



BIOPHILIA:

“Splendor awaits in minute proportions”¹

It is a clearing in the forest. A view to the bay. The feel of warm daylight or a cool breeze, spaces defined by raw, honest materials, a sense of movement, of change over time. Mithun’s designs have long been influenced by the ideas of biophilia (“love of life and the living world”) – from its Everwood offices through REI’s Seattle and Denver flagships, to IslandWood, Epler Hall, Zoomazium and many more. Today, the drive to more fully embrace biophilia continues – to create places that evoke nature’s patterns; landscapes and interiors that teach or bring perspective, joy and comfort. To that end, Mithun has adopted seven attributes that serve as the basis of its design approach practice-wide: “Sensory Richness”; “Motion”; “Serendipity”; “Variations on a Theme”; “Resilience”; “Sense of Freeness”; and “Prospect, Refuge and Enticement”. Further explorations by Mithun continue, as well, through research and

collaboration with the University of Washington and elsewhere – seeking new ways to incorporate natural elements into its designs.

“A rich sensory environment surrounds us, not just with visual delight, but also with sounds, haptic sensations from the feel of wood or stone, and variations in temperature and light as we move through a space.”² Mithun’s expression of biophilic design is increasingly clear in projects such as Novelty Hill-Januik Winery, the new Telemedicine Center at UC Irvine, and especially throughout its own Pier 56 office: quiet, colorful, open, places of prospect and refuge.



Biophilia

bio•phil•ia, noun, 1979 : a hypothetical human tendency to interact or be closely associated with other forms of life in nature

Greenbuild 2006: “Biophilic Design: Principles, Practices and Benefits”

Led by: Stephen Kellert, Yale University; Judith Heerwagen, J.H. Heerwagen & Associates, Inc.; Bert Gregory, Mithun; Amelia Floresta, Kieran Timberlake Associates; Jonathan Rose, Jonathan Rose Companies LLC

Biophilic Design, “Biophilia and Sensory Aesthetics”, Judith Heerwagen, Ph.D. and Bert Gregory, FAIA

“How can we take advantage of natural systems to create environments that are more beneficial to people’s well-being, or that protect and even restore the natural features of a site? Thinking of biophilia, of our innate connection to nature, helps us create places that people are going to love, that will be more resilient in the long term.”

—*Critter Thompson, Systems Ecologist, Mithun*