How to design a Community.

"The ecological community forms the ethical community".

Being a designer of 21st century, brings great responsibilities to our lives, especially if we claim to be aware of consequences of the decisions that we make. Conscious design is necessary in order to save the world as we know it, or at least minimalize disastrous effects of human actions. I do believe that every person should be introduced to the issues, the planet is facing just now, to increase all doings that try to solve them.

The expansive module I joined this semester is called Design Values, Issues and Ethics. It brings students closer to nature, slowly introducing us to the way it works and how much we can learn from it.

Ethic studies affect every level of design, beginning with complex engineering and finishing with our individual approach to fashion or clothing industries. Hoverer, in the first instance we must realize that ethics are always present at any interactions occurring within a community and considerate all members and aspect of a community's life. Ethics of diverse cultures may appear to be very different from each-other because they are being shaped by very different realities and histories.

By exploring communities' traditions and cultures we also learn of what they truly value. The most important side is that trough the research we can find the most resilient and peaceful societies and adopt what's best about them to our collection of ethics. On the other hand, we can also observe less successful groups, and learn on their mistakes.

During the course I had an opportunity to have an insight of lives among vary cultures, like for example Amish and Pirahas (both communities highly resilient and self-sufficient) or history of the people of St. Kilda who had to live their land because of the balanced system destroyed by innovation.

But my attention was caught up by tribes of Kogi and Ogiek. Both communities are highly eco-centered. Ogiek calls themselves 'caretakers of plants and animals', Kogi on the other hand 'Elder brothers. They don't understand community belonging like a western civilization does. In the 'culture of the self' people buy their way into community by impressing others with look, style or giant, exclusive house.

If we would ask a dweller of Ogiek's forest, they would probably say that in order to gain respect and social status, you must be a good community member and rise equally committed offspring.

Another aspect of their vision of community is that they don't define community as group of human species only, instead they include whole living world.

Members of both tribes show overall respect and high equality between people and natural world. Their indigenous practices keep theme resilient and spiritually satisfied, something that developed countries cannot say. Mental health of western society is rapidly decreasing, and that's mostly caused by feeling of being abandoned, luck of belonging.

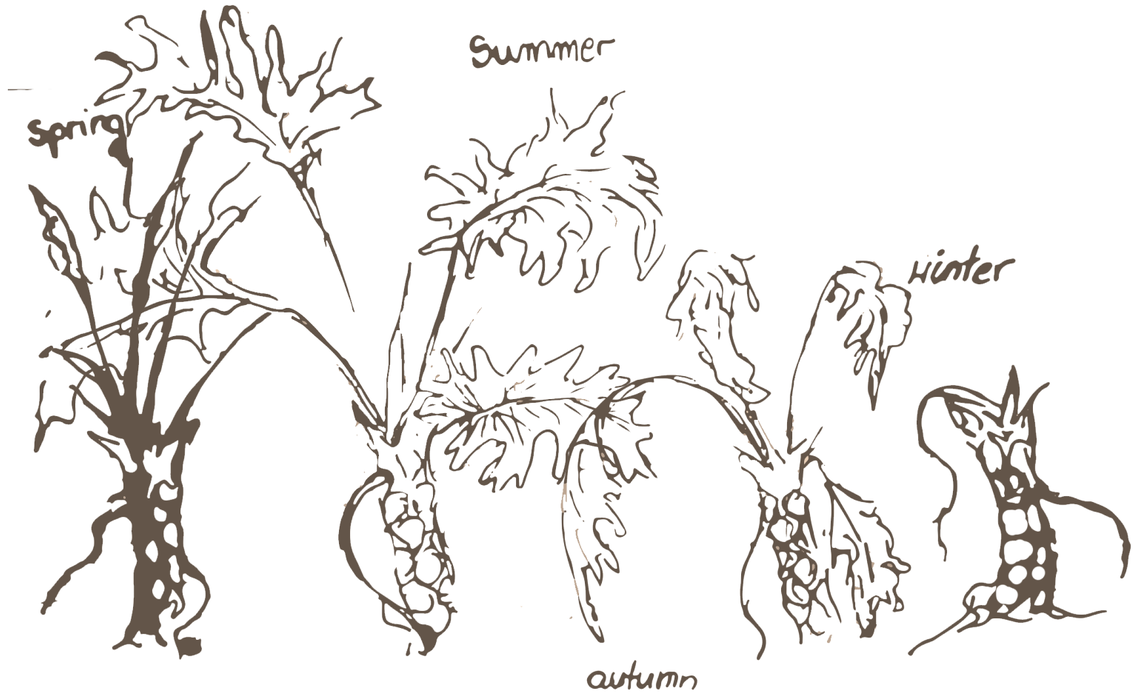
A solution to this could be a bio-mimicry design- coping nature and its secret and rooting it in our culture. Bio-mimicry is an effect of biophilia- a kind of bound between human and living world. Subconsciously, we all seek for connection to nature.

Sensors of our brains shows incredible rise of activity, when exposed to environments like forest or mountains. By exposing ourselves to nature, we become more creative, sensitive, relaxed and healthy. Kogi people are highly biophilic. They call our planet Mother Earth, themselves elder brothers, despite a level of our development, they call us a younger brother. They send us a message, asking to stop destroying the mother.

We should ask ourselves a question, where it that high responsibility and no need for only personal profit, coming from? There is relation between natures doing and pattern of ethics that could fulfil our desire of peace and equality.

Therefore, is it appropriate than to call nature a mentor? Billions of years of experience should speak for themselves. Our planet was developing solutions to millions of problems for very long period. By language of biomimicry, it has given us inventions like a Velcro or Gecko Tape. But with a company of today's science, we can finally begin to think of what is unthinkable, creating designs that are interactive elements of eco system, by the way that they were produced and that they contribute to ecosystem after their death. And that only confirms, that in order to change, people don't have to go back to living in caves It is about finding the solutions of how to become biological culture instead of developing industries we know.

Another thing we can learn from our planet, is that nature could be understood as a sort of play constantly changing actors. Function of play is always the same- to provide a survival of a living world. But form, of how nature expresses itself, is always changing in relation to real-time feedback. It is also our emergence that was an expression of nature. Mother earth is an emergent, not reductionist. It is not a circular, closed loop with zero waste. And that is another lesson, of



what is the difference between efficiency and eco-effectiveness, and how it relates to sustainable growth. Efficiency often ends with making dangerous design, less dangerous. Eco-effectiveness instead, tells us to consider whole life-cycle of product and material resources, so we can concentrate on a good, eco-friendly design, that becomes part of natural environment and grows from it.

That logic is crucial to create a stable, sustainable and resilient system. Eco-effectiveness often means need for so called 'leftovers' to feed not only the species that are using supplies, but also those who wait for what's left.

An illustrative example of this type of relations could be a cherry tree. Its over production of fruit is hardly to be called efficient, yet it is truly sub-optimal. Fruits that are not being eaten, provides for all creatures leaving on the surface of the ground, and under. That is also a future fertilizer for the roots of the very same tree. This example of ecosystem provides for itself.

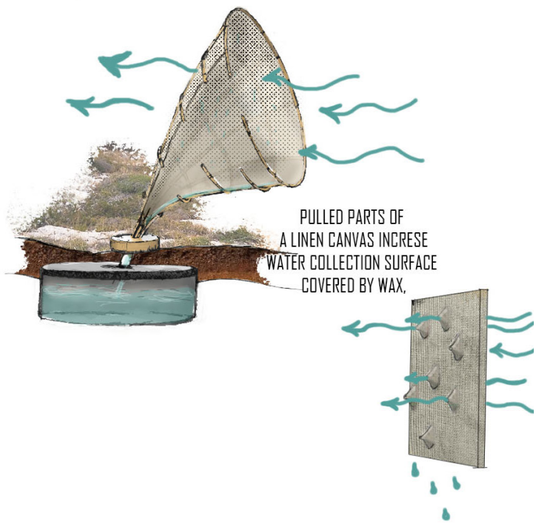
The same tactic can be seen in relation between squirrel and nuts. Squirrel simply cannot find most of nuts that she's hidden. It could sound like a waste of time and food, but it couldn't be more wrong. Uneaten nut will grow to a new tree and supply future generations. It is more of an investment in to the future.

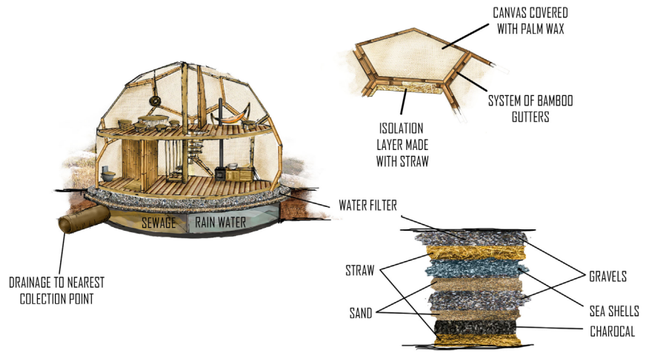
Fig Wasp also depends on trees which feeds wasp's babies with its own seeds. Mother wasp must pollinate all the flowers to initiate a growth of seeds, but eggs are being laid in only a part of them, otherwise, seedless tree could not procreate, and wasp would lose its inhabitant.

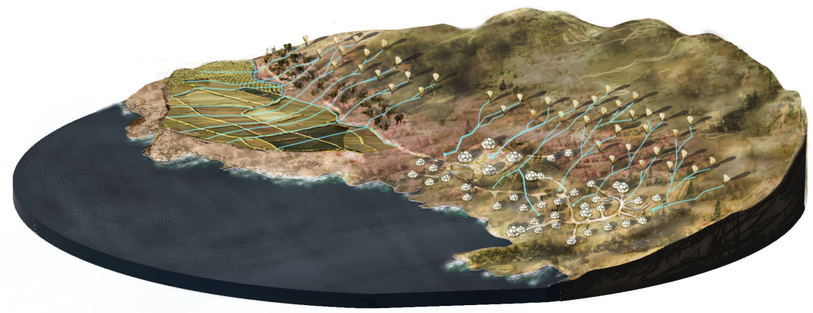
As a student of an interior and environmental design, I have really enjoyed reading chapter describing, cherry tree- inspired, biophilic factory. Wide access to daylight, no artificial air conditioning, flow of fresh air and endless shades of green- that is how we should imagine factories of 21st century.

Employees, even if tempted with better earnings, wouldn't leave the work place so well designed to keep them happy and satisfied by simply fulfilling their need for biophilia. Biomimicry design, eases human senses, reduces stress and anxiety, and could be the way to majorly upgrade standards of our lives, going the way the earth would do.

By cultivating eco-practices, we can have a chance of buying our way-back into nature after its been lost in order to grow an industrial world of fast, yet dangerous progress. These days, answering to yourself, what designer do you







Hydro System

really want to be, is extremely important, and not optional. All our decisions bring us closer to the destination, either if it is destruction or emergence.

As designers, we have an incredible power of reversing the madness we call globalization, by looking for inspirations within diversity of nature. Best way we can do that, is providing products for customers, that are already created with thinking of eco-centered values and ethics, made locally, with efficient use of energy.

Products that are: innovative, useful, aesthetic, understandable, unobtrusive, honest, long-lasting, thorough down to the last detail, environmentally friendly and simplistic as possible.Research about living world, looking for ethically living communities and facing the issues humanity must overcome, helped me to realize how big impact is being made by a decision of each human being, and that we must try to massively re-valuate our priorities and needs.

Designers must turn themselves to a new, or maybe just an ancient, live-saving fashion of thriving within the nature. Biomimicry design Is about to become the design of our century. Promoting it as new life-style may entirely change mentality of our societies, because of teaching people how to respect. If community respects natural world, that is a sign that they are peaceful and sustainable group of people as we've seen Kogis or Ogiek people.

Group project showed me, how many different approaches we need to explore just to understand how to provide most basic needs to a community, by doing it in a sub-optimal way. Sometimes we had to compromise strength of material with its weight, or accessibility. My group-responsible for a water access had to plan how to harvest water, how to purify it, save, recycle or magazine. By taking an example from the natural environment, we have managed to propose self-sufficient and sob-optimal idea for a Village system, located on Cyprus.

As a first step, we had to find and organisms that find a way of how to solve the issues we are facing with. We have based our harvesting system on an idea of headstander battle, who uses water contained in the air. Water devices are situated on the slopes of hills, to automatically transport the water to the village and fields.

Every household is equipped with self-sufficient rain-water collection system. Sewage water is being moved to the common tank (max 5 houses), to then be used as a fertilizer on the fields. Our rain water is being purified by system of natural filters, containing charcoal, straw, gravels, and shelves of shellfishes that has been previously consumed. Fore purification of a soil responsible are microbes, that removes dangerous toxins from our fields.

We also have a small plantation of cacto-pear that gives us juicy fruits, when nopal cacto gel can be also used for water purifying if boiled. Cyprus is also a great place to grow olive trees, and as it appears, during the process of pressing olives, large amount of water is being separated.

Water can be used for cooking, drinking small quantities, or to water the fields. The houses have been made with use of easy decomposable materials like a bamboo or myco-foam as a thermal isolation (myco-foam- a mixture of wood scrubs and growing fungus. I my opinion we did well as a group. I believe we could say more about complexity of our system, when making a motion peace, better describe some of the used solutions, introduce other groups to moral values that guides our community, and show how our issues are related to SDG's. We decided to simplify the video, describing most characteristic element of the system, in order to make it more approachable, but unfortunately that solution made the final piece a bit too pure with information.

I believe that by relating design industry to SDG's, we can have a better spectrum of how many aspects connects to what we do. SDG's can be treated as a kind of tips, used in order to design a sustainable culture, as they answer to most disturbing problems of our civilization.

Knowing more about cognitive sciences, like biology, neurology, physics or psychology, I began to understand the complexity of the system we live in. One simple action causes multiple reaction which not always can be controlled or predicted. The way how different sciences starts to overlap each other, makes my future profession much more complex than I was expecting, but at the same time much more exciting. I feel that, as an interior designer I have find my way of ethical living and creating.

I clearly understand purpose of my possession within community, in term of promoting biophilia as a life style.

In my previous projects I was already working on methods of how to create an experiences and emotions within the space, that can improve our mental state and well-being.

Now my knowledge about profits gained from sustainable design and biomimicry, only add to it.

I am glad I had a chance to begin this journey towards nature, but I realize I have much more to learn, and probably due to the real time feedback from our mentor and technical growth, I will be constantly developing new tactics of how to approach new issues.