Experiential Design – Rethinking relations between people, objects and environments

• Paper / Proposal Title:
The Power of Biophilic Design in the Built Environment

• Author(s) Name:
Ewa Podgórska; Emily Robertson

• University or Company Affiliation:
Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) Alumni

• Abstract (300 words):
“Before the desire to express existed, an emotion was felt.” That emotion is the driving force behind design vision and every decision that culminates in a finished work. This work, in the case of interior architecture, equates to a space that intentionally considers air, light, texture, shape, and sound, and how its users will react to the built-environment. These spaces that humans inhabit, are created by a few people, for the benefit of many, and have a tremendous impact on the thoughts, emotions, and physical well-being of their occupants. How the design is conceived, the initial emotion or impetus for expression, and how it is ultimately built, is essential to creating spaces that impact users in a positive way.
Designers and artists do not create in a vacuum: we are all affected by a shared human experience. For hundreds of thousands of years that experience meant living in, and developing alongside nature. As the global population increasingly migrates to dense city-centers, the urban habitat affects us greatly, leaving people yearning to reconnect with nature. Biophilic Design recognizes our innate and essential need to connect with nature, and provides a framework for designing this connection inside of our built-environments.

Biophilic design is gaining popularity and is not a trend that will pass. It is part of our species' origin story and we, as designers, have to understand and tap into its core principles to create positive, healthy experiences. We encourage a manifesto that centers biophilic design for all design creatives. By considering the use of materials and products, and their environmental impact globally as well as individually, artists and designers can implement Biophilic Design to help improve public health. This approach can become our collective “before,” our modus operandi.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Ewa Podgórska is a Founder and Principal at Sova Studio (www.sovastudio.co), an interior design firm in New York City. Ewa’s work focuses on regenerative and biophilic design, with human health and wellness at the core of her practice. She believes in socially and environmentally responsible design where designers ask questions about the products they use, their lifecycles and supply chain, as well as about the people and the environment impacted in the design and building process.

Emily Robertson (www.EmilyARobertson.com) is Senior Fabric Designer at Advanced Functional Fabrics of America, a non-profit institute positioned to encourage a resurgence of US textile-based manufacturing through fiber-device technologies and innovative textile system integration. Her personal work explores embodied and environmental cognition, sight, sense-making and nature through woven fabric, and the effect of awe in translations of the human experience.