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Introduction

This writing will present three different key words that will be explored with various theories. The contextual research will attempt to link the three words, design, biophilia and space. The key subjects will be investigated by using the philosophies of different thinkers and designers/artists, such as Ross Lovegrove (Biophilia), Edward T Hall (Space) and Donald Norman (Design). Images will be displayed to relate to the topics of discussion, showing the similarities and differences that are presented with each focus. The intent for this writing is to discover how some designers perceive their work by using the rules of using space and biophilia.

Biophilia

The word biophilia derives from ancient Latin (Jang.M, 2018). If the word is dissected into two separate words Bio and Philia, the word can be defined with greater clarity. A Greek philosopher, Aristotle, described the phrase 'Philia' as a concept of love or friendship for something (Jang.M, 2018). Biophilia would relate to humans' relationship with nature (Bio). Eric Fromm, a German sociologist, was thought to have started to use this term; with regards to understanding the human efforts to nurture our surroundings (Gunderson, R. 2014). Fromm's theory suggests that humans should develop a non-destructive relationship with the earth by perfecting the concept of biophilia, which consists of the thorough practice of love for living organisms. Additionally, the hypothesis of biophilia was popularised by a biologist called Edward O. Wilson. The naturalist writer released the book The biophilia hypothesis (1984) to discuss the belief of humans being genetically predisposed to an attraction to nature. According to Kellert and Wilson (1993, p.31-32) 'The biophilia hypothesis goes on to hold that the multiple strands of emotional response are woven into symbols composing a large part of culture. It suggests that when human beings remove themselves from the natural environment, the biophilic learning rules are not replaced by modern versions equally well adapted to artefacts.' The biophilic ideology also stems from the notion that for nearly all human history, we have been hunter gather bands, constantly involved in intimate relations with living organisms (Kellert and Wilson, 1993, p.32).



Fig 1- Oasia hotel, Singapore

The image above shows the Oasia hotel, located in Singapore. This is a perfect example of biophilia being incorporated in urban architecture. As you can see, the construction consists of aluminium mesh with climbing plants. The hotel has over twenty different species of climbing plants, some producing flowers that attract different animals all year round, such as insects and birds (Human spaces, 2018). The building extends to the ground to maximize possibilities for small animals like squirrels to roam around and settle as a habitat. This is a big step forward for biophilic design as the tower is able to support an ecosystem. The hotel is a unique way forward for urban architecture, bringing people closer to nature when staying at the hotel.

As a population, most people spend well over seventy per cent of time indoors which detaches us from nature and hereditary hormones. Humans are negatively affected by unnatural environments and would highly benefit from greenery and organic shapes (Kellert and Wilson, 1993). Research has suggested that spending time in nature is beneficial for human health, both physically and mentally (Rogers, K. 2019). A study suggested, people who spend at least two hours per week interacting with nature reported greater satisfaction and better health than people who spent less time interacting with natural environments. (Rogers, K. 2019).

To ensure that humans are always experiencing nature, biophilic design would be used for interior and furniture design. This allows people to experience the enjoyment of being surrounded by nature within the comforts of their home environment. Using biophilia within the home can be achieved both synthetically and naturally. For example, a synthetic use of biophilia can be achieved with furniture products that mimic nature.



Fig 2- seasons dishware, Nao Tamura

This product subtly invokes nature by mimicking leaves. The product is categorised as synthetic biophilia as it consists of a flexible silicon which is designed to cradle the food in your hand. (designboom | architecture & design magazine, 2012).



Fig 3- living moss matt, Nguyen La Chanh

This design is an example of natural biophilia. The shower mat consists of a rigid frame of Plastazote latex foam which contains many different variations of moss plants nested inside (Rekopoulos, 2015). This is an example of a product that is composed using natural biophilia. This is an interesting design as the intention is to create a connection with the living moss you stand on, symbiotically. Many of the species of moss that the shower mat contains, have antibacterial properties. certain species also have antibiotic properties on human-affecting bacteria and were commonly used by ancient civilization for treating many kinds of infections. Furthermore, some have been historically used for antiseptic dressing (Rekopoulos, 2015). This further reinforces the ideology that humans are one with nature and should use the tools that the environment provide.

Space

I have chosen to use the keyword space in a design and architectural context. Edward T Hall, an American anthropologist, discusses the concept space perception. He explores the perception of space with various cultures and species. He published the book 'The Hidden Dimension' in 1964 to present his research. Hall introduces the theory of kinaesthetic space which refers to normal everyday living space. Hall also differentiates space into separate categories. Fixed- feature space, semifixed- feature space and informal space (Hall, 1969, p. 103). Additionally, Hall discusses distances that vary depending on culture. The distances of interaction are Intimate distance, personal distance, social distance and public distance. People choose a preferred distance based on the occasion, their culture, and their emotions.

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