to insight and ideas as it allows subconscious random brain activity to become conscious and focussed.



Daydreaming, or more accurately mind wandering, also allows us to archive information, moving it from short-term to long-term memory. Kalina Christoff, of the University of Columbia, used imaging to confirm that mind wandering evokes a unique mental state that allows opposing regions of the brain to work together. Mind wandering facilitates problem solving through insight and that spark of an idea. Unfortunately, daydreaming in the office is often considered unproductive. This may be one reason why people like their own office, so they can daydream without having to explain themselves. If seeking more innovation and enhanced creativity from colleagues, then provide more time and spaces for solitary activities and mind wandering.

Nature has also been found to improve creativity and problem solving. Evolutionary psychologists Rachel and Stephen Kaplan have promoted the benefits of biophilic design since the early 1990s with their introduction of Attention Restoration Theory (ART). They proposed that mental fatigue is reduced, whereas our ability to focus and concentrate are improved, with exposure to natural environments. The capacity of the brain to focus on a specific stimulus or task is limited and results in fatigue of “directed attention”. However, when exposed to nature people feel refreshed and replenished because nature provides a setting for “non-taxing involuntary attention” enabling our directed attention capacities to recover.

One of my favourite studies on the impact of nature is that of Atchly, Strayer & Atchly, of Kansas University. They compared performance on a series

of creativity tasks before and after 4-6 days of back-packing in the wilderness and found an amazing 50% increase in performance on their return. Heschong and colleagues conducted a study of a call centre, with relevant embedded objective performance metrics, and found that operatives with views out, access to daylight and greenery processed calls 6% to 12% faster than their colleagues in poorer spaces. For restoration and reenergising, the workplace should incorporate nature by bringing planting indoors or providing a semi-covered terrace or garden area. As taking time out and away from the desk also assists creativity, colleagues should be encouraged to take breaks by walking amongst nature.

New and original experiences can also improve creativity. Simone Ritter, at Radboud University, tested divergent thinking after participants were exposed to new experiences, created using virtual reality. In her study, those immersed in virtual simulations improved their scores on divergent thinking tests by 15%. Ritter proposed that humans develop “functional fixedness”, or stagnation, from repeated standard routines. To disrupt it we need unexpected experiences to unlock the synapses in other parts of the brain and open new neural pathways. New experiences might be travelling or bungee jumping, but it can also simply be taking a different route to work, sitting next to new people, or using a different approach to doing the same tasks. So, provide opportunity for moving around and build interest into the workplace with alternative routes, biophilic shapes and layouts, nooks and crannies, along with art and points of interest.

In summary, office designers tend to focus on designing for creativity and collaboration, the fun and funky bits of the workplace. Ideas are indeed generated when brainstorming and socialising with colleagues, but we also need to provide places that foster mind wandering and attention restoration. Introducing nature into the workplace through biophilic design is a more sensible starting point than bean bags and slides.

<https://workplaceunlimited.com>

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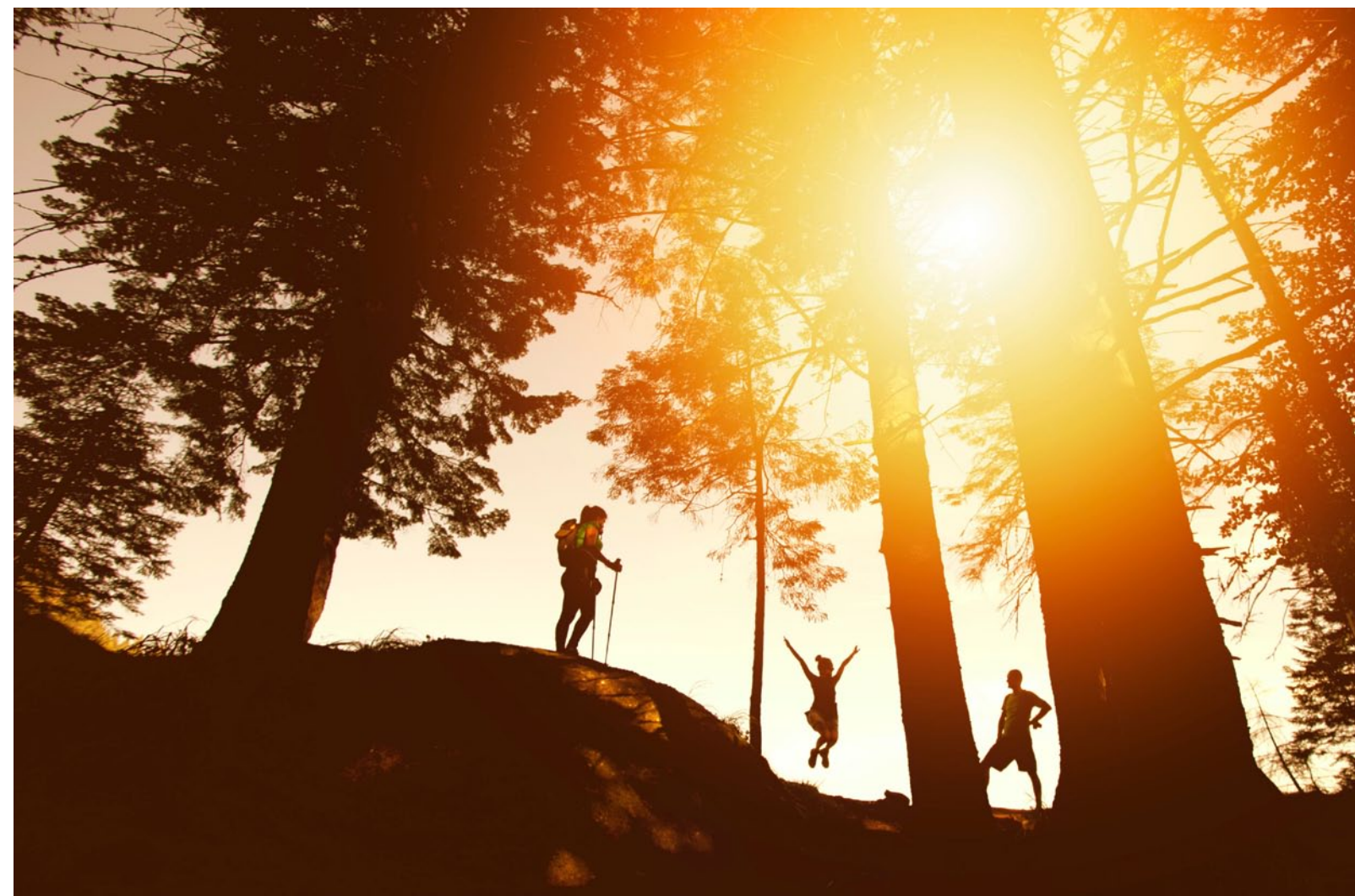
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ERGONOMICS, BIOPHILIA AND THE ARTIST

Guy Osmond

*“A treasured pen. A carefully adjusted easel.
A favourite chair. A room of one’s own.”*

The importance of the connection between an artist, their tools, and their environment has long been understood, even looking back to a time when little consideration was paid to physical wellbeing in other professions.

Instinctively it seems, creative individuals have sought to optimise their comfort and their ability to focus, long before ‘ergonomics’ came into being.

In a far more conscious way, biophilia, or the idea that humans have an innate connection to nature, is another concept that artists and writers have explored for centuries. From John Constable to William Morris, great artists have drawn their inspiration from landscapes and seascapes, plants and flowers, and of course from natural light, which for centuries they have sought to capture on canvas. And it’s hard to think of Wordsworth, for example, without imagining the poet wandering ‘lonely as a cloud’ under open skies, drawing his inspiration from nature.

Because the creative state is regarded as so fragile and easily blocked, close attention has been paid to every element that might support or hinder it. That elusive quality also goes some way to explaining our continued fascination with the preferences and processes of our great artists, which are often pored over and mythologised.

Paying attention to the physical, psychological, behavioural and environmental factors which impact productivity and wellbeing might be considered commonplace now, but our artists and writers were among the first to understand the power of nature and the impact of their tools and environments on their work. In that way, it could be argued that they were the pioneers of both ergonomics and biophilia.



Favourite tools, preferred postures

From a carpenter’s well-worn hammer to a trusty old laptop, the favourite tool is a familiar concept. We all self-select what is most comfortable from the options available to us, and when something feels just right, and brings pleasure and satisfaction in its use, you could describe it as ‘ergonomic’.

That might seem an unusual word to apply to the tiny table at Jane Austen’s Hampshire home on which she placed her sloping writer’s desk, or the tired old wingback chair in Roald Dahl’s famous writing shed, complete with the hole he cut in it to ease his back pain from an old war injury, and the writing board he placed over his knees.

These, and many other artists’ preferred set-ups, might not look comfortable to most people, and certainly wouldn’t qualify as ‘designed with ergonomics in mind’, but it’s worth remembering that

even a fixed chair can be right for certain individuals, especially if those individuals are regularly changing posture and getting up and moving about. Perhaps that’s why long walks and pacing about the room are also activities we associate with artists and writers?

American journalist and novelist Mary Heaton Vorse famously said that “The art of writing is the art of applying the seat of the pants to the seat of the chair”, but there are many for whom that wasn’t the case. Ernest Hemmingway, Winston Churchill, Lewis Carroll and Charles Dickens all, reportedly, preferred to write standing up. Marcel Proust wrote lying down in his famous brass bed, and Truman Capote described himself as a “completely horizontal author.”

From shifting postures to customising chairs and desks, writers have long been known for experimenting with tools and spaces to find what is comfortable and conducive to good work.

A room of one's own? Finding the right creative environment

Virginia Woolf concluded that a woman must have money and a room of her own to write. But JK Rowling had neither, famously penning the first of her blockbuster Harry Potter series in an Edinburgh café. The fact that both these details are common knowledge points to the attention paid, both by artists and those around them, to the environments they choose to create their work in.

While, for some, silence and solitude are prerequisites for creativity, there are also those who crave the presence if not the company of others, perhaps seeking out a café, a library, museum, or even a train.

The desire to be 'alone together', like toddlers playing companionably alongside, but not with, each other is a preferred practice we're becoming more aware of in the contemporary world of work. We're seeing more people forgo homeworking and returning to the office, finding themselves more content, even more productive, with other warm bodies in the room – even if a quick hello is the only interaction which passes between them.



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Artists and writers have also been known for incorporating natural elements into their workspaces to promote creativity and wellbeing. Virginia Woolf, for example, chose Monk's House, her home in East Sussex, for its garden, and for 22 years wrote most of her novels in the writing lodge tucked into the corner of the orchard. It was also an important source of inspiration and solace to her in periods of illness and depression.

For painters, natural light – a key element of biophilic design – is most commonly the essential component of their work. Artists' studios are invariably flooded with light, and some opt to abandon four walls altogether, preferring to paint en plein air.

These include French Impressionist painter Claude Monet, whose beautiful garden at his home in Giverny, France, became the source of inspiration for many of his most famous paintings.

The close association between so many writers and artists and where they chose to work again points to their seemingly innate understanding that, to work effectively, the environment around you matters enormously.

Learning from the masters?

So, what can we take from all these luminaries about how we can optimise ergonomics and biophilia to boost creativity?

In truth, not all that much. Ask 1000 writers and painters about how they work best, and you will get 1000 different answers. What works for one, won't necessarily work for another, because the creative process is truly individual; just as in ergonomics, one size doesn't fit all.

While a ramshackle chair or a quirky old typewriter might have been the best choice in the past, contemporary creatives can at least benefit from modern ergonomics. In the long-running Guardian series Writers' Rooms, Sarah Waters even advised aspiring authors to "Make sure your desk and chair are set-up properly! Don't get RSI!"

When the discomfort and pain which may result from ill-fitting tools and furniture and awkward postures threatens to undermine your creativity, finding a comfortable work set-up is key. Here are some good rules of thumb.

1. Get a comfortable work set-up. If you're at a desk working on a screen, ensure

the seat, desktop and screen are at the correct height for you, and you must have a separate keyboard and mouse.

2. When painting or drawing, invest in an adjustable easel or drafting table or drawing board, with a height adjustable stool – saddle stools on wheels where you have the option to sit, stand or perch are a good option.
3. Get moving – changing from sitting to standing for some tasks and taking regular breaks to walk and move can help protect the body and give the mind a rest.
4. Tap into biophilia – invest in plants, even fake ones, murals or large photos of natural scenes. Pick colours, textures and materials from nature. Choose spaces with plenty of natural light and ideally views out onto something green (or the sea!). And when you can, get to a park or garden for a walk.

The fact is, even with the perfect set-up, you can never guarantee inspiration will strike. But, by creating a comfortable and energising environment, you can at least be sure that you'll be ready to seize it if it does.

<https://ergonomics.co.uk>

PLANTS

Timeless Art, Nature and Creativity ~ Floral design inspired by the Ancient World

“Unifying Nature, Mindfulness, Creativity, and Environmental Sustainability.”

Dr. Patricia Baker

The Roman writer Pliny the Elder (1st AD) stated that the creation of floral crowns worn by the ancient Greeks and Romans not only served practical purposes, but was a play between art and nature. He explained his perspective in a story about a Greek painter and a floral crown weaver, where he says,

“For at first it was customary to make crowns from branches of trees. The chaplets were used at sacred contests as prizes. Later on, the custom arose of varying the colour by mixing flowers of different hues, in order to heighten the effect of perfumes and colours in turn. It began at Sicyon through the skill of Pausias, the painter, and of the garland-maker, Glycera, a lady with whom he was very much in love; when he copied her works in his paintings, she, to egg him on, varied her designs, and there was a duel between art and nature. Pictures of this kind painted by that famous artist are still extant, in particular the one called *Stephaneplocos* (flower weaver).” (*Natural History* Book 21. Section 3)

Ancient literature, art, and archaeological remains, particularly found in the Roman empire, provide further support for this appreciation. The Romans created crowns, wreaths, and garlands out of greenery, flowers, fruit, and vines. These objects were worn and used to decorate various venues for social, religious, political, and military celebrations.

Although depictions of floral decorations are ubiquitous throughout the Roman empire, they have received limited attention in modern scholarship. As a former professor of Greco-Roman history and archaeology with research expertise in medicine, health, and gardens, I noted this omission because I am also a floral designer.

To fill this gap, I explored how the designs were created, what flowers and greens were used in them, and questioned the significance they held. I was also curious if designed flowers were extensions of the Roman appreciation of nature. Aside from investigating ancient literature and art to answer these questions, I also recreated ancient crown, wreath, and garland designs as an experimental archaeological project.

The Romans not only appreciated nature for its beauty but all for its effects on their mental and physical wellness. Beautiful, natural settings with fresh air, moving water, plants, and trees were believed to be beneficial for their bodies and minds. To enhance their wellbeing, they brought nature into their dwellings with gardens, images of nature, and with floral decorations. When I recreated Roman crowns, I found a similar sense of serenity and focus the Romans described about their experiences in salubrious spaces.

Rather than limiting my research and floral design recreations to academic circles, I decided to share what I had learnt with a wide audience because the information is beneficial for both environmental and human wellness. I offered [workshops](#) creating Roman floral crowns in 2019 and 2020.¹ The participants were always fully engaged, excited to learn about the topic, and made beautiful designs with natural materials. Moreover, they always became quiet and focused on their projects as the workshops progressed. They left the events happy and calm.

Out of this experience, I decided to start my own business, *Pax in Natura* which means peace in nature in Latin.² I chose the Latin title because it joins my historical research with my floral work. My aims are to both teach and create historically inspired and sustainable floral designs that promote environmental stewardship and a mindfulness practice. Hence, my motto is, *to use my imagination and historical knowledge to share the natural world and create wellbeing for others and the environment*.

Working with flowers is a positive experience, but the modern floral industry is not [environmentally sound](#).³ Therefore, the historical knowledge of ancient methods can help reverse current practices and contribute to sustainable floristry. Like the Romans, I use locally sourced, seasonal flowers and biodegradable mechanics in my work and workshops. I do not use modern floral sundries, such as plastic based floral foams, tapes, toxic glues, and sprays because of the environmental harm they can cause. With a reverence for sustainable practices and nature, comes the added benefits of mental serenity.

Floral Images . . .



Roman Fresco. First AD
House of the Golden
Bracelet, Pompeii, Italy.



Roman Inspired floral design from the
house of the Golden Bracelet, Pompeii.
I used this \$2.00 charity shop garden vase
with locally sourced, seasonal California
flowers from my local farmers' market.
I was inspired by the fountain and the lush
greenery in the fresco to create this large
design. The flowers are held in place with
chicken wire that will be reused.



This is a reinterpretation of a Roman Floral Crown with a woven base made of palm fiber (raffia). Here, my nephew wears seasonal flowers with zinnias, sweet william, and gerber daisies from our local farmers market in San Carlos, California. The colors and design are based on descriptions of flower crowns in ancient literature, but the flowers are local and modern.



This holm oak crown is woven into a raffia base and is based on Roman military crowns. Holm Oak crowns were one of the highest honors a soldier could received. I used Holm Oak found near my former home in Whitstable, Kent, UK.



A dried Oak Crown. This is a photo of a woven crown made simply of oak branches. I used raffia ties at the ends to keep the branches together. This photo was taken when the crown had been left to dry for 6 months. I used oak from my in-law's tree in Nevada.

Business, psychological, and scientific studies are finding that those who work with natural materials tend to be happy when working. In 2012, the London guilds conducted a study on contentment in work and found that florists and gardeners were much happier with their careers than lawyers and bankers.⁴ They stated that this was because the designers found that their [work was meaningful](#).⁵ Their creations were appreciated by others and they could use their skills, imagination, and creativity daily. Further research has found that there is more to the meaningfulness floral and garden designers experience than simple work satisfaction.

According to a psychological examination undertaken at Rutgers University on the [reception of flowers as gifts](#) those who were given flowers often had an enhanced sense of wellbeing. To quote, “[t]he presence of flowers triggers happy emotions, heightens feelings of life satisfaction and affects social behavior in a positive manner far beyond what is normally believed.”⁶ In fact, the psychologists noted that flowers were useful in creating positive social connections.

Finally, on a physical level, a scientific examination made by [Christopher Lowry](#) and his team found that a microorganism, *Mycobacterium vaccae*, living in soil has the ability to enhance mental resilience to stress.⁷ Lowry's research initially met with skepticism, but [evidence](#) continues to come to light supporting the relationship between contact with the bacterium and its effects on mental wellness. Yet, can working with cut flowers offer the same experience as contact with soil?

I am unaware of any studies that consider whether the remains of the *Mycobacterium vaccae* organisms are found on flowers. Whether or not the bacteria survive on them or not, flowers offer us many sensory experiences that can uplift our mood and calm our surroundings with their light and strong scents, soft silky textures, and their array of colors and shapes to view.

This variety of sensory experiences can bring about the harmony one finds in a natural setting, a point noted in G. Herrigel's work *Zen in the Art of Flower Arrangement*. In this, she listed ten rules for working mindfully with flowers, all of which demonstrate an intimate relationship between humans and nature.⁸ Flowers also, as Herrigel notes, "testify to the eternal cycle of death and rebirth; they give solace and promise."⁹

Floral design is not a simple past-time, but an artistic endeavor that offers an immersive sensory experience that helps us commune with nature. Thus, I argue, floral designs that we wear and bring into our homes, such as the Roman recreations I love to make, give us *Pax in Natura*.

Dr. Patricia Baker
Founder of Pax in Natura

www.paxinnature.com

¹ <https://ics.sas.ac.uk/blog/making-roman-crowns-lessons-roman-floral-design-building-sustainable-floristry-today-part-ii>

² www.paxinnature.com

³ <https://www.paxinnature.com/post/roses-for-valentine-s-day-are-your-flowers-environmentally-harmful>

⁴ See also <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/jan/06/happiness-index-wellbeing-survey-uk-population-paul-dolan-happy-ever-after>

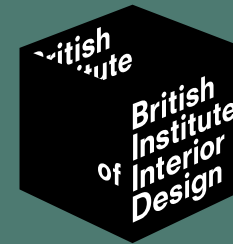
⁵ For the philosophy behind meaningful work see <https://www.philosophy2u.com/>

⁶ <https://safnow.org/aboutflowers/quick-links/health-benefits-research/emotional-impact-of-flowers-study/>

⁷ Lowry, C. A. et al., 2007. "Identification of an immune-responsive mesolimbocortical, serotonergic system: Potential role in regulation of emotional behavior," *Neuroscience* doi 10.1016/j.neuroscience.2007.01.067

⁸ Herrigel, Gustie L. 1958 (reprinted 2006). *Zen in the Art of Flower Arrangement*. London: Souvenir Press, pp. 65-66.

⁹ Ibid, pp. 75.



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The Monstera



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Monstera deliciosa

Monstera deliciosa aka the Swiss Cheese Plant has come back into fashion. Any follower of social media platforms will often see it flagged up on Mondays as Monstera Monday.

Native to the tropical forests of South Mexico it has been introduced and become invasive in other tropical areas like Hawaii, the Seychelles and Ascension Island. Of course we know it as a houseplant. It was very popular few decades ago but then went out of fashion. But since the craze for over-the-top houseplant collections – ‘how many plants can I get into this space?’ – it is back with a vengeance.

It is great as a statement piece as long as it is looked after and trimmed regularly so that it doesn't outgrow its space.

Monstera adansonii

Its relative, the *Monstera adansonii* aka the split leaf Philodendron is a little more conservative in its spreading/growing but it is just as attractive.

The Fruit

Something most of us don't know is that the *Monstera deliciosa* bears a large fruit (up to 25 cm long and 3-5 cm diameter). The fruit looks like a green ear of maize covered with hexagonal scales. It is edible and releases a sweet smell comparable to that of pineapples and bananas. It takes longer than a year for fruit to ripen and mature and it unlikely that fruit would grow on plants kept in our homes and in our climate.

Plants & Creativity

“Plants not only bring us joy, clean the air, stimulate our senses, act as noise absorption and so much more, they also inspire creativity.”

plants@work

Ian Drummond

I've been thinking about this month's theme of creativity and how fundamental it is to fulfilment and happiness in both life and work. And I don't mean creativity in its narrowest, artistic sense, but rather its broadest interpretation – possessing the ability to be inventive, resourceful, innovative and imaginative is not only an enormous asset in any part of life, but a key survival skill – there would have been no 'pivot' post-pandemic without it – so it only makes sense that we should do everything we can to cultivate this.

Designing a physical environment that encourages creativity is perhaps the most important and obvious starting point because research has shown that

getting this right can boost creativity by a staggering 45 percent and productivity by a similarly impressive 38 percent*.

The introduction of living, natural, breathing plants is the easiest and most effective way to create a healthy, biophilic environment to enhance creativity. Get this right and the benefits are unlimited – physically the air is cleaner, people feel healthier, less sick; plants also reduce stress, anxiety, depression and negativity. Sick Building Syndrome (SBS), first identified in the 1970s and later reported on by the World Health Organization in the 1980s, doesn't just apply to office environments, it can happen anywhere, including domestic homes.

The facts are compelling and I would encourage anyone to think about planting not only as part of the furniture, but as a way of creating an eco-environment that can contribute to the fundamental wellbeing of a building's occupants.

Designing the best biophilic environment

means having plants around you to feel the benefits in both air quality and an all-important view of nature – think of them as part of an overall room design. There are four main ways to position plants in spaces in a way that is both functional and stylish and they are Large Scale Floor Planting, Hanging, Living Walls and Desktop.



** Dr Craig Knight, University of Exeter, in association with Ian Drummond. The study took place in 2013 and demonstrated that a workspace enhanced with office plants can increase creativity by 45% and productivity by 38%.*

Desktop

Introducing plants on tables and desks is the most obvious and effective way of bringing them front and centre to eye level and so creating a sense of connection with nature – proximity is everything. If space is limited, it also means there is no need to have masses of plants to make a statement, it all comes down to how they are displayed and arranged. Choosing plants of the same colour or perhaps using the same container in different sizes will create a cohesive design. And while on the subject of containers, think about using natural materials here to increase the visual connection with nature – stone, ceramics and wood in an earthy palette are ideal. These principles apply equally to plants positioned

on shelves – interspersing a set of shelves with plants of different shapes and sizes softens an otherwise ‘hard’ environment.

Large Scale Floor Planting

This type of planting can serve several purposes – creating a ‘living sculpture’ focal point in a room or to separate and screen off different areas – whatever its function, the scale of the plants will optimise the benefits. If the planting is positioned against a wall, remember that walls painted in dark, matt colours, for example a deep blue or green, will make the textural elements of the plants stand out, particularly if the leaves are glossy. Ideal plants for this purpose would be *Monstera deliciosa* or *Ficus elastica*.



Office created at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show

Living Walls

This two-dimensional, vertical assembly of plants is a fabulously adventurous way of displaying houseplants and transforming otherwise flat and uninteresting internal walls. Appearing to be constructed entirely from plants, these walls create a connectivity with nature like nothing else. It is as if the plants themselves have escaped the confines of their planters and freed themselves to spread as if they were in their natural environment.

<https://www.plantsatwork.org.uk>
<https://www.iandrummond.design>



Hanging

If ceilings are high, make the most of this dead space and transform it into a healthy green environment by hanging trailing plants. Even a single specimen plant can be surprisingly effective in a small space, but larger scale spaces can take it to the next level with multiple planters hung at differing heights to create a jungle-like sense of immersion and abundance.

Ideal trailing plants include: *Rhipsalis baccifera*, *Tradescantia* and *Epipremum aureum*.





Flower Press Studio

The beauty of nature preserved in rainbows of awe

Rachel Parri & Keith Kralik
Pressed Flower Designers

1. Can you tell us where you work?

We work out of our house with each room assisting in some sort of way with our flower endeavours. We are in Denver, CO USA. We bought a home in the last affordable area of Denver in 2019. We are grateful. We xeriscaped the lawn and planted our own urban sanctuary. We still deal with all the city noise which is not that nice and hope to leave the city at some point to live in a smaller town.

Our workshop studio is not interesting. We make do with what we have. Our basement is where we press the flowers and design the pieces as well as frame everything. We store most of our supplies down there too. Our garage is used to cut and stain wood as well as make our wood presses. An upstairs bedroom is used to film our educational courses. It is a modge-podge of things but in an organized fashion. We really do not clutter so everything is organized.



2. What got you interested in creating images with flowers?

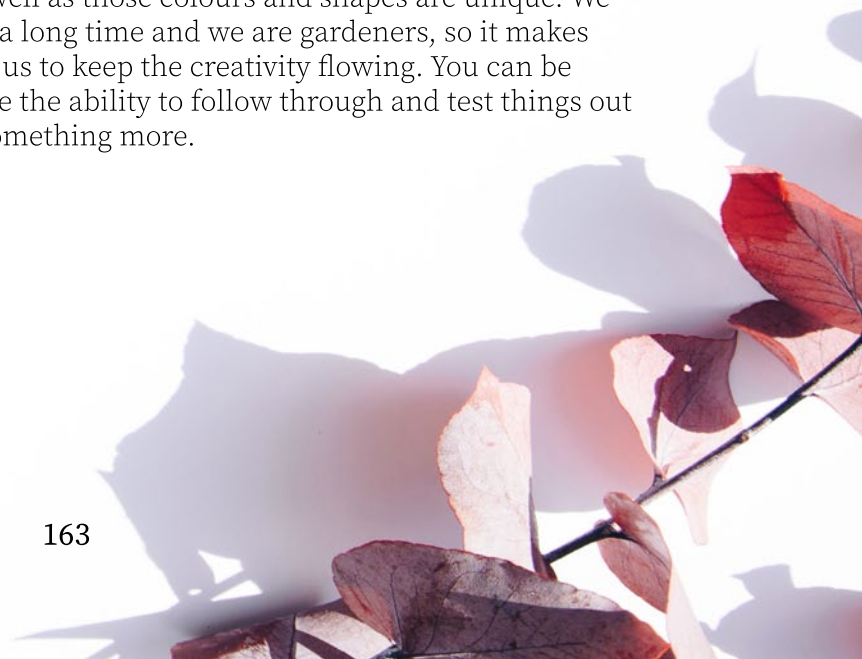
It just happened naturally. Our first season with our garden, we had poppies, calendula, sunflowers, and other natural wildflowers growing in our garden. So, we just started to press them and see how it all turned out. We probably saw pressed flower art on Instagram and were like, that's pretty. Let's give it a go. We made a handful of pieces that friends and family bought but this was not going to be sustainable. We were making the frames and doing everything and there was no way that was going to sustain 2 people. So, then we learned about preserving wedding bouquets through Instagram again. And this is where we thought we could possibly make a living.

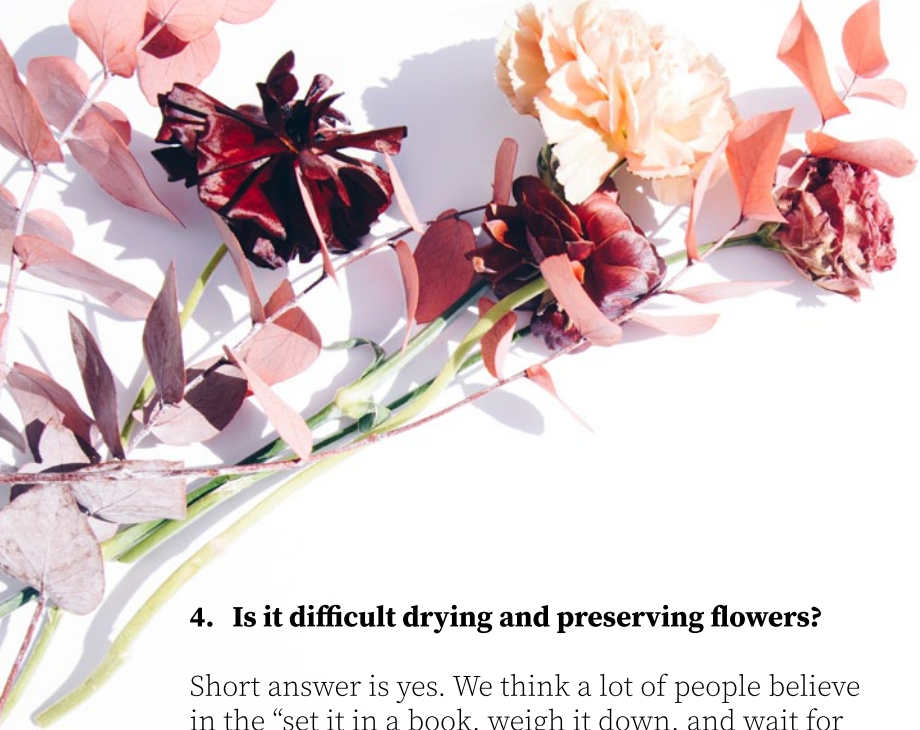
Fast forward, we learned A LOT from pressing bridal bouquets. Many bouquets have technical flowers in them, so you are always experimenting on different pressing techniques with the harder flowers like dahlias, sunflowers, peonies, etc. We would get free flowers from florists that were going to get thrown out so we could figure out how to preserve many varieties of flowers without screwing up the brides' flowers. It was a lot of trial and error.

In 2023, we realized we wanted to branch away from doing all bridal bouquets and do something more original, so we made a few pieces and again witnessed how people viewed our original design work and it was a sign to us to explore our own creativity more, so that is where we are today. Experimenting with different surface substrates, working with small flower farms to create beautiful art using the best blooms we can source from our farmer partners.

3. What is your inspiration?

Our inspiration comes from the flowers, their shapes, and their diversity. Some flowers have small seeds that we want to showcase, or curvy stems, or tiny veins through the petals, or layers of depth, or small unique shapes, etc. The flowers give inspiration. But it is also common for artists, including us, to get inspiration from keeping our eyes open. Sometimes it is from the internet, sometimes it is just from walking around the neighbourhood and seeing people's gardens. It could be from other artists in other mediums, like quilting. It is all about keeping your eyes and your headspace open. At the end of the day though, flowers and foliage give so much inspiration to us. We will be testing out fruits and vegetables soon as well as those colours and shapes are unique. We both worked in restaurants as servers for a long time and we are gardeners, so it makes sense that those two things have inspired us to keep the creativity flowing. You can be inspired by anything, but you have to have the ability to follow through and test things out to find out if that inspiration turns into something more.





4. Is it difficult drying and preserving flowers?

Short answer is yes. We think a lot of people believe in the “set it in a book, weigh it down, and wait for months” method, and although this can work for some variety of flowers, it will not work well for most. There is a correct time to press flowers. If moisture is hiding between petals and you try to press that, that flower will brown and rot. You cannot have moisture lying on the petals. There is significant time we spend on prepping the flowers before we put them into the press which we go over in our flower foundations course, which is not out yet as we are still editing it. But flower prep needs to happen with almost all flowers. From thinning out ranunculus to taking the little internal stems out of snapdragons and foxglove, to pressing whole sunflowers instead of deconstructing and then reconstructing them and understanding how flowers will come out of the press will really help you in your flower preservation. If you do not thin out flowers, you will most likely get a large clump of flower or foliage coming out of the press that does not look as neat and beautiful, so it is important to prep your piece how you want it to turn out before you enter it into a press.

Drying the flowers is a whole thing in itself. It is important to check daily on how the flowers are doing in the press. If you do not, you may have bad results. Little tweaks need to be made in the press. We check hundreds of flowers every day of the week. This is how we maintain good vibrancy.







5. Can you give us an example of how to dry something?

Poppies, flax, calendula, bachelor buttons, etc. Start with a flower that does not look technical; something that does not have too much going on. These are all pretty easy to press and dry and don't need much breaking down. For flax, we like to keep the stems on these. Drying just the flowers are tough because they are so thin so just keep it all together. If you do not have a press, just use a piece of cardboard, then lay a piece of chipboard (think cereal box), and about 8 pieces of paper (it does not matter if there is ink on it). Then place the the flax onto the paper, then cover it back up with more paper, a piece of chipboard, and another piece of cardboard. Then you can put some bricks on it, a cement paver, or other things that can give an even, distributed weight against the flower. This same thing can be done with poppies and bachelor buttons. For calendula, we like to clip the stems off but you can do either way. You can probably check on these flowers every other day instead of everyday. Replace any paper or chipboard or cardboard that is damp with new ones.

6. How do you start designing your images, do you know exactly how it will look, do you have a plan when you begin or is it organic?

For our deconstructed style, we do not design a pattern first or do anything by template. It is created little by little. If we tried to make a pattern for this style, it would change very early on as we start to glue. Flowers would get shifted around, moved by millimetres, and this would trigger the design to change, so we design as we glue, and glue as we design. We arrange flowers as we go and are constantly shifting them before we glue them. Things are constantly being altered and moved. Sometimes we will design a decent section of flowers, glue some down, but then take a bunch away to replace with other flowers of different colour or shape.

7. You have a course coming up, how can people find out more?

You can join our mailing list on our website. Anything we release will be sent to our subscribers.

Online Courses – Flower Press Studio. Our first course is the most important of them all. How to make a press, all materials needed to press flowers, breaking down 30 types of flowers, and the foundations that anyone will need to know as they press any flower. Many practices with one flower can be applied to other similar flowers.

8. Anything else you would like to add?

This business was the most organic thing we have done in our lives. There was no plan. We just went with some ideas and tried them out and will continue to try ideas. That is the only way to improve is to keep tinkering away. If you have an idea, start small and see how it feels to you. If it feels good, then proceed further.

<https://flowerpressstudio.com>

Biophilic Design shown to DOUBLE the value of a workplace

New report makes a strong business case for biophilic design in offices

PLP Labs, Joyce Chan-Schoof *Loughborough University,*
Professor Derek Clements-Croome *University of Reading, and Benholm Group*

‘Reap What You Sow: Valuing Workplaces that Grow Good Ideas’, is a new publication by PLP Labs and its academic and industry partners, explains the process of measuring and monetising the well-being and environmental value of biophilic design in offices. **This research helps designers and architects to make a business case for healthy and sustainable design decisions, which are often the first to suffer from value assessments.** A financial proxy applied to data collected through sensors, wearables and interviews demonstrates up to a 200% uplift in well-being and environmental

value in an office with greenery and views out

This report explains the process of measuring and monetising the well-being and environmental value of biophilia in architectural design. In corporate real estate, the environment impacts the bottom line. PLP’s study – run in collaboration with academics from Loughborough University, the University of Reading, and plant experts Benholm enables real estate clients to fairly evaluate the worth of investing in nature alongside other project costs.





The report is the culmination of a year-long research project between PLP Labs and their research partners in both academia and industry that explores how to attribute monetary value to well-being and environmental quality in workplace design.

Biophilic design can take the form of green walls, pot plants, skylights, water features or wood furniture. These features add value to the workplace; not only through improving air quality and aesthetics, but also tangibly impacting on employee health, creativity, productivity and satisfaction. Given employees are the largest cost for a business, the report explores to what extent biophilic design can save companies money by ensuring that staff are healthier and happier at work.

The report also highlights the importance of integrating biophilia into the architectural design process early and earmarking investment for it, so that the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing of the building can accommodate the plant life. Plants affect building conditions like humidity and air flow, therefore these conditions need to be accounted for.

Case Study

This eight-week pilot study was conducted in PLP Architecture's London studio, where employees worked in three different environments with varying degrees of views out and indoor greenery. The study used both qualitative and quantitative means to monitor the participants' well-being and environmental quality during each scenario. Qualitative methods included questionnaires and interviews. Quantitative data on air quality, heart rate, steps, sleep quality, noise level, and

EEG (brain waves) was collected through sensors and wearable technology.

A financial proxy was applied to the data collected from the post-occupancy evaluation, demonstrating the long-term value and potential of the well-being economy in monetary terms for stakeholders such as investors and developers.

Clear differences were found between the different degrees of biophilic workspace. The immersive scenario understandably had the highest capital investment, as this reported the highest monetary gains in terms of well-being and environmental value:

The immersive scenario was valued at approximately £28,288 and the typical scenario was valued at £23,440, this is stark compared to the £11,627 valuation of the existing space.

Measuring biophilic design in monetary terms enables designers and architects to make a business case for biophilic design, and enables investors, developers and occupiers to understand the long-term value and potential of the well-being economy. Not only this, the methodology used to measure the value of biophilic design can easily be translated to evaluate the value of other healthy and sustainable design choices.

Authors of the Report

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- Professor Derek Clements-Groome: Contributing author, University of Reading
- Savannah Willits: Editor, PLP Labs Team Lead

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British Council for Offices (BCO) financed an earlier pilot study on the use of wearables to collect meaningful data from office workers. This previous research informed the study on the measurement and value of biophilic design.

Groups Involved

Benholm Group

Benholm Group has proudly been delivering plant and floral products and services with care and creativity, for commercial clients across Scotland and the UK, for 30 years.

We work with some of the UK's most prominent interior designers and architects, helping bring their creative vision to life with the perfect plants and flowers for any space.

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PLP Labs

Is a design research collaborative operating at the intersection of technology, culture and space. PLP Labs investigate possibilities and define solutions for tomorrow's cities. They have collaborated with leading experts from around the world and across a wide spectrum of disciplines to offer an expanded range of knowledge-based services.

www.plplabs.com

Joyce Chan, Loughborough University

Joyce is a PhD Researcher at the Design School of Loughborough University. This case study is part of her doctoral field-study to develop a Valuing Biophilic Model to make a business case for human-centric design. She is an Architect with two decades of experience in sustainable design; She is currently the Sustainability Lead of the UK Parliament's Design Authority. She is passionate about bring research into practice.

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Professor Derek Clements-Croome

Professor Clements-Croome is an Emeritus Professor in the School of The Built Environment at the University of Reading in Architectural Engineering research. His projects focus on the impact of wearables on office workers, and health and mental wellbeing in the workplace. Professor Derek Clements-Croome has co-authored numerous pieces reports and guidance.

<https://derekcroome.com>





ENVIRONMENT PEOPLE PLANET

There is a podcast on www.journalofbiophilicdesign.com which accompanies this article (podcast is also available on Spotify, Audible, iTunes, and all RSS feeds)

'UnEarthed' Creativity

The seed of this article was an invitation from the Editor to write a piece on creativity whilst sitting at the small farm South of Bristol where I work every Friday. My friends and colleagues at Earthed (Al Kennedy, Katy Kent and Jeremy 'Jez' Le Fevre) and I reflected on how to explore this topic through some of the nature-based practices we have adopted over the last 8 months. We settled on a question around how working regularly in a nature-connected, bio-inspired way has shaped our creativity. Holding this inquiry in our minds we spread out around the land to spend some solo time to reflect; time to tune into the living system we sat within.

Jaime Blakeley-Glover with Katy Kent, Jeremy Le Fevre and Al Kennedy
(Earthed Community)

We recorded the conversation that took place when we reconvened in the yurt beneath a large Alder tree. It was a moment in time that was unique and somehow it doesn't feel right to reduce it to an analysis or summary of key themes. This normally inbuilt reductive tendency is something that I have intentionally resisted as I sit under the twin oak trees a week later, listening back to the conversation that happened 50 metres from this spot. My hope is that this article captures the essence and aliveness of our conversation as best it can in written word by bringing together observations and reflections from our four perspectives.

"Tuning into the cycles, tuning into the layers, different speeds; from different places and with different intensities".

When Al spoke these words he reflected on the natural cycles of the seasons, the slow deepening of winter and the quickening of spring. Nature's process of creativity is not the trap that many of us get drawn into so regularly in our work lives; an endless pursuit of trying to get from A to B. Al talks of the natural pace of change, a cycle of multiple phases with every stage of a cycle of life having its place. Nature creates change through this cycle every year and genuine creativity comes when we trust the cycle of change rather than trying to force it through a linear process. Listening to Al speak, Katy recalled Otto Scharmer's quote, "*letting go to let come*".





“Attenuating my presence to the moment and see what comes in that moment”.

Picking up on the theme of cycles, Jez saw the same cycles observed by Al as he stood next to the apple tree that sits in the small orchard by the yurt. He remembered the putrefying apple he saw in late 2022 and the apple blossom now there in its place in the spring sunshine. Jez witnessed the source of creativity that comes from the ability to be truly present in a moment, wholly tuned in to the living system that he was part of. Through the full experience of that moment, Jez experienced both an opening up to everything that surrounded him and a connection to his inner world. The ability to tap into a broader, deeper source of creativity. (to see a short film created in that moment: <https://vimeo.com/826831906>)

“Exploring the shadows, the darker places we sometimes try to avoid is where the real creativity can arise from”.

I hear myself speak these words as I reflected on where the real shifts in my creativity had come from during the last 8 months working at the farm. It links to the natural cycle that Al talked about, the deepening of winter a few months earlier and the real attention I paid to what was present in those cold, dark months. As a group, we often speak of the importance of attending to the ‘space in between’ transitions rather than the beginning and pre-defined end point. It was the inspiration that came from those months that helped me to explore the space in between my work across property, coaching, sustainability and the outdoors. Journeying into that shadow space ultimately led to integration; the natural winter activity that builds the nutrients for spring. For my work, it provided a grounding from which some of my most creative periods have emerged. I speak of how different this creativity feels, it comes from a very different place. It is ‘radical’, from the roots.



“I went down to the woods, the blue bells starting with their magic. As I sat amongst them a feeling came up in my stomach. I realised how it has shaped my creativity, I am in touch with something within myself which I wasn’t before”.

In her words, Katy captured what was happening in that moment in April. She explored the role working in nature has played in connecting with her intuition. She spoke of the ability to turn inwards, trust in her gut feeling and connect with her voice. Listening to it now, I hear how her experience of working in nature regularly has opened her up to the multiple layers of information, multiple perspectives of thinking, embodied feelings and the interrelation between those things; the ‘space in between’. In that space, she speaks of connecting with her own perspectives; her own voice, a deep trust in where that takes her own creativity.

As I sit under the oaks listening to our words, I notice the patterns and connections between them. There is no doubt that my attention has become increasingly drawn to connections and the flow of energy within them through my work here at the farm.

I see the importance of cycles. Nature has ‘created’ through adaptive cycles for millions of years. Each state in the cycle has its place, birth, early growth, mature growth, death and composting. Each stage creates an important shift in energy for the next. Jez reflected on the “composting” that has happened in all of us and the unexpected growth it has led to as we launch the first Earthed Residency. The creativity that happens through these cycles is not predesigned, it responds to what is present, it creates what is needed in that moment within its own environmental limits. A reminder of the ways our human ‘creativity’ is taking us beyond what we need and what the earth can sustain.

“The practice of paying attention and being available to receive these types of natural intelligence.”

In one of Al’s reflections and all our words, I hear an increased porosity between our inner and outer worlds, an ability to notice and integrate what we are seeing, hearing and feeling. I notice this ‘radical’ shift in where our creativity is coming from. This is not the “*heady creativity*”, Katy recalled experiencing in advertising agencies of ‘creative brainstorming’ meetings. The creativity we are speaking of is not someone you are or you are not. It is not an industry you either work within or without. It is ‘radical’ creativity that comes from our roots in ourselves and the land. It is a different way of knowing that emerges from connection, the integration of our inner and outer worlds. It is putting trust in the creative process that brings forth the “*exquisite*” blossom in spring and the “*delicious*” apples in autumn.



When we read some of the most moving poems ever written and are enchanted by remarkable paintings, we sometimes forget that these revered works of art or creativity come from that very same connection with nature and porosity between our inner and outer worlds. It is something that is there within all of us, something waiting to be given the space to emerge. Maybe the reason some of us don't feel 'creative' is because we are bounded by a linear process of A to B that sits in a box we aren't designed to work in?

As Katy concluded, ***"To create is really about life, to be in life. How can you fail to be inspired by the living environment around you ... a constantly evolving source of creativity inspiring on such a deeper level that it brings limitless, boundless creativity"***.

As the recording comes to an end I pause. I notice the qualities of the conversation I've heard; unrehearsed, unscripted, alive. It was our first experience of how different a recorded conversation can be when it is grounded in the moment, in nature. Little comes from the head, it brings our whole bodies and the living system in; it is 'radical' in its truest sense, from the roots. It reminds me of Satish Kumar, referring to the soul and the soil. As Jez said, sometimes conversations are like apples, *"just delicious"*.

If you want to listen to the whole conversation it can be found at
[<https://soundcloud.com/future-natural/creativity-and-the-earthed-experience>]

www.orientate.earth

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CLIMATE HAZE

“A couple of weeks ago, roughly a third of U.S. experienced a disturbing impact from the wildfires in Eastern Canada. In fact, it’s not over yet. And perhaps, it has just begun.”

Maureen Calamia

The firefly is banging on the door.

For several days the air quality alerts recommended that no one spend any considerable time outdoors at all.

It was shocking to see images of New York City. Cityscapes that are clearly visible, then obscured by the yellow haze overtaking the skies.

According to AirNow.gov (the website we were told to consult), several days that week, the air quality went from “unhealthy for sensitive types” to “hazardous” in the span of an hour. I found myself shifting my routine to take advantage of the better air quality in the earlier parts of the day. We were told to close windows and turn on air conditioners, even though the temperature did not yet warrant them.

The eerie quiet reminded me of the early Covid lockdown days. The school field

across the street from my house was empty. I had the beach all to myself.

The smell of smoke hung in the air all day long. And this, from wildfires five hundred miles away?

What is going on?

Record heat and drought are starting to be a constant weather pattern. And it’s now hitting areas completely unaccustomed to it.

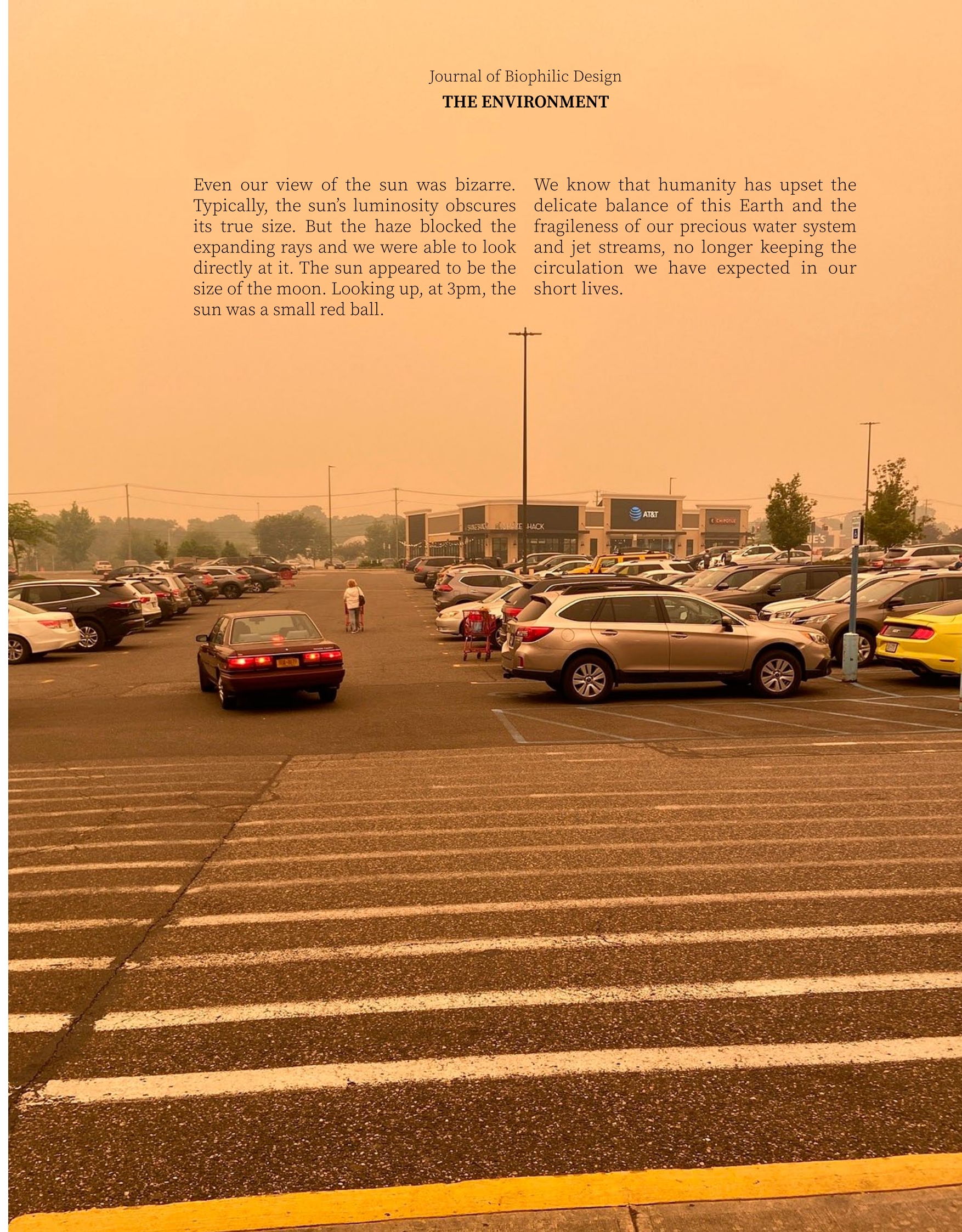
Although many areas of the world have experienced the impacts of climate change, some of us, lucky ones, have been oblivious to the direct experience of it. Yes, we have had some drought and the occasional stronger storm, but, for the most part, our daily lives have not changed.

But the post-apocalyptic images outside our windows were shocking.

Journal of Biophilic Design
THE ENVIRONMENT

Even our view of the sun was bizarre. Typically, the sun’s luminosity obscures its true size. But the haze blocked the expanding rays and we were able to look directly at it. The sun appeared to be the size of the moon. Looking up, at 3pm, the sun was a small red ball.

We know that humanity has upset the delicate balance of this Earth and the fragileness of our precious water system and jet streams, no longer keeping the circulation we have expected in our short lives.



We are in a time of crisis. But what will it take before we (collectively) shift our way of being?

As a student of metaphor, nothing unusual fails to stir deeper analysis into the psyche. I wondered about the parallels between the haze and our global situation.

Haze obscures our view so that we cannot see with clarity. So, what aren't we seeing, first on a personal, then collective level?

Although we can still breathe the air, we are inhaling poisons. What are we taking in that is toxic?

Hiding away, inside of our buildings, the haze pulls out of the natural world. Is this how we are doomed to live? In a manufactured space, separated from nature? Is the Earth seeking revenge? Or is she merely trying to get our attention?

The Earth speaks to us in many ways. This has become abundantly clear.

She speaks to us through direct encounters in nature. Encounters with a massive oak, a beaver, a rainbow-lit sky. She speaks to us collectively through storms, earthquakes, and other weather phenomena.

She also speaks to us, each one of us, in our dreams.

Last month, I awoke from a dream with these words coming out of my mouth, like the Oracle of Delphi: "The firefly is banging on the door."

Interesting. Shocking.

But it took me a month to understand what those words mean.

**Author, Creating Luminous Spaces
(Conari Press, 2018)**

<https://www.luminous-spaces.com/>

A Wild Curlew Egg

"This beautifully written, heartfelt connection to our wild planet is uplifting, moving and will inspire in you a sense of purpose to see, feel and protect our natural world."

Mary Colwell

Imagine being an egg, not the ones from a supermarket, a wild Curlew egg. You are one of 3 or 4 laid onto a simple scrape on the ground, which is nothing more than a patch of flattened vegetation. The roof of your home is the sky, the floor is the soil, the walls are made of grass that grows quickly in the April showers and sunshine. It closes you in and shields you from view. The warm, soft body of a parent bird settles gently over the top of you, keeping guard. There are many dangers here in this farmer's field – foxes, badgers, stoats, crows, ravens, dogs, cows, sheep, people, agricultural machinery, and increasingly in this climate-stressed world, unpredictable weather. You will need both love and luck on your side, because so much is against you surviving.

As the days go by the grass grows longer, giving a sense of security. The weather feels warmer and there are insects all around, crawling over you, fluttering and buzzing on their way. You develop quickly and hear their busyness as well as the soft

calls of a parent whistling and singing to you, turning the eggs over and around with a gentle, long, sensitive bill; you can hear them well through the thin shell between you and the wild, wide world. They talk to you of important things in a language only you understand. I wish I could listen in to these secret murmurings. What is it you need to know so young? You have not seen the light of day, yet still they speak to you. I like to imagine they are ancient stories, passed down the generations of Curlew ancestors who have nested here, tales of heroic survival in this place of your becoming. These gentle calls are beautiful, if I could fathom even a vestige of their wisdom, I know would understand this world far better.

The adults are always listening, keeping watch, wary of every sound and movement and only sleep occasionally. One soars above on fresh winds, scanning and searching, the other sits as still as a statue, but always alert. When it rains, they spread their wings a little

more, hunkering down, a living shield between you and the planet. You are the focus of their world.

And still the grass grows.

There have been close calls – times in the dead of night when danger has approached too close for comfort, creatures that see you as food, not the future. Foxes and badgers are the doyens of darkness, their senses attuned to a world without light. Many of your neighbours have fallen victim to their restless, hungry searching and you have heard the parents' cries of despair as precious offspring are devoured, leaving nothing in their wake but searing loss. But for now, they haven't found you.

When you emerge into the world, the day is bright. It was a difficult struggle to break free from the confines of the shell. You can feel the warmth dry your feathers, begin to know hunger for food and a yearning for exploration. Under the watchful gaze of a parent, you are safe. They constantly whistle and coo, sometimes they clack their long bills and make a throaty groan as you make your first, wobbly steps. Food is all around the nest, tiny insects, and you feed up and long to discover the world. But not yet, you are too small, too unsteady. At the slightest sign of danger you dive back under a wing, to crouch in the warmth and darkness and know that you are deeply cherished. But after a couple of days of tentative tottering, the urge to wander is too strong and you make your way into a world of green grass and sunshine. You should grow quickly. That tiny bill will lengthen, your muscles will harden, your feathers will change from

fluff to substance, and you will begin to make the first sweet notes of that famous, heart-stirring call. All the while your parents are on guard, shepherding you to the best places for food and safety.

The stars chart the sky, the sun and moon set the path. Somehow these constellations seep into your very being and they will guide you back to this place once you have fledged to finish growing and developing in another land, maybe far away. The stars locate you in this space and will, in time, bring you back to the family home.

The end comes unexpectedly and to a sound like nothing else you know. It is loud and roaring, a thundering in the distance. Your parents cry in alarm. Instincts as old as the earth have them screaming and dive-bombing at the approaching steel blades and huge wheels, but it is fast and hard and relentless. You squat down, as instinct tells you to do, to lie low and wait for whatever threatens to pass over or be chased away. But a bird is no match for a machine. The grass that once protected you has become a trap. The blades slice and slash, the desperate cries of adults are the last earthly thing you hear.

Another year of failure, of tenderness and hope destroyed. It is a story played out across the land, time and time again. The parents will return next year, and the year after, and the year after that. They will live to be around 30 years old, all being well, but they will be lucky to raise any chicks at all in a world that is no longer fit for ground-nesting birds like Curlews, other things have taken priority.



As agriculture has intensified and silage (grass stored to feed cattle) is cut multiple times from April onwards, danger comes from steel blades and machinery. In the warm, food-rich environments we have created from cities to farms, predators like foxes and crows do very well, growing in number over the last 50 years. The UK has the densest populations of these creatures in Europe. Birds of prey, too, have expanded as persecution has lessened and they pose further threats. Add to these the loss of suitable places to nest through development and forestry, and the world as seen through Curlew eyes looks like a land of killing fields, so much so they are disappearing in many parts of their range from Ireland to Russia. The tragedy of the particular is lost in big-picture, big-systems thinking. We consider outcomes and bottom lines, not gentleness and the fragility of life. One curlew family hardly registers in the grand scheme of things. The haunting, bubbling, evocative call of the Curlew is falling silent, and part of us dies with it.

Curlew conservation puts you in the heart of some of the biggest issues facing the natural world – intensive agriculture, forestry, climate change, development, the role of predators, the list goes on. All these bear down on this shy poet of the wild, placing them on the edge of survival. To tackle them needs legislation and incentivising payments, but it also requires not a small amount of kindness on behalf of those with power. A willingness to care, to hear the voiceless and not count the cost. If only kindness was linked with power in every aspect of life.

One word haunts my mind in my Curlew work – vulnerable – based on the Latin

vulnerare, to wound. To love Curlews is to be wounded, and that is difficult and painful. You become vulnerable to the hurt and the fear that surrounds a wild bird that has nothing to offer humanity other than song and emotion, and that doesn't seem to be enough.

It was the great American ecologist Aldo Leopold who said, "One of the penalties of an ecological education is that one lives alone in a world of wounds." Loving a vulnerable, disappearing bird makes you vulnerable, too. At times the heartbreak is too painful, it seems easier to walk away and to believe it can be taken care of by science or conservation organisations, that saving them is someone else's job. But I have learned I can't do that. True love never comes alone, to thrive it always requires the lover to be constant and consistent, and so as long as they hang on, so will I.

www.curlewaction.org

Chair – Curlew Recovery Partnership
England

www.curlewrecovery.org

Books:

John Muir – The Scotsman who saved America's wild places (Lion Hudson)

Curlew Moon (Harper Collins)

Beak, Tooth and Claw – Why we must live with predators (Harper Collins)

The Gathering Place – A winter pilgrimage through changing times (Bloomsbury)



WELLBEING



Relational Nature and Creativity

“Our connection to nature takes many different forms. Some of us commune with Nature by just walking through a forest, others of us, stop and listen, others of us go deeper still and see nature’s majesty and abundance and it then conduct creative inspiration. Our forest walker speaks a few words to us, but here lets nature show her fruits.”

Amanda Bond

Shifting my work as a therapist a few years ago, I moved into a deeper relational practice with nature. I had always advocated spending time in nature for wellbeing, but moved to immersing myself in new ways, and picking up on older ways too....

My grandmothers taught me sewing, knitting and crochet skills, as well as foraging for berries and other wild seasonal herbs and plants.

As a child and young adult, I dabbled, but now something within is drawing me closer, back into a deeper relationship with nature – and with that is emerging more creativity.

I communicate with plants and trees, not like you and I would converse, but through inspiration, intuition, feelings of welcome, (and sometimes not), messages and images through the imaginal sense. I forage for herbs to bake with, make medicine – tinctures, balms and salves, and more recently to make natural dyes, pigments and inks with. I ask permission from the plant, when I do so.

This practice in turn is sparking more ideas, and new creative projects, collaborating with others, always with nature as my guide.

Amanda Bond MA MBACP, Nature and Forest therapy Guide, Ecopsychologist
www.wildedgewalker.earth





ON NEURODIVERSITY, NATURE AND CREATIVITY

David O’Coimin

Neurodiversity is Nature. It is the natural variation in how the human brain perceives and processes the world.

Necessity is the mother of invention, and neuro-divergent people have more extreme points of need than our neurotypical cousins.

From NHS Cambridge University Hospital: People who are neurodiverse often think about and see the world differently, making them a huge asset to any team that wants to improve how they do things and deliver excellent patient care or services.

We are obsessed with simplicity. Black and white. Put it in a box. Give it a label. It is fair to say that simplifying is essential, to be able to function. There is so much going on, it helps to be able to make decisions. What is this? Is this good or bad? Should I be for or against? Will it hinder or help me? And so on.

While this is a necessary part of navigating an overwhelming world, with streams of information coming at us from all angles, it is important also to recognise its limitations, to acknowledge its lack of nuance, to appreciate that life is a spectrum. Far from black and white, it is millions of colours and levels of saturation. Even between black and white alone there are infinite steps.

The difficulty occurs in that today’s world has been designed around one type of brain – the type that performs adequately in a school, in a factory, in an office environment. But as with all averages, the one-size-fits-all approach misfits almost all, to some degree or another. Everyone is being hindered in one way or another. Some to extreme degrees.

Again, from Cambridge University, this time a research paper on Dyslexia: “We misunderstood people with dyslexia. They’re not disordered. They are specialised to explore the unknown. We urgently need to start nurturing this way of thinking to allow humanity to continue to adapt and solve key challenges.”

This time from the Google Project Neu: “Neurodiversity is a biological reality for humanity; like stars, no two minds are alike.

Psychology Today posits: “individuals with ADHD have a more intuitive cognitive style, which means that an individual unconsciously compares a current situation with situations that have happened in the past, generating a “gut reaction” for the potential outcome of a given course of action. This cognitive style is commonly seen among individuals who end up in creative careers.

Individuals with ADHD also demonstrate high levels of idea generation and elaboration.

All in all, by embracing the true nature

of our minds, and building a world and a culture of inclusivity, of appreciation and celebration of difference, we can generate the out-of-the-box thinking we need to get where we need to get to – within our lives, in our organisations and for our planet.

Our current systems are in conflict with Nature. We’ve recognised this in terms of Climate Change. Now we need to recognise that at the heart of this issue is our own rejection of our fundamental nature. We need to evolve past our base instincts of short-termism, fear and polarisation, to evolve our systems and rhetoric towards individuality, inclusivity and kindness. It’s the path to creating a sustainable future for us all, people, flora and fauna.

<https://nookpod.com>



What is “Feeling” Language of Biophilic Design?

“Exploring an intersection of Biophilic and Feng Shui design principles.”

Maureen K. Calamia

As a feng shui practitioner, I work with “feelings” all the time. And I bet you do as well, but you may not have the language around it like I do.

Feng shui is an intuitive art that has been practiced for thousands of years. It was built on the observation of nature, common sense, and gut instinct and was used to locate the optimal places for survival. But today, the primary goal is to enhance success in life. Feng shui is a *language of metaphor* that requires attention to the *feel of spaces*.

On the other hand, biophilic design was developed in reaction to our modern, technology-driven lives. It is based on research that shows access to nature and

natural elements decreases stress and improves our feeling of wellbeing.

How are they alike?

Through four millennia in China, feng shui has evolved into many different schools and branches. It absorbed the culture, folklore, and technologies of its era.

Biophilic design was created for our time. It has absorbed the culture and technologies available to us now.

But at their core, they are the same. They harness the power of nature to heal body, mind, and spirit. They help us thrive in our spaces.

Both disciplines acknowledge our deep subconscious yearning to live among healthy, vibrant natural environments. In these spaces we are hard-wired to feel more alive!

“Our emotional freedom, our spirit, is nurtured and supported by those environments which are themselves alive” –

Christopher Alexander, architect

Biophilic research confirms many of the basic principles of feng shui. For instance, in feng shui command position is the location for a bed, desk or chair that provides a view of the entry to the room. Its biophilic design counterpart is “prospect and refuge.” Both provide a feeling of safety and security which allows for greater focus, rest, or productivity.

One is an art, the other a science. One is yin, the other is yang. Different sides of the same coin. Nature nurtures our spirit.

In my practice, Re-Nature Consulting, LLC, I work with both biophilia and feng shui simultaneously. Biophilic design provides yet *another* language and of tools, which may appeal to a wider, and sometimes, different audience.

In commercial spaces I tend to use the language of biophilia. My clients are often more interested in how my recommendations will impact the bottom line rather than contribute to a feel-good space. These spaces tend to have limited access to nature and are traditionally more yang. For instance, there are hard surfaces, lots of equipment, harsh light, lack pattern and sterile white or gray walls.

On the other hand, most residential spaces have much more access to nature and the

goals of my client *are* to “feel good.” The language of feng shui is more suited for these conversations, however, biophilic design is always a part of my work.

Here are some connections between feng shui and biophilic design. The language is different, yet their goal is the same.

Location & Vitality of the Land – In both disciplines the land itself is Number 1 importance. In feng shui, the best site has good “landform” for protection from the winds and plenty of fresh flowing water. There is diverse vegetation and wildlife.

In short, the ecosystem is healthy and alive. It has vitality. It also can sustain development and habitation. In both systems, we want to maximize healthy nature views for the inhabitants. On the spiritual side, this healthy ecosystem translates to a sense of place and belonging to the earth.

Orientation of the structure – The compass directions are an important factor to harness sunlight, reduce energy consumption and in determining the layout of the space.

Understanding our need for natural light, both feng shui and biophilic design seek to create a layout incorporating the best locations for activities depending on the time of day. Both systems consider the orientation of the building as it relates to land features, such as water, hills, mountains, and roads.

Movement & Chi Flow – In our built environment, a prime consideration is how people move through the space. Pathways should allow for comfort and ease to get us from one point to another. In feng shui this is called the “flow of chi”.



Paths that are narrow, long, and straight will funnel people quickly and awkwardly. Paths that are wider and provide more space will allow people to slow down, linger and feel more comfortable passing each other.

Placement/Personal Orientation and Command Position – Personal orientation and placement within the space are key to a feeling of wellbeing. Windows should allow for natural light to penetrate the building, as well as provide views of nature.

“Prospect and refuge” is the biophilic design counterpart to “command position.” Research shows that people are more relaxed and can function better when they have protection from behind as well as a clear view of the space before them.

Sense of place – As our modern culture becomes one big melting pot, our sense of place is disappearing. When we use local materials and acknowledge our location, we honor and respect the land and people that came before.

Variety and Yin-Yang – Diversity mimics a healthy natural environment. Feng shui calls this “yin and yang.” Biophilic design calls this “information richness.” Environments that have complementary opposites, such as soft and hard, sunlight and shade, textured and smooth, dark, and light, a panorama of color and shape, satisfy this need for variety.

In feng shui, the five elements (wood, fire, earth, metal, and water) are further expressions of yin and yang. These elements guide us to bring nature into our spaces. From Eastern philosophy, the five elements are not just the natural materials of each element, but the energy, images, and deeper representations including color, shape, and esoteric symbols. For instance,

gentle water sounds represent calmness, stillness, and contemplation, and therefore, water contributes to ideal place for study, quiet, and meditation.

How are they different?

Because feng shui has evolved over the years and has diverse methods and practices, not all feng shui is biophilic in nature. Not all biophilic design is feng shui.

For instance, in biophilic design, land with a deep ravine at the back might be appreciated because of the nature views and possible wildlife living there. But from a feng shui perspective, this back area, representing the store of resources and money, would be lacking support and would be a detriment to the inhabitants of the land.

Biophilic design does not address basic architectural design concerns of chi flow. In feng shui a narrow, long hallway, which would create “rushing chi.” A wall opposite an entrance to a space that would impede the flow of chi.

And perhaps some good feng shui spaces, might not be good from a biophilic design perspective. There is always more to learn about how they interact.

But one thing is clear to me: There is great synergy in bringing these two disciplines together to create both human and earth friendly spaces.

Would you like to learn more about the connections between biophilic design and feng shui? Learn more about the Luminous Spaces Biophilic Design Online Course here:

<https://www.luminous-spaces.com/biophilic-design-online-course/>

Humans in Trees

#5 Things that set us free

Anicee Carolyn Bauer

Creativity! ... Our eyes light up, when we hear that word. And although it can also be a little scary, we do embrace it! We want part of it, and we want part in it. Creativity is fun. Creativity is exciting. Creativity is freedom. Or is it now? ... In the business world, creativity has evolved into a *buzzword*. It's out there with *out of the box*, *design thinking*, *think tank* and lots more. It has conquered an important place in big business to come up with new products, strategies or services. Companies organize creative sessions for employees to go nuts with crazy ideas,

have a good laugh and refresh their motivation to innovate and break old routines. And as our mind (thinking) is regarded more important than our heart (feeling), we usually also apply *thinking* to the creative process (hence "design thinking"). Admittedly, these sessions can indeed be a lot of fun. If it weren't for one little detail: they must yield results.... Oh, yes! Creativity has a goal. It has an objective. It has a purpose. It is a *means to an end*. And let *that* be just the thing that *blocks* creativity.

Generally, of course, there is nothing wrong with using creativity as a means to an end. The problem is that this is pretty much the only purpose we have left it with in our society. Being creative just for joy's sake, is regarded as "cute", but useless. Of course, children may still play around *without* purpose, waste time, fool around and be silly just for the fun of it. In other words, be *childish*. But they too, quickly learn the message, that real life is about something else: *performance*. And performance, by definition, is "something accomplished" or "the fulfilment of a request". And performances get judged. Naturally. They get compared, rated, and rejected or adopted. So, if we fail to fulfil such a request, we tend to slowly turn away from creativity and might even try to suppress it. But the desire to *create freely* (and by that, I mean without a result in mind) remains within us. Because in our truest essence we are *creative beings*. And if we live our lives without free creative expression, focussing too much on logical thinking, performance, and results, we struggle and feel incomplete. And the imbalance between thinking and feeling can ultimately affect our health and our peace of mind. We experience a mental overload – and burn out. However, restoring the balance makes us happy, more self-confident, open, and courageous. Our energy increases, our minds feel more spacious, and we can more easily deal with everyday problems.

You see, *free creativity* is not *meant* to be judged. It is about connecting with our inner wisdom and

our intuition, with our unique creative power and the playful child within us. Creativity is about enjoying the process, messing around, without knowing what and whether "it" will become something. Creativity is about *enthusiasm*, which means "*being inspired by God*". It's about *moving our soul* and feeling free within our own way of expressing ourselves. Because we can only discover truly new paths with *our hearts*. Only when we become detached from the result, only when we are *prepared to fail*, do we dare to cross boundaries and begin to feel what we are capable of.



So, the question is, how we can sprinkle our lives with more creativity. Well, first, I would suggest that we change our attitude towards it. If we keep looking at it as *cute* and *childish*, we will always have reasons to prioritize everything else. Because creativity doesn't magically appear in your life. As with lots of other things, you have to cultivate it and invest time in it. If you don't, you are very much like this annoying store owner, that firmly tells you he doesn't have what you want, without even bothering to look "in the back". How about we say creativity is "*a vital and active way of life, with the purpose of getting inspired and joyful and not having anything to show for it*"? I bet this will fit

right into any modern business model.

But seriously, think about what role you want creativity to play in your life. And then find a way to make it an integral part of your day. Maybe you try Julia Cameron's morning pages. Or your own "good night dance". Or you lay the table with a paper under your plate and a pen next to your knife, so you can make a drawing right after you eat. Luckily there are lots of (creative) ways and moments to be creative. And there is always more to discover. I recently stumbled across *Neurographic Drawing*. It is exceptionally relaxing to do, because you get into a state of flow while transforming a sharp chaotic situation into a soft one, laying the groundwork for new neural pathways.

What is important to keep in mind at this point, is that *free* creativity is not about techniques or skills. It's not so much about "knowing how to....", but rather about experimenting and trying out new materials, colours, methods or movements. It is about listening to your heart and not caring about what others think. And believe me: I'm very well aware of the awkwardness that goes along with it, when you feel you are making a fool out of yourself. Do yourself a favour: recognize the boring little "party pooper" as what it is: your *inner critic*. It will try to convince you – time and time again – that you are wasting your time, but eventually it will quiet down once you give it a loving pat on the head and tell it to stay the HELL out of it.

Neurographic
Art by Greetje
Limbeek
(@Pin2Greetje)



Want to try it? Here is a little exercise to experience yourself as a poet. Just follow the instructions.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR WRITING A POEM

1. Describe something you see (happening) around you.
2. Write a sentence about your hands.
3. Write something about a sound you hear.
4. Write something about a colour and a smell.
5. Write another sentence about your hands.
6. Start a sentence with "Oh, if only I had/could/knew..."
7. Repeat the first sentence – with a little twist.
8. Give your poem a title.



There you have it. Super easy. For encouragement, here my own little poem. It's called "*The lamp in Africa*".

THE LAMP IN AFRICA

The lamp is on the ceiling.

My hands are cold.

My dog is snoring.

The dwarf's hat is red and smells like garlic.

My hands are writing.

Oh, if only I could go to Africa!

The lamp is no longer on the ceiling.

(A.C. Bauer)



And if you now are wondering, where I saw that dwarf ... well, it's right next to where the acorn elf always rides its bike....

*“We don’t stop playing because we grow old,
we grow old because we stop playing.”*

George Bernard Shaw

<https://humansintrees.com>

Further Reading & Inspiration

- Cameron, J. (2016). The Artist's Way. New York, USA: Penguin Random House LLC.
- <https://neurographic.art/2019/02/25/what-is-neurographics/>
- <https://www.verywellmind.com/how-to-boost-your-creativity-2795046>
- <https://acornelves.com>



For a start it doesn't degrade ... so it's with us forever, or fragments of the cloth winds up spinning itself out of your washing machine and into the water chain and out into the rivers.

Just a few top tips ...

Avoid Polyester like the plague. It is made up of synthetic polymers (the “poly” bit) made up of “esters” of dihydric alcohol and terephthalic acid ... not only can our skin not breathe properly, but also there is evidence that it has a knock on effect on our health as a result of the electrostatic energy. Do you remember those scarves or tops that were popular in the 70s, that when you took them over your head your hair stood on end, and it made that “electric clicking” sound? Well, there's your static.

Nylon is made from petrol and then treated with chemicals like chloroform, terpineol, limonene, pentene, sulphuric acid and caustic soda,

Rayon is wood pulp, which on the surface (excuse the pun) is ok, but to make it into things and so it can withstand washing, is treated with ammonia, acetone, sulphuric acid and caustic soda. Would you put this on your dog now you're read this? Would you put this on yourself?

Acrylics are made up of polycrylonitriles, which according to the EPA may cause cancer.

Instead, make better choices for yourself, your family and your planet. Linen, wool, cotton, hemp, grasses, natural fibres. We've seen lots of examples how manufacturers are using these in fabrics. Next time you go to buy something, choose yourself better. Biophilia isn't just about plants, it's about how we connect ourselves to our living, breathing planet. Nature was here first, we became part of nature, we are nature. Let's not wrap ourselves, our furniture, our homes, workplaces, schools, hospitals, our buildings, our cities, our food, our lives in plastics. We and nature deserve better and healthier choices.



BIOPHILIC CITIES



CONTACT, CONSCIOUSNESS AND CREATIVITY THROUGH URBAN DESIGN

“Survival necessitates creativity, which enables a person to adapt to or solve problems during uncertain times. Our creativity and imagination enable us to alter our circumstances and memories, whether we want to recreate the past, escape the present, or visualise the future. It allows us to see what could have been and what could be.”

Ann Rochyne Thomas

Our creative endeavours are influenced by our social and physical environments. To encourage creative performance, spaces must be designed to stimulate our senses.

Creativity – a process and a product

A creative product is novel and original and can be tangible or intangible. It may be an idea, a physical object such as a sculpture or painting, or a behavioural act such as dancing or singing. The value of creativity is determined by how effectively it can solve a problem or improve a product or process to make it more adaptable to change. However, the aesthetic value of creativity has been seen to sometimes eclipse all of these other values. The personality traits associated with high creativity determine a person's potential for creativity, but the 'process' by which ideas emerge to produce a creative 'product' is largely shaped by

environmental factors throughout a person's lifetime.

The 4Ps – person, process, product, and place (Rhodes 1961) influence how creative a person can be at a given time and place. A well-designed public space stimulates creativity and facilitates learning. A setting that inspires us to seek contact with the natural world and guides people to a heightened awareness of our immediate environment can help us think without distractions and imagine without boundaries.

On Empathy as the Foundation of Urban Design

Conscious design is empathetic. It is highly receptive to people's physiological and psychological needs. When spaces are designed to stimulate the human body's senses, it becomes easier for people to achieve mindfulness, which boosts creativity.

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BIOPHILIC CITIES

Traditional classrooms and office spaces are enclosed environments that restrict interaction with the outside world. This can have a negative impact on people's capacity for creativity. Vegetation and daylighting have been shown to improve cognitive and emotional abilities in humans. Providing opportunities for deep work and reflection in public places can encourage people to spend more time outdoors. Private spaces can be created in shared public spaces by providing comfortable seating and making imaginative use of vegetation and shading options. Creating collaborative spaces for small groups can encourage people to congregate in public.

Spatial layout shapes human-human and human-environment interactions in the public realm. Public areas must serve as a stage for street artists, a market for hawkers, and a refuge for pedestrians. Unlike monotonous car-oriented urban areas with fragmented streetscapes, mixed-use neighbourhoods promote a vibrant street life and allow people from all walks of life to interact with one another. To boost social cohesion, diverse urban functions must ideally be dispersed in public spaces to

facilitate positive interactions and increase opportunities for chance encounters.

Our cities must be designed to foster the 'everyday creativity' of their residents. It is important to ensure that when one spatial element is modified to encourage creativity, it does not have a negative impact on other spatial elements. Being complacent and only providing easy access to the desired physical features and urban functions that encourage creativity is insufficient. With increasing urbanisation, it is becoming increasingly important to regularly evaluate people's experiences in perpetually evolving streetscapes in order to ensure that the public realm continues to provide equal and abundant opportunities for all.

Ann Rochyne Thomas is a bio-climatic spatial planner and founder of the Centre for Climate Resilience – a sustainability and climate change advisory.

www.linkedin.com/in/rochyne

Centre for Climate Resilience:
www.ccradvisory.org

BIONOVA
www.bionovasolutions.com

Nature, Creativity and Cities

Architects, image makers and storytellers, the ongoing violence against nature and biodiversity and a small children's theatre in Plymouth

"Within himself everyman is an architect. His first step towards architecture is his walk through nature. He cuts his path, like a writing on the surface of the earth. The crushing of grass and brushwood that gives way before his strength is an interference with nature, a simple definition of man's culture."

Sverre Fehn, *The Thought of Construction*

Robert Bedner

Recently my home town of Plymouth has been in the news, along with Sheffield and Wandsworth, for the destruction of most of its city centre trees (and their associated biodiversity) all in the name of a new urban plan.

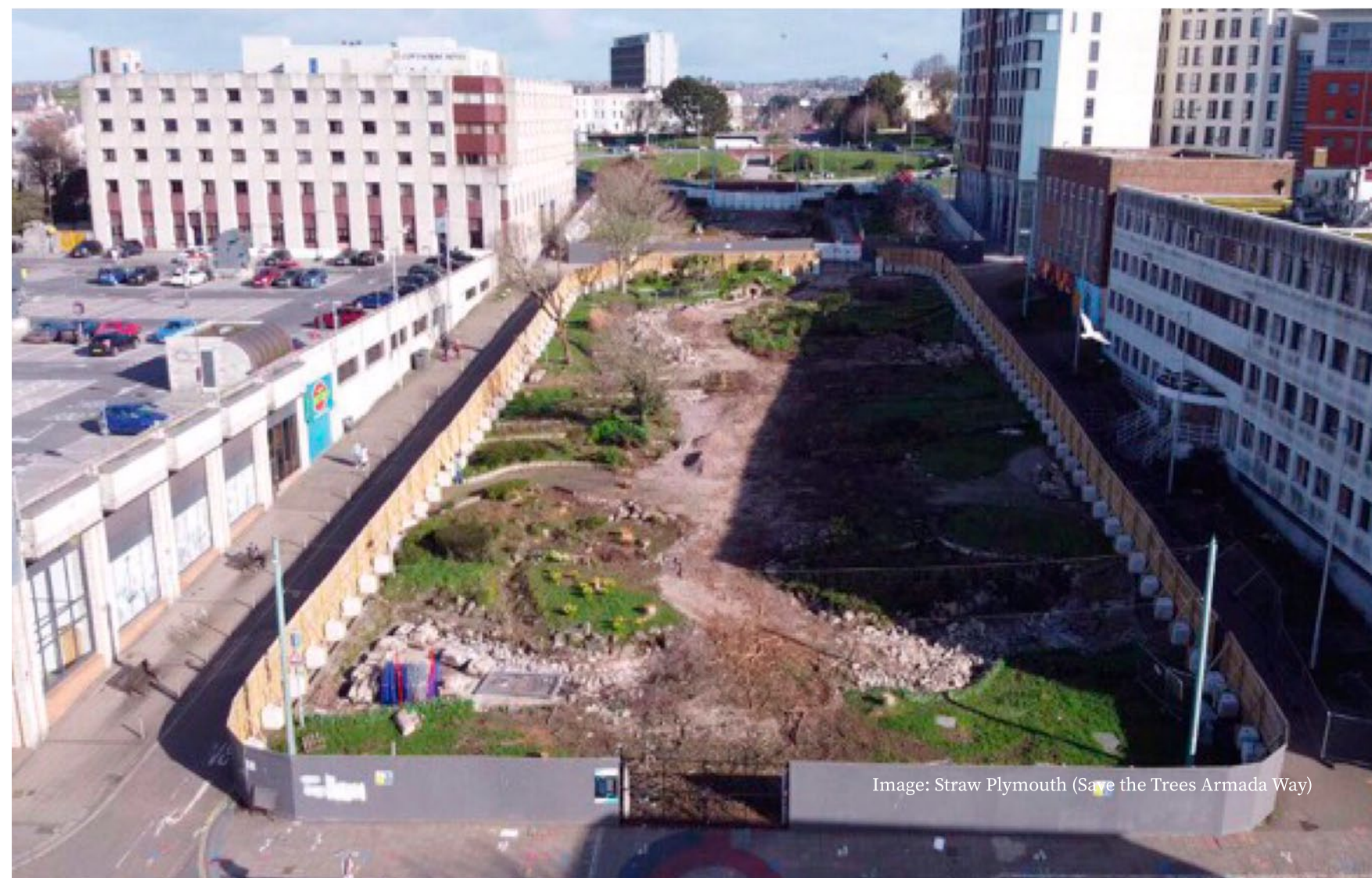
Plymouth (Save the Trees Armada Way) These photos are emotive and go a long way towards describing the way we as a culture (western culture for the most part) have been treating our urban spaces as "a blank canvas" on drawing pads and computer screens.

We tend to see most natural resources including trees as data and symbols on a computer screen as and as replaceable resources and forget that trees can take more than 50 years to mature, have 260,000 leaves, 12 kilometres of branches and support over 350 species of insects and 30 species of birds as well as 360 other plants.

Somehow, we forget our connection as

human beings to these natural elements. Demolished trees and landscaping speak both about a kind of violence and as well about a culture that has lost touch with the community and spiritual value of nature in our homes and the public places we inhabit.

As a Designer I'm painfully aware of the way that built environment professionals can manipulate digital images to produce a kind of digital eye candy that goes a long way to supporting a story (or narrative) that in turn results in planning permission and/or construction, but where it's not clear how the existing trees, the birds and insects and butterflies have been accounted for on the drawing. In addition, somehow community feelings, feelings that are difficult to express graphically, that existed pre-demolition of "I care", "I believe" and "I love" this space, have not been transferred to the drawing. This can have a disastrous consequences for the community and for the environment.



Don't get me wrong, making images, designing and creativity can be good things. If anything, we need more of all of this if we are to find sustainable and right ways to live on and with this planet. Experiencing the earth, the sky and the horizon, experiencing nature are clearly beneficial and brings meaning to life. Making marks on the earth and building large developments will continue.

We as a culture, as a creative population of makers and doers and builders, need to find ways to not only include nature in our designs but to enhance nature. We need to find ways to lessen the reality that

architecture is an inherently violent act.

We are living in a disappearing world where the population of mammals, birds, fish, amphibians, and reptiles has now seen an average drop of 69% globally since 1970 and the major cause of wildlife decline is habitat degradation and habitat exploitation carried out by human beings.

Nature is dying. At this point, it's all too clear that for most people involved in the built environment, turning your back on the above requires a lack of hubris and lack of responsibility that would beggar belief.

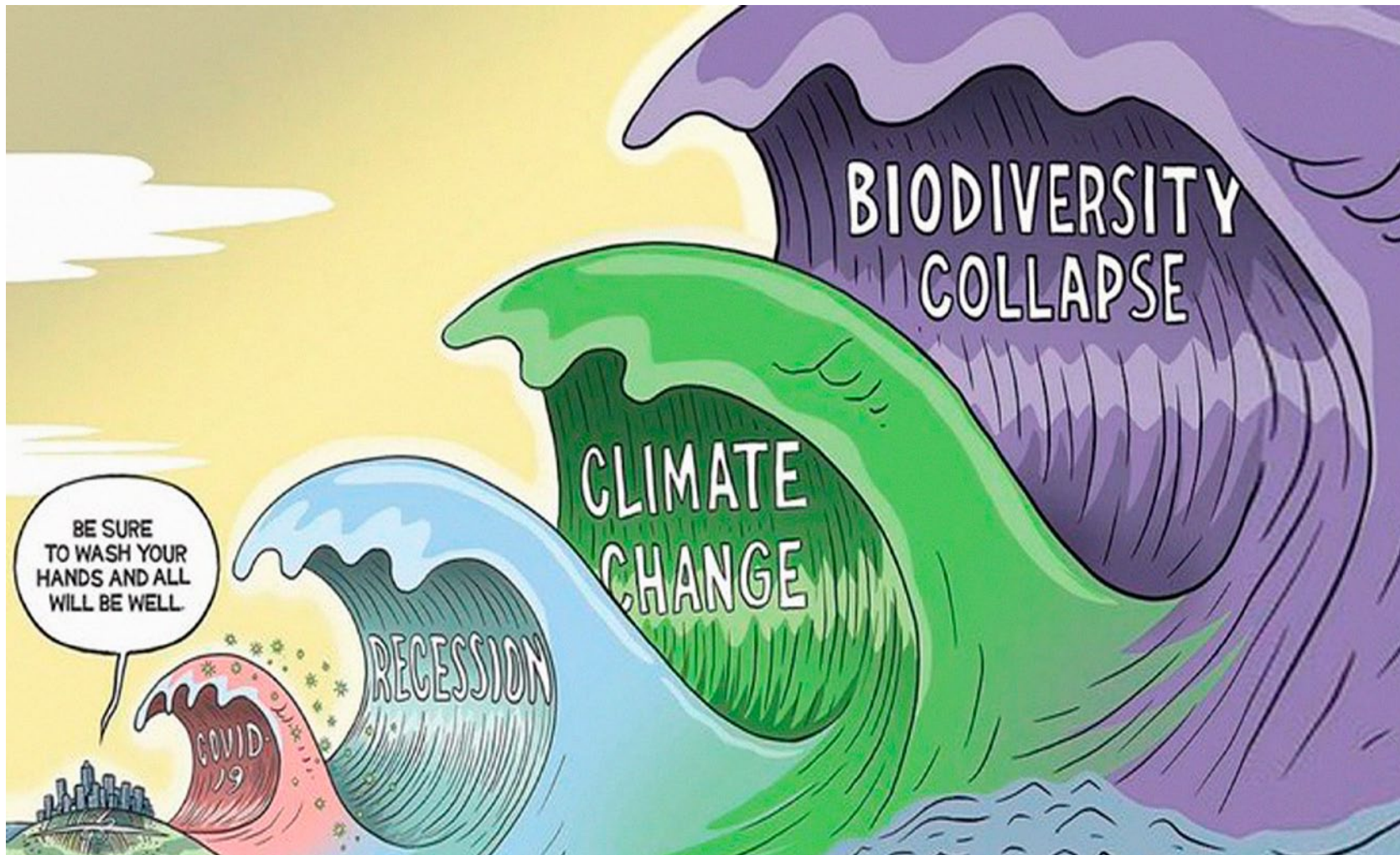


Image: Courtesy of Graeme MacKay



It's now clearer than ever that architecture and urban design and cities, need to take account and to integrate nature and our relationship to it as a core design value and what a better way to achieve this than with a view towards biophilic design.

Back here in Plymouth again, my architecture practice Cura Design has been working over a period, with a local community-based Children's Theatre, Stiltskin Children's Theatre (<https://stiltskin.org.uk/>)

Stiltskin Children's Theatre is an example of what can be achieved with biophilic design in terms of combining good design and children and nature to increase their

well-being and as well to protect and enhance the nature which surrounds the building in an urban park.

A derelict WWII gas decontamination building and Heritage Asset was repurposed into Plymouth's first dedicated children's theatre and managed amphitheatre space in Plymouth's oldest listed public park. The design of the Children's Theatre and amphitheatre endeavours to acknowledge and encourage the relationship between children's theatre and the heritage and natural setting. Cura Design looked to both biophilic design principles and passive haus technologies (in collaboration with Peter Warm Consultants) to integrate nature into the day-to-day life of the theatre.



External green walls provide additional habitat for birds, insects and butterflies while providing an affordable design.

The building has three performance stages: one at rooftop level, one at amphitheatre level and one internally.

Currently in a second phase of development, the project is planning to expand to include a green roof, rain water harvesting and solar panels to further connect it with the listed park and to help to enhance biodiversity in the area.

Good architecture and building cannot exist in a vacuum. Good architecture together with good design requires nature together with people, flora, and fauna in order to create meaning and poetry and spirit. If carried out and constructed properly good architecture and building can create feelings of “I care”, “I believe”, and “I love”. We need less violence against nature in the act of building. We need nature to be valued. Nature is more than a resource on a computer screen, whether you are religious or spiritual or not, nature and our relationship to it is sacred.

Biophilia creates deep and powerful connections.

Biophilia benefits economic growth.

Biophilia creates healthier cities.

Biophilia positively impacts education.

Biophilic cities are happier and more productive.

We need more people to fight the good fight in making as Charles Eisenstein writes – The More Beautiful World Our Hearts Know is Possible

www.curadesign.com



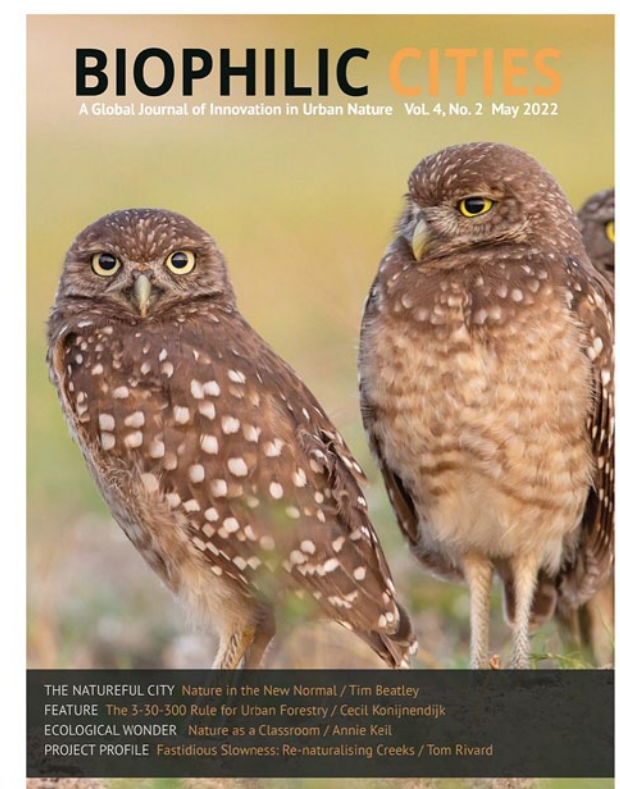
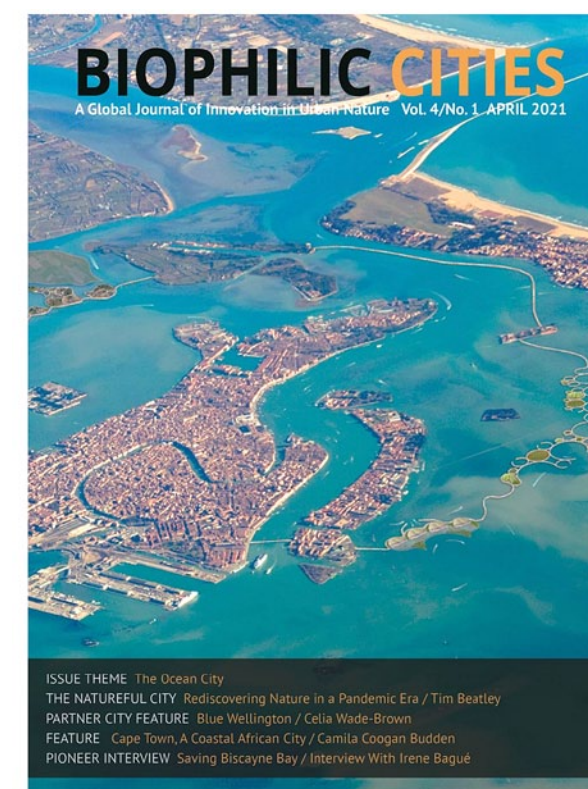
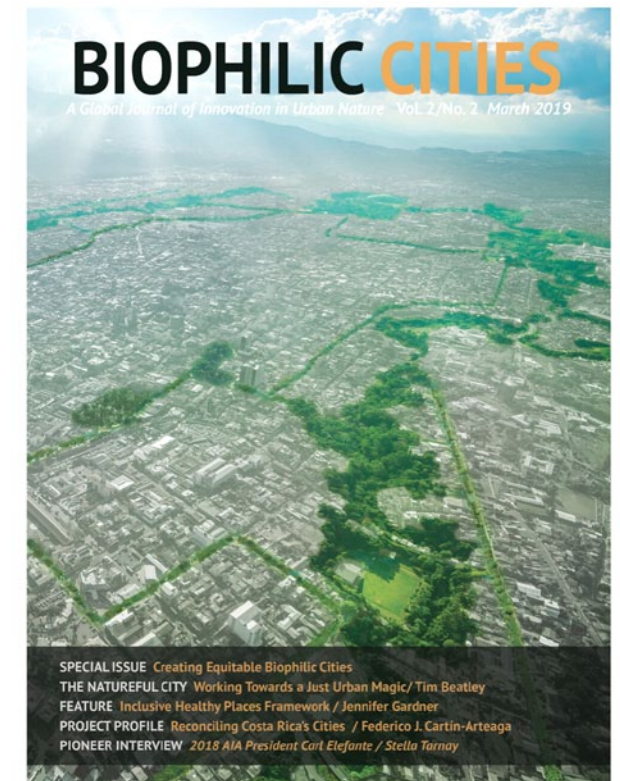
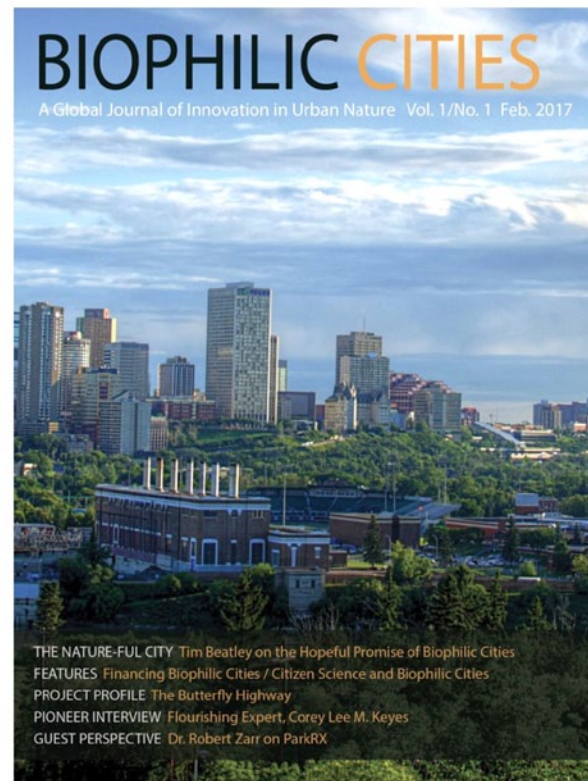
BIOPHILIC CITIES

If you are involved in town Planning, make sure you visit the amazing resource that are Biophilic Cities. There is a “pattern library” on their site where you can see examples of how different cities have taken different approaches to bringing Biophilia and nature-inspired design into the Built environment. From Blue Greenways to Murals, Urban Water Trails and Green Streets. It will give you some ideas to spring-board off.

CONNECTING CITIES AND NATURE

Keep an eye out for our next issue where we'll be exploring some interesting city designs and solutions....

<https://www.biophiliccities.org>





FINAL WORD

Dr Vanessa Champion
Editor

Nature and Creativity go hand in hand. Nature is creative, we are nature.

One thing some of you might think we left out, was Biomimicry. There is a whole research and design discipline which focuses just on Biomimicry, which if you don't know what this is, oh my word, you're in for a treat, check out Martin Pawlyn's book in the first instance and go from there! The good news is, this is such a big topic, we will be planning an issue dedicated to this fascinating element of nature-inspired design in the months to come.

If you are passionate about Biophilic Design, passionate about our environment, our planet, our wellbeing, health, economy, schools, healthcare system, workplaces, cities, towns, communities, family life, food security, plants, wildlife, biodiversity, environmental psychology, neurodiversity, inclusion, equity, then **you might also be interested in joining our Biophilic Design Conference taking place early November 2024**. Please visit www.biophilicdesignconference.com to register your interest. This will be a melting pot of research, ideas, practice, workshops, round tables, networking, and action. **We will have a charter you can sign and share, plus we will launch the Biophilic Design Awareness Day** where all of us can lend our voices to raise up nature-inspired design into the spaces and places where ears and eyes need to hear and see it.

Please do visit www.biophilicdesignconference.com

Thank you so much for all your kind words of support since we started this Journal, it is a labour of love for all of us involved. A big shout out to our artworker and designer who tirelessly puts this all together each issue too. Mike, you are an angel and evidence in itself that nature and creativity go hand in hand on the page!! I couldn't do this without you!



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EARLY NOV 2024

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