

# In Conversation: Biophilia, Art & the Human Connection

Diane Epstein, Mary Davidge & Eve Edelstein



Pantheon Dome Rome, Italy © Diane Epstein

## Nature, Architecture & the Spirit of Place: the Art of Diane Epstein

A Solo Exhibition at the [Point Richmond Gallery](#) from December 9 - February 11, 2024

The Point Richmond Gallery hosted an esteemed panel of experts to discuss the synergy between nature, art, design & neuroscience. [Diane Epstein](#), internationally recognized biophilic artist, and pioneer of 'Fresco Photography', facilitated the afternoon's conversation with [Mary Davidge](#), luminary biophilic designer, and [Dr. Eve Edelstein](#), renowned for her innovative healing design based in neuroscience and architecture.

Diane Epstein noted, "The nature-based or culturally evocative 'biophilic art' can stop us in our tracks; beckon us to be truly present, to look, listen, feel. It can ignite all of our senses. It affects our environments, our creative output, and our emotional, sensory, perceptual, cognitive and physical well-being.

More than just a panel, the group is united in their larger mission. As Diane stated, "We stand together, to illuminate, preserve and share the beauty that exists in nature, in art and in the places we work, create and heal. Our brains, minds, and bodies measurably respond to the sensorium, and can bring more connection, creativity and a sense of wonder into our architectural, interior, urban and outdoor spaces.



Aquatic Embrace California © Diane Epstein

Dr. Edelstein reflected that form and function are aligned. "If we don't ask why it's formed like that and why you need a space like it is, then we're missing our purpose. Designers could be better at balancing solutions around the users. We spend too little time asking our users what really matters to them. There's a return on investment in design that enhances experiences that help all of us."

Mary Davidge, as Director of Global Design at Google, instinctively knew good art & design produce that feeling of being in the natural world. "It's really important to design a workspace in layers, to function well, and to offer individuals the opportunity to create their own space/ work environment, to give them choice and control. We can then inspire wonder, be more productive and feel empowered and uplifted."

Diane added, "By using a people-centered approach to art & design, I find engaging the designers, architects, owners, and users in an envisioning process to uncover what feelings and qualities they are yearning for produces the most evocative, effective results." She then asked the audience and panel if they would focus on any fresco image in the gallery, and what feelings or qualities they noticed.

Mary noted her fascination in the layers of mystery, when one is able to discern and yet not see exactly what lies beyond. "Like in great art or buildings, something just kind of draws you into a space. I really do think that happens in Diane's fresco photography, painting and mixed-media art."



Forest Serenade Moss Beach California © Diane Epstein

Eve remarked, "...when you look at Diane's layering of images you get to create the story, you can delve into memories, you get to solve your own mystery. You can feel the textures, the illuminating beauty that her art brings. It is amazing to watch Diane create her fresco images. Underneath each piece could be 10, 20 layers of art, beginning with a concept, and developing layer by layer."

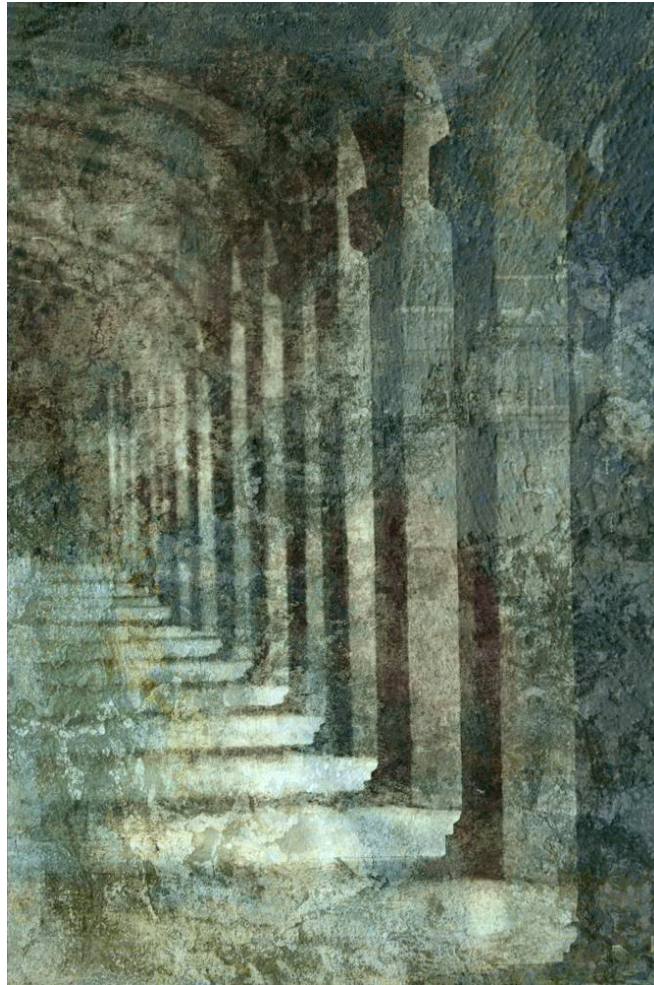
The audience noticed the passage of time, the contrasting colors, the luminosity, and an emotional resonance when viewing Diane's art. Eve noted the light/dark verticals induce the eye to move in a pattern that the brain interprets as movement.

Diane, with her background in creativity, healing and psychotherapy, added, "Biophilia plays a pivotal psychological role by assisting us in reconciling with our inner struggles, and the isolation we might experience as individuals within the vast network of life and built environments. We bring the art of culture and nature from the outdoors inside to help us feel at ease, aligned, rejuvenated, and interconnected with all living beings. Nature's fundamental trait lies in its perpetual resurgence, constantly birthing new life. Even in the face of the most profound challenges, time reveals growth, renewal, and a profound sense of hope for our own existence. Accepting this connection with all life, acknowledging each of us as a part of nature's grand story, is key to saving our planet."

Diane was given accolades by a room full of participants, from clinical, architectural, design, art, and environmental disciplines. Gail Brager, Professor of Architecture at U.C Berkeley, was the finale:

"I'll start by just saying Diane Epstein's art is stunning. Breathtaking! So why would we characterize it as biophilic? So, biophilia, love of nature; biophilic design is about bringing what we love about nature into the built environment. So now what is it about Diane's art that makes it biophilic? Some of the reasons we love nature is because those experiences are very multisensory. They're very dynamic. They're variable. It's not just about greenery. It's not just about the flora and fauna, it's

about climate. It's about changing every moment. Diane's art is so much more than just the visual. There's so many paintings and photographs of nature. Would we call them all biophilic? I would not! And the reason I would call Diane's art biophilic is because of the mystery and the imagination. You can get drawn in. I can see the ever-changing dapples of light. I can imagine myself moving through that passageway. I can hear the sound of my footsteps. I can feel the breeze coming through the archway, the sunlight on my skin. Diane works at scales from artichokes to landscapes, forests to ancient monuments. Diane's art is biophilic because we are brought in and we can feel and experience those dynamic qualities of the natural environment that we love so much."



Behind the Hidden Door Rome, Italy © Diane Epstein

[www.PointRichmondGallery.com](http://www.PointRichmondGallery.com)

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[Expanded Definition of Biophilic Art](#)

by [Diane Epstein](#)

*"Curating a sensory rich spirit of place, honoring our human nature bond, and the innate, visceral, natural affinity and yearning for love and aliveness expressed and cultivated to the shape and soul of our story, culture, and the patina of time."*