Lifeways: Reimagining Community, Spirit & Place in Northern Haida Gwaii

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Studio Hours: Tuesday & Friday 13:30 - 18:00 PST | Office hours: Friday 9:00 - 10:00 PST via email request

Current worldwide conditions remind each of us just how fragile our existence in the world can be, from physical and mental health challenges to social injustices. For some communities, these conditions have always been present, long-ranging and systemically rife with multiple forms of inequity. But in displays of unbridled optimism, Indigenous and Minority peoples around the world are now voicing their experiences on social media and in public demonstrations, promoting lasting positive change. Here in Canada, 150 years since the country’s inauguration, First Nations communities, some with over 14,000 years of local history, are working to create communities centered around strength, vibrancy and resiliency. Their collective healing takes form as an unbridled optimism for the future.

Northern Haida Gwaii is our chosen site, as it holds both opportunities and challenges. As Old Massett Village ventures into the realities of the 21st century narrative —beset with histories of racial and cultural discriminations; rampant external resource extraction; community health and wellness shortcomings, to name few —our studio will participate in the co-creation of a re-envisioned story for Old Masset. We will contribute to the community engagement phase of a multi-year-long visioning process, organized by Eudaemonia Network (EN) and Old Massett Village Council (OMVC). While the design and construction of natural trails, learning, meeting and places of contemplation, and a longhouse in Northern Haida Gwaii is the ultimate goal for EN & OMVC, our studio will contribute to the imagining process, to explore new beginnings through thoughtful strategies of reconciliation.

The course has three modules in this order, Reflection & Expression (2 weeks), Respect & Reciprocity (5 weeks) and Recognize & Reimagine (5 weeks). There are 4 investigations accumulating into a final video, with reading & media seminars in between. We will be working individually and in groups in order to address a range of topics, from environmental protection to socio-cultural rituals. We will explore various forms of multimedia, utilizing the animated story™ to engage and to capture the imaginations of local community members and prospective investors alike.

NOTE 1: This studio highly encourages both students from landscape architecture and architecture to participate.
NOTE 2: To those who embark on this course, do so with an open mind and open heart.