

Wild Design: The Architecture of Nature

Kimberly Ridley

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William Blake's poetic directive to "see a World in a Grain of Sand / And a Heaven in a Wild Flower" encapsulates the message of Kimberly Ridley's *Wild Design*. Here, the natural structures of mineral crystals, bird nests, beaver dams and honeycomb are sources of wonder because of their intricacy and functional perfection. There is both art and science in Ridley's marvelous visual and textual examples, alongside interesting facts about how diverse animals and plants behave in their environments.

Elegant descriptions of flora, fauna, rocks, and fungi are paired with curated images from antiquarian natural history sources. Diverse plant forms, from pollen grains to leaves and petals, seduce the eye on closer inspection. Seashells and sunflower centers unravel in dazzling and precise logarithmic spirals. Tiny radiolarians, a type of plankton, are encased in stunning, spiky silica mesh encrustations that resemble hot air balloons or retro military helmets or Victorian lampshades.

Designers and architects have always turned to the natural world for inspiration, and collectors grand and small have long sought out the wondrous natural treasures showcased in this book. *Wild Design* is an evocative miniature cabinet of curiosities, in portable codex form.

RACHEL JAGARESKI (November / December 2021)

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