
“Hidatsa Ma-giguts-gi Adish”
(Hidatsa Learning Lodge):
Language and Performance Renewal Center for
Three Affiliated Tribes



a Graduate Design Thesis prepared by Marita Abe

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Three Affiliated Tribes**

Master of Architecture Design Thesis documentation
submitted by Marita Abe

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A DESIGN THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE
DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTURE OF NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

By

Marita Abe

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE

 03/31/2010
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Primary Critic

 03/31/2010
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Thesis Committee Chair

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Abstract/Executive Summary:

Interest is increasing among the “Seventh Generation” of Three Affiliated Tribes on the Fort Berthold Reservation in North Dakota, seeking out elders who are still fluent speakers of the Hidatsa language. Language embodies important aspects of cultural expression and cultural identity, and a shared goal is to pass along this endangered language to future generations. This thesis acknowledges the urgency of learning Hidatsa culture and tradition as a necessary step to assuring cultural renewal and cultural identity for future teachers of an endangered language.

This thesis design exploration deals with the current need for a place to give a voice to fluent Hidatsa speakers. Successful expression of cultural renewal and healing, by reviving and renewing the endangered Hidatsa language, will provide a suitable place for elders who are fluent in the language and knowledgeable about traditions and culture of the Hidatsa people.

In theoretical terms, the thesis will explore correspondences between language and architecture. An architectural setting affords the appropriate “vehicle” that will facilitate language renewal through performance and celebration. The architectural thesis represents a process of discovery and a framework for the designer’s knowledge of cultural traditions and spiritual meanings.

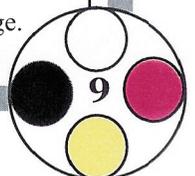
Theoretical Premise:

Much like language itself, architecture can communicate, through time and tradition, a sense of healing and renewal of an endangered language (Hidatsa). Language renewal is integral with renewal of cultural life among the Hidatsa people, as well as a necessary mechanism for transmitting spiritual knowledge to future generations. Architectural “place-making” can help the process of language renewal by creating a vehicle for people to communicate and help revive this culture’s identity.

Cultural renewal and healing can be expressed through the active process of teaching endangered Hidatsa language and traditions. As Hidatsa language and culture are valued in all the richness of their details, they can be celebrated by being passed along from one generation to the next. Architecture will contribute to the preservation of cultural life and language by giving the people of the Hidatsa tribe a performance setting and celebration place that stimulates communication, teaching, and language renewal in all its dimensions.

Project Emphasis:

As tangible modes of cultural expression, language and architecture have many fascinating, similar aspects that invite comparisons. An architectural setting will provide a place for people of the Hidatsa tribe to express attitudes and emotions that embody the spirit of their language.



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