Respecting the Future

Respecting the future, whether designing products or a business model, inspires architects, designers and business leaders to change their approach to the “design” process. This shift necessitates reconsideration of materials, products, and processes within the entire business realm. This shift can occur as exemplified by David Oakey Designs, founded by David Oakey, a textile designer by trade who now leads a global effort on sustainable, or “smart design.” Respecting the Future describes Oakey’s transition from questioning the sustainability movement five years ago, to becoming convinced, and a leader in sustainable design. Oakey’s innovations have been inspired by his mentor, Janine Benyus, author of Biomimicry, the study of learning from nature to solve problems in design, business, and life. Oakey’s lessons also draw on Wabi-Sabi, an ancient Japanese philosophy of learning acceptance versus control. Connecting the two philosophies, David Oakey’s work describes how nature can become a mentor for business and design and a model for the way of life. He offers examples of how the design approach can shift away from seeking to control the process, the product and the outcome, and can instead mimic the natural processes premised on self-organizing feedback systems. Overall, the presentation describes the development of a process and environment for design inspiration and collaboration that enhances the future quality of life.