

## Found in Translation:

## Language and the Built Reality

"The structure of the language one habitually uses influences the manner in which one understands his environment. The picture of the universe shifts from tongue to tongue." *Langauge, Thought, and Reality* -Benjamin Whorf

Language acts as a frame through which people see the world around them, and through the learning of languages, humans are able to see the world through different frames. Language forms the basis by which people form relationships between objects, each other, and the self and its environment. Architecture, on the other hand, acts as a physical representation and boundary for these relationships. This project sits at a crossroads of language and architecture, of art and structure, of different cultures, and of intersecting realities. As humans reach for understanding of the world they inhabit, how can language be used to influence the design and experience of architecture, and can it be used to bring together communities with cultural and

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together communities with cultural and linguistic differences? How do these parallel yet contrasting stories impact worldviews, imaginations, and behaviors? Minnesota has many languages woven into its history, the first being the Dakota people. They tell stories of the Bdote, where two waters come together. It is said that the seven Dakota tribes came from the seven stars of Orion. They traveled down the Spirit Path and arrived on earth at the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers. Their names and the stories they tell are very strongly connected to the land. They named the area Mni Sota Makoce or "the land where the waters reflect the skies".

The site sits near the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi River, the boundary between school districts, and between central locations for several cultural groups. The District del Sol is on the West Bank of the Mississippi and houses the center of Saint Paul's Latino culture. North of the Mississippi, there is a significant population of Hmong speakers who have also created their own communities. To the West is the Bdote, a sacred place for the Dakota people as the origin of their people and a meeting place for gatherings of different groups.

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e interplay between story, the physical plane, and greater knowledge.



