

Towards an Ecology of Design Praxis

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Abstract

The notion of ecological design has rightly been around for decades, yet a genuine praxis of designing ecologically has been slow to emerge. We believe this is a problem about how we understand our perception of and relationship with the other, the rest of nature and ourselves. This paper attempts to synthesize a new epistemology of design which we refer to as an ecology of design and in which we try to understand the systemic relationships which constitute the human ecology of living and in which the practice of design forms an integral part. We use the ideas of some phenomenological philosophers and bio-cognitive scientists to explain the systemic dynamics of the ecology of design and, mainly through Humberto Maturana's notion of conversation, we suggest a new cognitive basis of design directed by human embodied and ecological emotion. We conclude with some implications for a praxis of ecological design with a special focus on an ethical domain of design.