Ancient Spirit Modern Mind - Huu-ay-aht Community Cultural Centre
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Field of Inquiry
The **motto** of the Huu-ay-aht First Nations provides the conceptual framework for the studio. The pairing of “ancient spirit” with a “modern mind” is front and centre in their public-facing and online presence. We will respect that aim and search for what it produces architecturally.

Putting this idea into practice, the Community Cultural Centre (CCC) at the Huu-ay-aht village of Anacola is both part of a tourism plan and a way to transmit knowledge between generations. The **Huu-ay-aht are negotiating the repatriation** of many artifacts, including two large poles and many smaller objects. How these artifacts will be housed in and active agents of the CCC will be significant technical and creative issues of the studio.

In parallel to these plans, the Huu-ay-aht are also developing resource capacity via a community forest and sawmill with kiln-drying facilities. They are involved in reconciliation negotiations with Western Forest Products, a major timber/lumber producer on Vancouver Island. We will focus on the intersection of this wood-centred material culture and its developing infrastructure.

**Schedule**
The studio is organized in two parts: 1/ a five-week research and design exercise that develops a small but complex element of the project to a high degree of specificity, and 2/ the elaboration of that element into an eight-week design project.

**Learning Objectives**
Students will resolve the organization of the modest (5000 sf) program, site orientation and (urban) design, life safety, basic material, and technical systems, and universal accessibility standards.

**Site**
The gently sloping site is in a developing part of Anacola, carved out of the lush coastal rainforest of Vancouver Island. We will explore how the CCC can strengthen existing, casual connections to two adjacent public buildings to the west and south. Also part of the studio’s site design activity will be how the CCC can anticipate connections to a large open space for sports and community gatherings and a new 20-unit housing district being planned to the northeast. There are also potentially significant south-facing ocean views of Pachena Bay, especially from an elevated position.

**Program**
The CCC functional program is modest, and organizing it a straightforward process. There are two major parts: 1/ a entry-level artifact exhibit and artist workspace; 2/ a second-floor space for Elders’ and a multi-purpose room/daycare. There is of course also the vertical (spatial and physical) connection between them.

The focus of the first exercise is the meta-program. Can, and if so, **how does a building facilitate the transmission of knowledge**? How does this question apply in the context of an **Indigenous culture that has occupied the same geography for millennia**? Where does a design sit along a spectrum from the technical to the cultural?

We’ll begin by assembling a collection of **Nuu-chah-nulth / Huu-ay-aht artifacts currently located in museums**, but potentially repatriated. We’ll catalogue them according to material, use, and fabrication method, etc. We will explore how to creatively and conceptually link one or many of these artifacts to the building’s spaces and their users, including tourists and residents, Huu-ay-aht Elders and children.

In both exercises, the modest size of the program provides an opportunity to explore and develop in some depth a range of scales of building elements (corners, projections, stairs, thresholds, entries, openings, surfaces, cabinetry, etc.) that are embedded in it. How the building extends into the landscape, meets the sky or the ground, how a wall turns a corner, will also be subjects throughout the studio.

**Community Engagement**
Students in the studio will complete the **TCPS Core 2 tutorial** on research ethics and produce a **positionality statement**. Via Zoom, we will have several opportunities to engage with members of the Huu-ay-aht / Anacola community and others who consult with or work for them. These sessions will provide local knowledge and insight and help ground your work. Unfortunately, it is not possible to travel to Huu-ay-aht at this time.