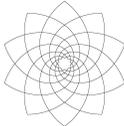
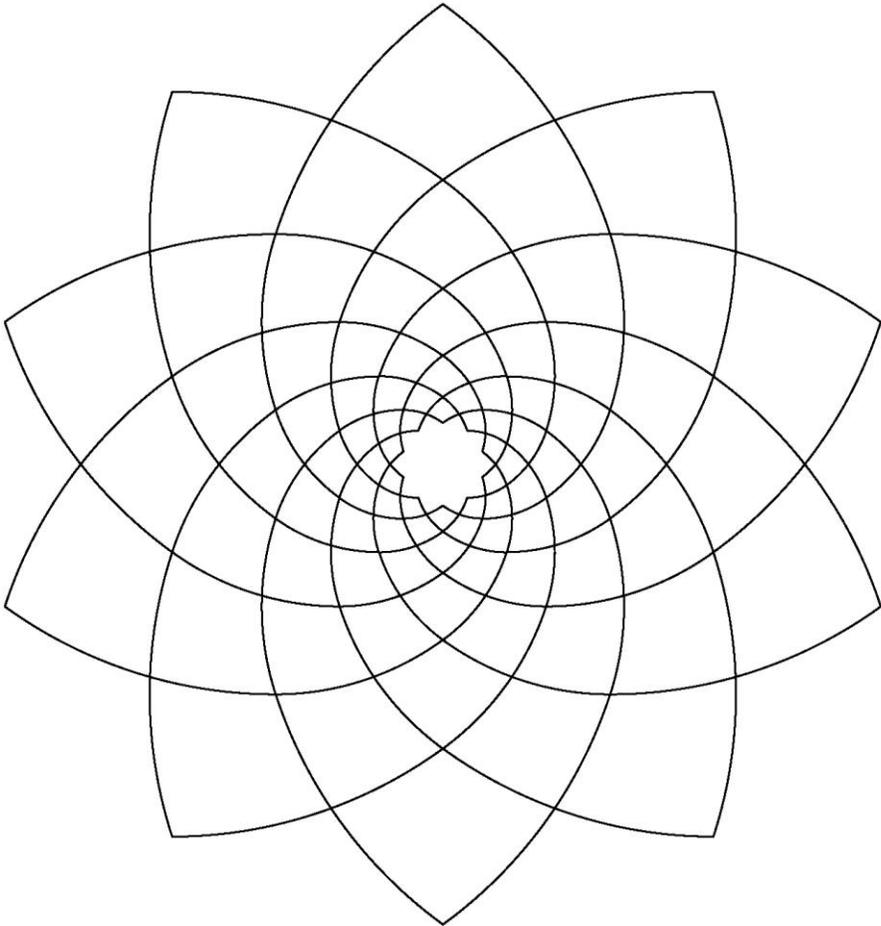


MICHAEL RICE ARCHITECT

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## Interview for design magazine 2006

How did this all begin?

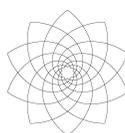
As long as I can recall I have been interested in space, shape and form. This found playful expression in everything from weird lego constructs, unorthodox airfix creations (ignore the instructions!), paper and card models, tree houses and straw forts! My acceptance into the school of architecture in 1984 was the result of a bizarre series of synchronicities, which started my formal architectural training. Fortunately it took only a couple of years post graduation to purge this training, and to begin my journey to remember a more life based design approach.

There are many possible paths....what factors influenced your chosen path?

I have always been interested in eastern philosophy and began traditional Karate in 1984. I read and thought extensively about cycles of nature and principles of creation. In immersing myself in natural movements and rhythms it became very clear that nature expresses itself in a language of shapes, harmonic ratios, geometric symmetries etc. It seemed to make sense that if our buildings are to support life they should have these principles as generative design paths. The quest was emerging at a conscious level.

How did you inform yourself about Sacred Geometry and Natural Design?

I have been and continue to be blessed with many wonderful teachers along my path, appearing each time when I was ready to gratefully receive the depth of their teaching. The subjects are far-reaching and diverse, ranging from martial arts, healing practices, shamanism, feng shui, bio feedback, Permaculture, dowsing and energy clearing, art and traditional building practices. I have traveled extensively to learn and build this awareness and knowledge base, from the US and Mexico, across Australia, through Tibet, China and India, mainland Europe and more recently Japan. Each new level of understanding got ample opportunity to manifest in my design practice, honed with continuous feedback and subsequent refinement.



Teaching to diverse audiences from all disciplines around the world also provided a rich environment for developing my knowledge and comprehension of this material. Not taking myself seriously has also helped a lot, as I believe we can be more open to receive clearly when we are not full of our own importance! This playful attitude is enhanced by being a very lucky father of four home birthed, home-educated children which provides the equivalent of a continuous intensive Buddhist retreat in my own home!

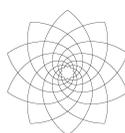
Show would you explain Sacred Geometry to a lay person?

The principles of sacred geometry are actually very simple. I have had fun describing them to children, and got great enjoyment from witnessing their complete acceptance and understanding of the information. As the great philosopher Winnie the Pooh is fond of saying – “simplest is bestest”, and this is true of natural life-based design. I would normally introduce the subject by saying that everything in the Universe consists of energy vibrating at different frequencies.

Waves of energy are constantly interfering and interrelating with each other in each moment in every corner of the Universe. When two waves meet they must learn how to interfere in such a way so as not to cancel each other out. The way they do this is to use symmetry (pattern / shape / form) which leads to the emergence of what we call matter. So in effect, nature uses shape to attract, form and sustain patterns of energy, which form the basis of the manifest world and the living environment. The underlying principles are easy to learn and use, as they are the very nature of who we are.

Any practical advice for garden designers...?

A lot of the garden designers I have encountered have an instinctive grasp of this information, even though they may not be consciously aware of the ‘science’ behind it. Mother nature is the best teacher, and when we design places and spaces that mirror the forms we see in nature, we go a long way in creating a living wholesome environment. Sacred Geometry can provide a



limitless natural framework for our design manifestations – it serves to open us to timeless and endless possibilities rather than limit us to the passing fads of fashion or mood.

Are clients aware of what is in store for them with your design approach?

Generally, clients arrive at my door after a referral, having seen a completed project or reading an article about my approach. So they tend to be already a little bit mad (for that read 'free'). They will have resonated to some extent with what they have seen or heard and are generally more than happy to explore the infinite possibilities of creation!

Is it necessary for clients to understand the principles of sacred design?

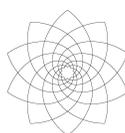
No, of course not. However, they do tend to get a crash course when they see the initial design! As these generative ratios and proportions are what we are made of, at every level, when we actually see it in the form of a design, we get a hint of our true nature, and this tends to excite and enthuse my clients. It is not about me and my 'design ability' – rather it is a way to ground us into a deep understanding of our potential and to see it made manifest in our space.

How do I process negative emotions to produce positive results?

I do not believe in good or bad, right or wrong. What we might describe as a negative emotion or tendency / habit / viewpoint is an opportunity to see where we still have charge or resistance to flow. It's all good!, and it all leads us to establishing a more sustainable life for ourselves, our clients and the land itself.

How can one manage the unconventional design...including budgetary constraints etc ?..

In the film 'The Matrix' there is a scene where a boy appears to be bending a spoon with his mind. When the main character, Neo, questions the boy he replies – "it is your mind that must bend, not the spoon". So too with the building of 'unconventional' designs. A mind that will not bend cannot see that a curved wall is actually easier to set up, is more structurally strong and



can be a lot of fun to construct. It does not have to be more expensive or require greater skill. Just an open or 'bendable' mind.

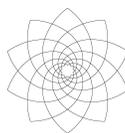
I designed quite a few holiday homes associated with a famous Golf and Country Club, and each of them incorporated mostly curved walls, stairs and some ceilings. Initially the builder grudgingly referred to me as the bast@\*d with the compass!, but after only several weeks he noticed that all of his workers were achieving more in any given day, enjoying the work more, less sick days and generally a more positive attitude to their craft. He even commented on one carpenter who came back in the evening on his own time to finish a particularly tricky stair detail because he 'wanted to get it just right'.

Most of my one off houses are built by a Canadian / Estonian crew with very bendable minds, and very skilled hands. I merely introduce them to my clients and the magic begins. Once they create the frame shape I find that getting more traditional builders and contractors to engage and finish the build is easier, as the space has now emerged and is very attractive to life – it enthuses even the most cynical of personalities!

What would you advise on the selection of building materials??

The 'new' definition of life that underpins my design philosophy is far reaching in its implications, as it impacts on every aspect of our lives, from how we chose to give birth, live, eat, build, create and of course die. Put simply life can be described as 'the ability to fractally attract and self organize electrical charge'. I understand that this can seem a little obtuse and perhaps a tad heady, and here is not the forum to tease it out a bit.

But this definition provides a rigorous framework for life-based design including the choice of materials. We can see materials as complex wave packages, which interfere and interrelate with an environment. The choice of materials dictates whether or not the resulting wave interference pattern is generally constructive or destructive. This is not open to much interpretation as the results are measurable using bio-feedback – does this design choice add greater charge symmetry, greater charge density, greater electrical (energy) coherence – i.e. more life? Or does it create a reduction of same, leading to tension which creates imbalance.



For instance using metal in a garden installation can create disruptive magnetic symmetry on the land, or in more playful terms – it annoys the faeries!

I understand that the language used here can be a little off putting or indeed irrelevant. It is introduced to establish a sharable language frame work based on science, so that we all creative disciplines can be ‘singing’ off the same hymn sheet!

What do the words Sustainable / sacred mean?

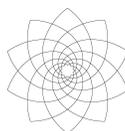
The word ‘Sacred’ actually means ‘Sustainable’. The two are totally interchangeable. If we remove the religious connotation we have a viable design philosophy that builds living systems.

What are some Techniques for reading the invisible?

This is actually the easy part, once all the head stuff is put in its place! We are more perceptive than we imagine, in fact we are limited only by our imagination. At a quantum level a perceived event has every much a likelihood of being caused by something that has yet to happen, as by something that just has. The notion of linear time, which underlies most design thinking (the critical design path etc) is actually an illusion, albeit a persistent one! There is only the now. This is of course counter intuitive and seems to make no sense, but in reality consciousness (all there is) is not limited by linear time and space.

At a more relevant level this means that our minds can actually reach forward in time and download the perfect matrix of possibilities in any given design situation. This flies in the face of most if not all established design thinking, but this does not phase me – I seek to be of service, and put no limits on how this can manifest.

Not having a design ego (or taking yourself too seriously!) is actually vital to the successful manifestation of a dream. There are techniques to optimize the process – they are neither secret nor difficult, and can be taught in a matter of minutes. But they do require surrender, trust and gratitude – and of course practice!



What is next?

I am on this planet to seek to remember who I am, that I am Oneness expressing itself as an apparent individual within a dream wherein the illusion of a separate self gets to be of service to the apparent continuing evolution of consciousness! I know this might sound a tad new agey, but in truth it is the reason we are all here. This is all there is. This is it. This celebration is immensely enjoyable, but it does require a relaxed attitude to what might emerge next. It is all unfolding with exquisite perfection!

Thank you, and remember – don't worry....be happy!

