

FRAMES

THE NEXT SPACE

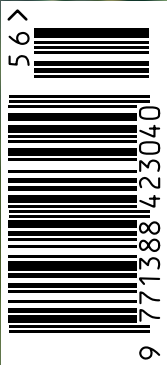
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How to make spatial experiences meaningful

Insights

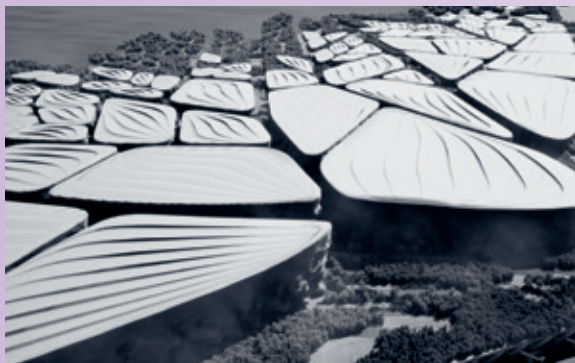
How airports are **embracing biophilia** to make it harder to leave. Why fashion brands are doubling down on **emotional connections** and authenticity. What offices – and the designers behind them – are learning from the **home-swap renaissance**. This issue's Insights take a trip through the



Courtesy of Gucci




Chris Mortallini, courtesy of Civitan



Courtesy of Kalbod Design Studio

new developments in experientially oriented design.

An aerial photograph of a modern airport terminal. The terminal's roof is covered in green vegetation, with large, light-colored, curved panels interspersed among the trees. The terminal is situated on a sandy beach, with a runway and taxiway visible in the foreground. The ocean is in the background, with a few small boats visible on the water. The overall scene is a blend of nature and modern architecture.

Why *airports*
are going
green – in one
way at least

Contemporary airport designs are countering the stress often associated with air travel while becoming destinations in their own right, introducing human-oriented experiences and biophilic design to this end.

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The transportation experience is often thought of as a liminal space between here and there – a temporal write-off deemed dull and mundane at best and stress-inducing at worst. Transforming spaces for such means into destinations involves incorporating a people-centric approach that recognizes human nature's desire for community and the traveller's desire for exploration.

In many cases, this goal has led designers down the path of biophilic design, which honours the intrinsic connection that human beings have with nature and its positive effects on body and mind. Nature's ability to guide people's attention in a gentle manner contrasts with the aggressive bombardment of flashing screens and lights largely present in our day-to-day lives. Research has shown that intertwining nature and natural elements with spatial design improves clarity and creativity while decreasing stress. Add these benefits to the potential resilience of biophilic design, with its sustainable materiality and reusable energy initiatives, and you have a spatial design cocktail suited particularly well to airports. Carefully intertwining efficiency with experiences and utilizing biophilia in this way ensures, says MD and CEO of Bangalore International Airport Hari Marar, that for travellers the design will 'ease their journey, making it seamless and unforgettable'.

JETTING OFF FROM STRESS

A study by airport lounge access specialist Priority Pass highlighted that the most stressful aspects of air travel include fear of losing luggage, passports or children and long wait times. These stressors can be attributed to unclear navigation and excessive noise, which designers can mitigate with intuitive wayfinding, quiet zones and sound dampeners.

Biophilic design, which integrates natural elements, can also alleviate stress by lowering cortisol

levels and providing a gentle distraction. For example, the new Terminal 2 at Changi Airport in Singapore designed by Boiffils Architecture uses clear navigation and biophilia to reduce common airport stressors. It features nature-inspired touchpoints, efficient check-in systems and automated special assistance lanes. Similarly, Foster + Partners' under-construction design for Techo International Airport in Phnom Penh incorporates ample natural light and greenery, ensuring a clear and intuitive passenger experience.

Transitional spaces can also provide calming moments among the busyness. Conceived by SOM in collaboration with landscape architects Grant Associates and designers Abu Jani and Sandeep Khosla (AJSK) as a 'terminal in a garden', Terminal 2 at the Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru exemplifies this with its 90-m-wide, multilevel 'forest belt': a lush landscape featuring winding paths and bamboo-clad pavilions. This stretch separates the function-heavy main terminal block – which houses check-in, immigration, security, retail, arrivals and baggage claim – from the Terminal 2 gates. As SOM managing partner Laura Ettelman says: 'With a focus on the passenger, we have created a rich, sensory experience.'

BEYOND BAGGAGE CLAIM

For some, travelling is a routine occurrence for business, studies or visiting family. For others, however, travelling is an experience of novelty and adventure. Designs for new airport terminals have begun to play into this sense of exploration, transforming what could be the most mundane part of a journey into a stimulating experience that balances excitement with restraint so as not to be overwhelming.

Changi Airport's Terminal 2 redesign in Singapore achieves this through several experiential touchpoints, including a plethora of shopping and »

cultural hub

In alignment with the country's ambitious tourism intentions and the megaproject The Line, renders of Saudi Arabia's newest airport showcase a hyper-modern biophilic urban complex (also pictured on previous spread). The centre comprises 'cities', each with its own diverse microclimate stretching from the desert to the sea. Conceived by Kalbod Design Studio, NEOM City airport will function not only as a transit centre, but also as a cultural hub. The complex will include museums, galleries and exhibition spaces, attracting both locals and visitors.

terminal in a garden

Conceived in collaboration with landscape architects Grant Associates and designers Abu Jani and Sandeep Khosia (AJSK), SOM's design for Kempegowda International Airport's new 'terminal in a garden' seeks to connect travellers to nature in an accessible and sustainable new transit hub. The use of local materials and abundant plant life in the 'forest belt' simultaneously pay homage to Bengaluru's heritage as a garden city and help ease visitor stress, making for a destination-worthy transitory space.

Ar. Ekansh Goel / Studio Recall





dining options amid the nature-inspired designs and materiality for the ceiling, walls and carpet. The centrepiece, a 14-m-tall digital 'wonderfall' situated on a vertical garden, calls to mind the 2019 water vortex in the same airport, designed by Safdie Architects. Earning the title of the world's largest indoor water-fall, this iconic feature was exemplary in showing how airports can function as one of the city's most popular attractions. The design for NEOM City Airport in Saudi Arabia by Kalbod Design Studio is similarly seeking to align with the country's tourism ambitions. Renders for the new airport show a series of 'cities' in the biophilic complex, each with its own biodiverse microclimate, incorporating an unprecedented and unexpected spirit of exploration within the desert airport.

AN EMBLEMATIC GATEWAY

Stefan Behling, head of studio at Foster + Partners has said that 'an airport is among the most important of public buildings, reflecting its symbolic status as the gateway to a city'. As the first introduction for many to a city or country, it can counteract the liminality often felt in transit hubs by offering a distinctive sense of place, grounding the passenger and providing a warm welcome.

The greenery-rich design for Techo International Airport in Phnom Penh is 'inspired by Cambodia's history and built heritage', standing 'as a modern embodiment of Cambodian culture', says Foster + Partners senior partner Nikolai Malsch. Similarly, Terminal 2 at the Kempegowda International Airport has a distinctly Bengaluru feeling thanks to its use of

indigenous flora and local materials such as bamboo, brown granite and traditionally woven rattan. This pays homage to the city's environment and economy, offering locals a comfortable sense of familiarity and visitors a unique experience. NEOM City airport is also attempting to offset the no-man's-land effect often associated with airports by including museums, galleries and exhibition spaces designed for both visitors and locals, making the airport function as a cultural hub as well as a transit centre.

HOW FAR CAN RESILIENCE GO?

Part of honouring the surrounding environment means taking on resilience and sustainability initiatives. Terminal 2 at the Kempegowda International Airport, for example, relies entirely on renewable energy and harvests water onsite for the plant life. The Techo Airport will have an onsite photovoltaic farm that will generate enough energy to power the space almost entirely. That said, these 'green' initiatives and carbon-neutral plans won't completely offset the inherent unsustainability of air travel. Aeroplanes contribute heavily to the total greenhouse gas emissions globally, not to mention the waste and emissions generated in their construction and that of airports. In making the prospect of air travel more appealing, are these terminals perpetuating the problem? What if the same approach was adopted for the terminals of more sustainable travel means, such as train stations? After all, it's all well and good to attempt to increase the sustainability of air travel, but the most sustainable option is to not fly at all.●

inspiration in transit

Nature figures prominently in Changi Airport's Terminal 2 designed by Boiffils Architecture. Featuring a 'dreamscape' garden with biodiverse landscaping and a 14-m-tall 'wonderfall', the design continues Singapore airport's legacy of offering immersive experiences for travellers. Passengers will also appreciate the attention paid to increasing efficiency for check-in bag drops and movement throughout the space.



tropical escape

For Cambodia's forthcoming newest airport in Phnom Penh, Foster + Partners was inspired by the country's vernacular forms and tropical climate. The new design is centred on the passenger experience. The master-planned transit hub will be able to service 13 million passengers annually and features a lightweight steel grid shell roof canopy, which allows natural light to filter in through an innovative screen and is supported by structural trees.



