MIMESIS



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MODELING Matthew Hernandez, Kamryn Olsen
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BIOMIMICRY

Biomimicry, a term assembled by natural sciences writer Janine M. Benyus, is the practice of imitating nature to solve manmade problems. Viewing Mother Earth as a muse, an endless amount of sustainable possibilities emerge. With an inspiring literary voice in her 1997 book, where she introduces and boasts the beauty of this new practice, Benyus highlights biomimetic scientific endeavors in the Maslowian aspects of modern human life: food production, creating energy, manufacturing materials, making medicine, storing information, and conducting business. In the first few pages, she perfectly encapsulates the obvious sensibility of using biomimicry.

"After 3.8 billion years of research and development, failures are fossils, and what surrounds us is the secret to survival" (Benyus pg. 3).

Yet humanity's surroundings rapidly change. Resources dwindle as building after skyscraper is erected within months, but twenty-first century technology grants Homo sapiens the vital opportunity to harmonically convene with the Earth, after hundreds of years of attempting to exempt themselves from its laws. To begin building a utopian future, humans must start with one of their most basic needs: infrastructure.

Second to food and water, humans require shelter, but they habitually fancy themselves "as gods, very far from home indeed" (Benyus pg. 5). They hack at the surface of the planet to forge stylistic structures only tasteful for a few decades before abandoning them, finding prettier land to deface, and constructing something new to ultimately meet the same demise. Without relying on nature, humanity ignores its desire to sustain itself for fleeting pleasure.

In contrast, "nature makes only what she wants where she wants and when she wants. No waste on the cutting-room floor" (Benyus pg. 104). If humankind is to prove itself to be the pinnacle of the planet, as they believe, they must architecturally investigate Gaia. It will bring them closer to fulfilling their true purpose of obeying and caring for the rock they call home, as all its other inhabitants do. They must humble themselves, and by bowing to the Earth's unending genius, they pull themselves towards the apex of this sacred relationship.



Mimesis holds architectural biomimicry in reverence, as a relationship superseding human avarice, a savior at the edge of their fingertips. The deep browns allude to rich soil, a microscopically diverse foundation, and the off-white coaxes visions of beach shells to the front of the mind. Both biomes, land and sea, harbor the organisms whose structural secrets will draw humanity toward a sustainable union with their planet.

While styling remains relatively ordinary, its monochromaticism allows design pieces, created by Kendall Burton (brown) and Darin Fowler (cream), to sing. Models Kamryn Olsen and Matthew Hernandez become the blank blueprint paper for this natural inspiration, much like biomimicry "put[s] [humans] in the learner's chair," guiding its hand on the drawing board (Benyus pg. 236).

THE MIMESIS THEORY



In conjunction, styling and design look otherworldly. This is no mistake. By indulging in their "'reluctance to accept anything that is not human,'" as evolutionary anthropologist Kenneth Glander states, mankind alienates themselves from the environment where they find refuge (Benyus pg. 183). The eye finds home in manmade angles and lines, but this is rarely the case in nature. No wonder biomimetic architecture, often curved and flexible,looks like a gift from the heavens.

The cream ensemble against the rusty metals of the Heron Creek restroom and the Acorn in Austin's Pease Park furthers Olsen's alienation. Maybe this is not a bad thing. It stands out without looking unnatural. It is proof biomimicry allows humans to retain their precious individuality and their status as an apex species.











Olsen's neckpiece, modeled after the Germanic 2019 BUGA Fiber Pavilion, serves as an almost helmet, the aforementioned structure brought into the next decade upside down. German scientists researched beetles' wings to create a lightweight structure of carbon and glass fibers with the capacity to bear several tons of weight. It was beautiful and unique, like its fashionable counterpart, but it also fit form to function. Similarly, Olsen's helmet holds the Earth not at bay, but at the peak of balance, proving humankind can do the same through biomimetic architecture.

Hernandez tells a different story. Robed in the deep brown Olsen stands against, he becomes one with nature. However, the curves in Burton's design are an illusion. Each piece is its own entity. Put together, they become a dazzling system of sprouting roots come to life.

This is true of biomimicry as well. When applied to architecture, two different systems (an organism, proven successful by natural selection, the other, the human brain, an apex of neurons and logic) converge, shaping something completely new and mutually beneficial.

Burton's design is almost reminiscent of the Fibonacci spiral, a shape found in the curve of the Milky Way, the head of a sunflower, and, unsurprisingly, the design of the Parthenon. Mankind unconsciously honors nature, no matter how hard they wish to distance themselves from it, but, as Benyus says, humans must "walk in the forest again," unfurling its splendor in the structures they create (Benyus pg. 9).

Whereas Olsen protrudes from her surroundings, Hernandez assimilates, flaunting biomimicry's versatility. He lunges and forms angles with his limbs, raging against the design as a cage, yet he is contained by this net of nature covering him. Only when Hernandez humbly kneels, hand over heart, does he find peace. He yields to his surroundings. Humanity must do the same. Architectural biomimicry, then, "becomes [the start of] a race and a rescue," the apex of nature's survival finally flush against humankind's (Benyus pg. 9).





Mimesis grasps at a not so distant future.

One defined by a circular relationship with the planet, working with it instead of outside its laws. Humanity cannot create a more impressive pinnacle of survival than the organisms around them. It is time for them to echo the genius of nature, utilizing the apex of cogitation behind their eyes, to climb towards its towering heights. Like Olsen and Hernandez, mankind must lower themselves to the ground, eye level with the bugs and the brush, to manufacture sustainable infrastructure, a process they can then apply to every aspect of life. Only then will they rise towards the peak of harmony with their planet.