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The Design Lodge: A lexical shift towards life-centred architectural pedagogy

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Abstract

This essay posits the role that the spaces for architectural production have played in supporting a design ethos that has historically neglected our relationship with the Land, and how its reconceptualization could contribute to a 'spiritual and cultural' shift through a placed-based ethical framework. More specifically, the space where design typically takes place is most often described in English as the "studio", a term that has been adopted by universities and professional offices alike and is broadly considered the core of architectural education and production around the world. Yet, surprisingly, we rarely question - why a "studio"? What is the nature of a "studio" exactly, and how does this potentially impact how we teach design and, subsequently, what we design? Can an element of the sacred infiltrate the spaces of architectural production in the twenty-first century in an effort to prioritize the flourishing of all life on our planet, and how can Indigenous knowledge guide us along this path? The essay first examines the history of the "studio" and questions its ongoing relevance, as well as recent alternatives. This is followed by a proposition for the concept of a "design lodge" that might best be able to inspire "transformational" change in architectural education by transcending conventional fixations on object-centred design.

Keywords: Studio, pedagogy, indigenous, lodge.

> "I used to think the top environmental problems were biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and climate change. I thought with 30 years of good science we could address those problems. But I was wrong. The top environmental problems are selfishness, greed and apathy… and to deal with these, we need a spiritual and cultural transformation - and we scientists don't know how to do that."
>
> - Dr. James Gustave Speth, former Dean of Forestry at Yale University (*Ives, Freeth, and Fischer* 2020, 208)

> "We have something in our way of life, in our roots, in our heritage that is a knowledge that surpasses that of the majority society. They have lost their affinity with the environment, while we still feel the oneness of all living beings, the oneness of all life. We have a tremendous amount of knowledge to offer mankind. We must teach the industrial societies the meaning of life."
>
> - Douglas Cardinal, Blackfoot architect and Anishinaabe Elder (*Of the Spirit*, 1977, 46)

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1. INTRODUCTION

We strive to accept our collective responsibility to address our self-manufactured climate crisis, yet struggle to understand how to do it, as Dr. Gus Speth's opening statement adequately summarizes. The word 'scientists' in Speth's final sentence could be effortlessly replaced with 'architects' and many other professions, for whom the notion of spirituality is often considered taboo in our mostly secularized professional and postsecondary environments. This essay posits the role that the spaces for architectural production have played in supporting a design ethos that has historically neglected our relationship with the Land, and how its reconceptualization could contribute to the kind of 'spiritual and cultural' shift that Speth calls for. More specifically, the space where design typically takes place is described in English as the "studio", a term that has been adopted by universities and professional offices alike and is considered to be at the core of architectural education and creative production around the world. Yet, surprisingly, we rarely ask the questions, "Why a studio?", and, "What is the nature of a studio exactly, and how does this potentially impact how we teach design and, subsequently, what we design?"

Based on personal, academic, and professional experiences as a Métis architect working alongside various Indigenous colleagues, Elders, and communities throughout my career, this essay posits whether an element of the sacred can infiltrate the spaces of architectural education in the twenty-first century in an effort to prioritize the flourishing of all life. A suggestion is offered that Indigenous knowledge can guide us along this path, as renowned Blackfoot architect and Elder Douglas Cardinal wrote nearly half a century ago. An alternative to the studio is considered through the introduction of the Design Lodge, a space for learning that might best contribute to a transformative shift in architectural education towards transcending our historical fixations on object- and human-centred design.

Why a lodge?

For First Nations and Métis peoples in Canada,[1] and throughout Turtle Island, the word "lodge" is used in multiple contexts. It most commonly identifies spaces of ceremony, such as a healing lodge (which has also been increasingly used to define Indigenous-focused healing spaces within correctional facilities in Canada), or a traditional sweat lodge (Figure 1). Related to this is also the Midewiwin Lodge, which will be discussed briefly below. However, the word is also frequently used to describe a communal residence for Elders in many Indigenous communities (i.e. an Elders' Lodge) and it occasionally emerges in other contexts. For example, in personal communication with a Métis Elder about the role of a contemporary library, she described it first in the Indigenous language, but then poetically translated it into a "storytelling lodge." Instantly, the psychogeography of the library was transformed into something transcending a repository for books and information, and instead demanded reflection on the sacredness of storytelling as a form of timeless knowledge transfer and exchange. For Indigenous peoples, the word "lodge" thus carries varying levels of respect, honour, and sacredness and to identify a space as such, also indicates a certain level of behavioral conduct and sanctitude. Ceremonial lodges are typically led by a Lodge Keeper, an Elder, or a Knowledge Carrier or Keeper, and these individuals have been inevitably taught their traditional teachings by their mentors for decades. They carry on that knowledge through lived experience, oral traditions, and ceremony as highly-respected individuals within their communities. It is also essential to emphasize that though there are many similarities, the teachings, rituals, and physical structures of the lodges vary significantly across Turtle Island (the name for North America for many Indigenous peoples) depending on the culture, the language, and the geographical region they are woven into.

More recently, the word "lodge" has also been used to describe spaces for learning at universities in

[1] I am not familiar enough with Inuit cultures in Canada and therefore am not including reference to them, not to exclude, but rather to not make any pan-indigenous assumptions about the use of the word lodge in these cultures.

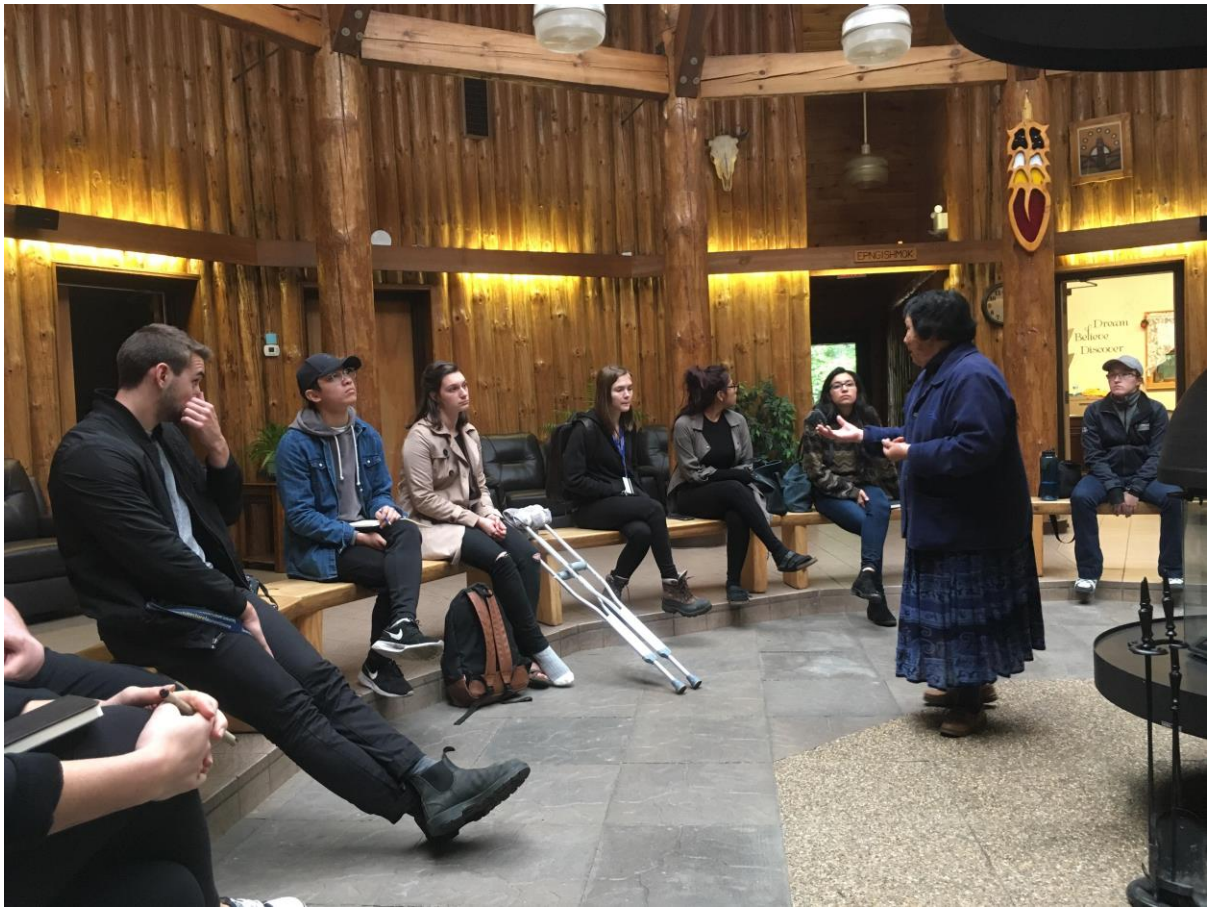

Figure 1. Students from the McEwen School of Architecture Indigenous Design Studio listening to Elder Carol Nadjiwon at Dan Pine Lodge in Garden River First Nation, Ontario, in 2017. Photo by author.

Canada, grounded in Indigenous teachings. The Calls to Action presented by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015), initiated a nation-wide conversation about what reconciliation means for Canada as a country composed of many sovereign nations, encouraging universities to further question how they might "decolonize" their approach to post-secondary education. For example, campuses such as Brock and Laurentian Universities have recently constructed "teaching lodges" to "provide safe space[s] for Indigenous ways of knowing." (Hunt 2021) The Laurentian University *wiigwaam* is a teaching lodge primarily, though it is also used for other activities such as individual counselling and mentorship (Figure 2). The building of the wiigwaam was a collective effort led by a number of Indigenous faculty members at the university (including McEwen School of Architecture faculty), Elder Petahtegoose (Atikameksheng Anishnawbek), and the Indigenous Student Affairs office.[2] What is most relevant to this discussion is the kind of learning *milieu* that emerges through the conceptualization, preparation, and construction of a teaching lodge. Months prior to its construction, there is a collective effort to harvest the saplings that will be used for the structure, as well as the birch bark panels that will eventually clad it, all led by the Elder. Where to find the appropriate saplings and bark for the panels, what time of the year to harvest them, and dealing with the insects and the physical labour, all require intimate knowledge of the Land and how to navigate it, which leads to a more personal and invested relationship with material that transcends the commodified norms of most architectural schools. Yet beyond the experiential engagement with the

[2] It is important to note that, while the term *wiigwaam* has been often translated into English as a "lodge," this does not honour the full complexity and embedded teachings of the anishinaabemowin language.

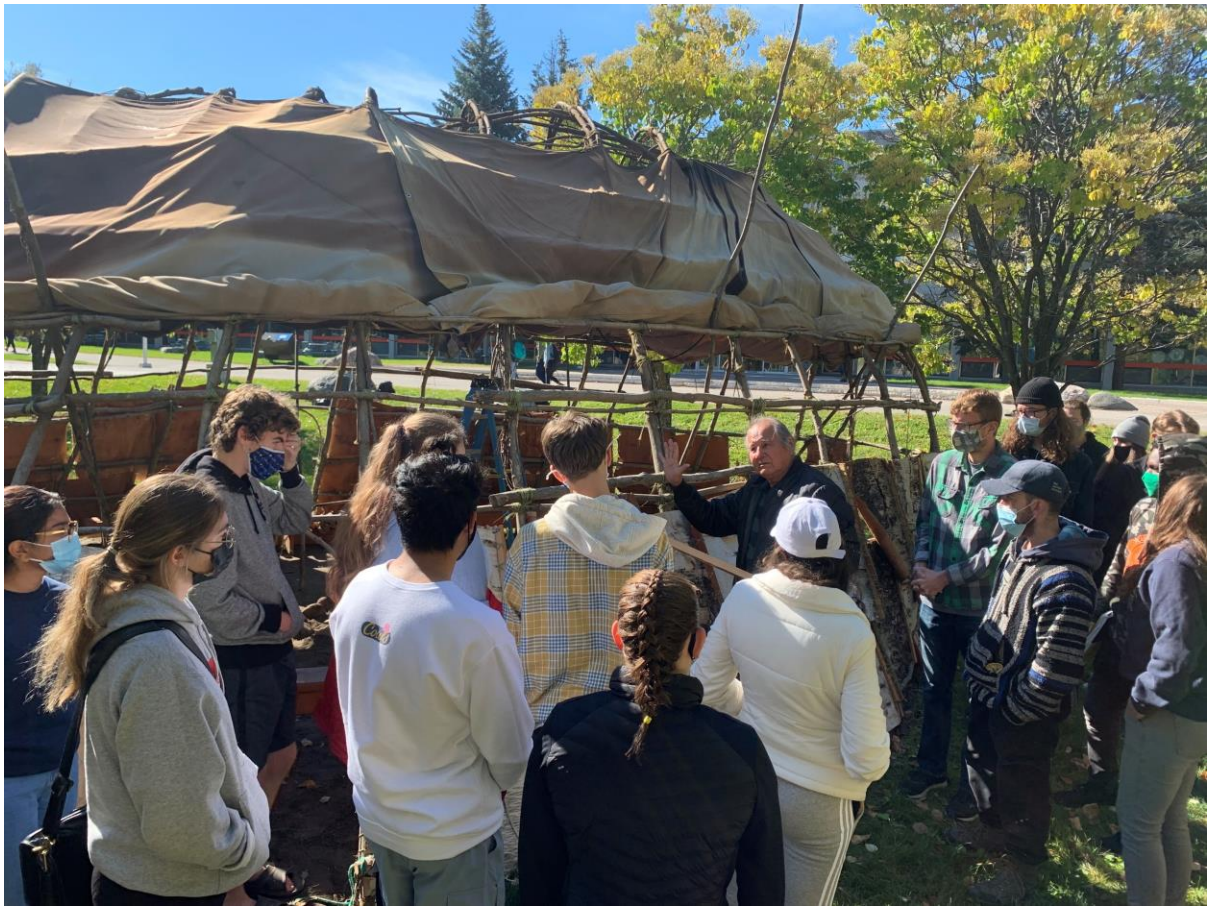

Figure 2. Elder Art Petahtegoose discusses the construction of the Laurentian University teaching lodge, or wiigwaam, with students in 2021. Photo by author.

source of materials, participants also learn about the importance of laying down tobacco (*semma* to Anishinaabemowin speakers) to honour the lives of the forest that have offered themselves for the eventual structure. Thus, the experience of building a lodge allows one to gain awareness of the need for an intimate relationship with the Land, its seasons, and the sacred interconnectedness between all things, as well as Indigenous values of reciprocity, long before the construction has started. In this way, the teaching lodge immediately offers a uniquely ethical positionality with material as one of its first foundational lessons.

But the teaching lodge at Laurentian University carries other significant lessons about buildings, design, and community. In a video interview introducing the lodge to the broader community, Elder Petahtegoose describes its construction by the various students and faculty members over multiple academic years, including second-year undergraduate students from the McEwen School of Architecture, as follows:

> It's not yet been fully born. It's still under construction. So that has to be captured at that time - the giving of a name to this lodge to indicate that it's now born…it's now a home. We're learning right now the instruction about how we're to care and provide for the keeping of this home. It's not only a single individual, it belongs to the wider community. It becomes the community's responsibility to look after it and that's all part of the teaching that's going on here. We're creating a new life and that's all part of the learning experience for the students that are coming in and they're participating in this building and looking after, eventually, a house that's been created, a home that's being opened. (Petahtegoose, 2020)

Elder Petahtegoose here emphasizes that buildings are not inert objects, conceived only for their utility or aesthetic enjoyment, but that they are named and living community members, and they need to be cared for by the community in order for them to thrive and support that community. Furthermore, in describing the lodge as a space for learning, he adds,

> The lodge here has a deep purpose to it. It's a home. It's an educational facility. It's a learning centre. People come and sit down inside and there's a peacefulness here when you come into this place. And when we light up that fire, there's a centering that goes on, it makes you really feel welcome. And that's what this place is for - to welcome people home. To help people get grounded, to prepare [them] so that people are walking into their future with a warm heart and an open mind." (Petahtegoose, 2020)

Here, Elder Petahtegoose describes the learning space as a home, not in terms of residential occupation, but rather as a space that can "help people get grounded," and move into a future with a "warm heart and an open mind." This reveals a very different kind of learning environment than the typical architectural design studio, with a very different set of objectives. Thus, the third essential teaching here is that the lodge is as much a space about ethical and existential inquiry as it is about the content of the pedagogy, and that the two are inextricably interrelated. It is in the dialogue between Elders, Knowledge Carriers, faculty and students over time that a form of pedagogical exchange takes place that cannot be easily annotated or scripted. As Elder Petahtegoose emphasizes in his description of the lodge – "it takes time." The teachings are not snippets of information to be stockpiled for a future measure of competency at the end of a semester, but rather to help "ground" people in broader ways.

Similar approaches to Indigenous knowledge are also emerging through other academic initiatives, including those with an environmental or land-based focus, such as the *Gikinoo'amaagewin Wiigwaam*, part of a funded research project under the umbrella of the Centre for Environmental Health Equity at Queen's University. The website for the program describes that the name of the project originates from "the Anishinaabemowin words *Gikinoo'amaagewin* (teaching) and *Wiigwaam* (lodge)," and that the community-driven action-research project seeks to affirm "the role of *M'Wikwedong* Indigenous Friendship Centre as a teaching lodge for climate action and land stewardship." (Centre for Environmental Health Equity) In all cases, there is a clear understanding that within the various lodges, sacred teachings are passed on, with the majority of them inextricably linked to honouring Mother Earth and each other in transformational ways. Thus, the emerging postsecondary "teaching lodge" is designed specifically to share with a broader audience local Indigenous knowledge and timeless lessons about the Land, and the sacred interrelatedness of all life within that region.

Inclusivity and the lodge

Based on the above, the teaching lodge can be understood as a learning space that emphasizes buildings as living community members where ancient and contemporary teachings are shared, as informed by Indigenous languages and an intimate knowledge of place. It is a space where individual and collective awareness is gained about the essentiality of our relations with the living world, to which Anishinaabe peoples include things like rocks and water. Yet another essential aspect of the contemporary teaching lodge is the importance of sharing the knowledge with others in order to inspire a life-centered approach to our individual and collective agency, as Cardinal's opening quote suggests. Today, many settlers are genuinely interested in learning more about Indigenous knowledge, but there is often the daunting obstacle of seeking out how to access the teachings because they are primarily passed on through oral traditions and often through ceremony. Such spaces within communities are not readily accessible as they require an invitation and a level of trust that can only be established through building mutually respectful relationships. However, the introduction of the "teaching lodge" into the university campus has broadened access to the lodge significantly. This brings us to the etymological complexity of the word "lodge" and how inclusivity has been an essential aspect of it since settlers arrived on Turtle Island.

At some point during the early decades and centuries following first contact, Indigenous spaces of ceremony on Turtle Island were translated into English as "lodges." Given their spiritual significance, it is worth considering why they weren't called "chapels" or "temples." Why a "lodge"? There are likely two primary reasons. First, as Elder Petahtegoose explains, the *wiigwaam* has been widely translated as a

"house" or "home," which is related to previous centuries when the structure was used by various Indigenous peoples as a primary shelter. However, such a single reading would risk reducing it to the romanticized primitive hut of previous architectural generations. Instead, Elder Petahtegoose's description of the teaching lodge as a space for "welcoming people home" transcends providing shelter; the lodge is about an ethical and spiritual grounding. This leads to the second reason why "lodge" may have been used to describe spaces of Indigenous ceremony and further highlights why inclusivity is essential to its pedagogical role. The Indigenous "lodge," as a designed physical space for ceremony reflecting the teachings offered within, shares close connections with the lodges of the settler Freemasons, with whom many influential Indigenous individuals maintained strong relations during the early centuries of colonization. For the Freemasons, while "lodge" had been previously used to describe a "workshop of masons" in the mid-fourteenth-century, it was first recorded to describe a "local branch of a society" of Freemasons in 1680. Similar to the Indigenous ceremonial lodge, the Freemason lodge carries with it ancient spatial design guidelines, with rooms required to be oriented east-west and spaces designed to embrace the Sun and the Moon, for example. (Mackey 1859, 281) One of the closest links between Freemasonry and Indigenous ceremony is evidenced by the Midewiwin of the Chippewas, also known as the Grand Medicine Society, who similarly developed lodges that, like the Freemasons, include a series of degrees that act as spiritual thresholds, while the construction and occupation of their "lodges" are also intimately linked to their teachings.

Joy Porter's book *Native American Freemasonry* (2011) offers a comprehensive account of the historical relations between the Freemasons and various Indigenous peoples throughout their shared history on Turtle Island, and while she acknowledges many significant problems related to their interactions, there were also many core similarities. The pantheistic and republican values of Freemasonry, Porter argues, were deemed as philosophically aligned with Indigenous teachings. As she writes, "…it corresponded with certain Indian traditions and Indian ways of perceiving. In particular, Freemasonry perpetuated a sense of the essential kinship between all things and preserved cultural space for ritual and symbolism." (Porter 2011, 106). Though immense gaps existed between their distinct belief systems, there were enough perceived similarities between the Freemasons and Indigenous peoples in terms of their spiritual journeys and their lodges that many influential Indigenous leaders such as Joseph Brandt and Philip J. Deloria (grandfather of Vine Deloria, Jr.) were welcomed into the Freemason brotherhood. While many unnerving complexities existed between Freemasons and Indigenous communities, including the masons "playing Indian" by adopting their rituals in their ceremonies, their exclusion of women, and the overall imbalance of power between them, there was something intimately aligned in their common pursuits that allowed for them to share a space of spiritual inquiry – the lodge - regardless of their ethnic, cultural, and economic differences. Thus, there is significant evidence that the lodge has been one of the few spaces where Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples have historically come together to celebrate their common understanding of the "essential kinship between all things," and therefore offers an appropriate alternative to consider spaces for design education and creative production.

Why a design lodge?

A lexical shift - The above proposal for a teaching lodge for design still leads to many questions about what this would mean pedagogically. After all, as Carpenter et al. write, "Pedagogy, we argue, should drive space design." (316). To answer this, it is first worth clarifying how a design lodge might differ from the conventional studio. The influence of the Eurocentric studio on the historical production of Western art and design cannot be overstated. As Daniel Buren writes, "The art of yesterday and today is not only marked by the studio as an essential, often unique, place of production, it proceeds from it." (1979, 58). Etymologically, Terrie Anne Fraser (2016, 46-7) traces the history of "studio" to the Latin term *studium*, which is characterized by the zeal and passion that propels one's work, and *studere,* the diligence and determination in applying oneself to one's task. Regarding its increased use during the Renaissance, Fraser (48) describes a significant historical evolution when artistic "production" shifted into artistic "study," revealing "the belief in the supremacy of working with the artist's scholarly, conceptual and intellectual rigour rather than the artisans' hand skills and knowledge of materials." (67) Importantly, Fraser suggests that the kinds of work prioritized in the studio, either manual (material) or intellectual (conceptual), have been intermittently favoured throughout history to "meet

the cultural demands of a given era." (49) It was during the Renaissance that the artist-as-scholar flourished, consistent with social and cultural emphases on individual achievement and humanistic values across Europe. Thus, the individual experience of the artist became central to the creative vocations. Quoting Christopher Wood, Fraser writes that in order for the humanist artist to respond appropriately to the complexity of new cultural developments and shifting modes of production, they "now needed a private space where [they] could gather together and focus upon bits of the perceptible world…[which] changed the nature of the space distinguishing the modern artist's studio from the pre-modern workshop." (63)

Antonello da Messina's *St. Jerome in His Study* (1474) is one of many representations to depict the reverence for the study during this early Renaissance period. (Figure 3) Here, da Messina carefully positions the scholar within a fantastical construct of the Gothic cathedral. The natural world is framed only through the architectural openings, while his elevated desk is surrounded by the multiple books and objects that guide his intellectual focus. Valentina Manganaro (2022) concludes that the "curious" setting with the study at the center underlines how St. Jerome, as "a scholar of his time, [contributes] to a new lay iconography for humanist intellectuals," as he has "dedicated himself to prayer through reason, the main virtue of the humanist era." Related to the lexical shift towards the emerging prominence of the "study", and subsequently the "studio", Cole and Prado (2005) add that,

> "…the word *studio* only came late to designate the artist's workplace, first entering the English language in the nineteenth century; until the seventeenth century, Italians called the artist's shop a *bottega,* or simply a *stanza*, and used 'studio' primarily to denote

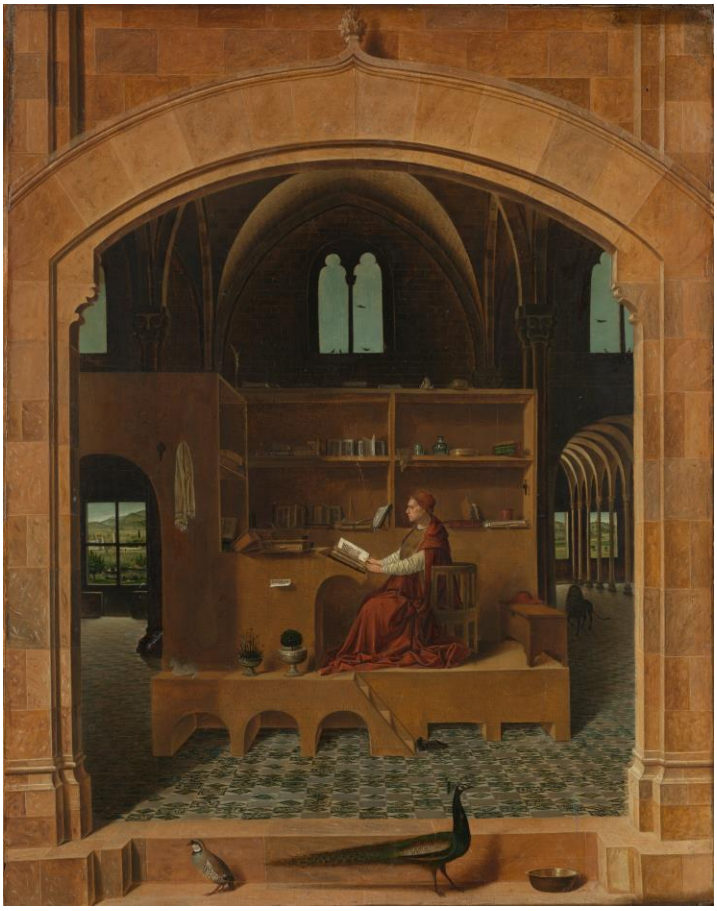

Figure 3. Antonello da Messina's *St. Jerome in His Study* (1474). Image courtesy of The National Gallery – London, via Wikimedia / Public Domain.

> the room, or even the desk, where the *scholar* sat." (3)

Furthermore, it is during this shift from workshop to studio that Fraser writes,

> …two of the most important qualities of the studio were forecast: the artist was presented as a scholar, working with his intellect rather than his craftsman's hands, in a study or a private room which came to represent (with all its collections) the materialization of the workings of his mind…it was a private space to which outsiders were scarcely admitted, giving it an air of secrecy and mystery that performed either by mirroring the artist's reflection of himself, or by function as an 'instrument,' as a kind of method for examining or framing the world. (64)

It is thus evident that the nature of the spaces where design takes place has changed significantly throughout history, including how we describe them. Over the past few decades, there have been multiple indications within architectural education that the word "studio" cannot universally circumscribe spaces of creative activity.[3] Examples of alternatives include "labs", "community centres," "collaboratives", and "workshops." Given that the term "studio" became favourable during the Renaissance in response to the societal values given to the individual intellect at the height of Humanism and colonial expansion, it is not surprising that its continued relevance has seemingly been questioned. In an age desperately trying to understand and respond to the environmental devastation caused by the Anthropocene, as well as the social and cultural atrocities committed through the colonial project, the Design Lodge offers another valid descriptor, and the first to be grounded in Indigenous knowledge. However, it is essential to also note that the development of a design lodge cannot be done hastily, as Celeste Pedri-Spade and Brock Pitawanakwat explain:

> Decolonization within universities happens when people commit to identifying and changing systems and processes rooted in colonial ideologies and white supremacy that continue to oppress Indigenous peoples and their knowledges. Decolonization recognizes that trying to "Indigenize" without dismantling systems of oppression changes nothing and actually creates conditions where Indigenous Peoples are further marginalized in ways that are gendered and racialized. (2022, 25).

Dismantling the idea of "studio" can therefore not be approached as another alternative for the sake of novelty, or to check off a box of "Indigenizing" for political correctness, but rather to seek the foundational essence of an Indigenous-led design education and allow for something distinct to emerge from this process.

Design ethics and sanctity – Beyond the significance of its renaming, if Speth's opening challenge is to be taken seriously, then the Design Lodge could offer a space where ethics and the notion of spirituality would be foregrounded, but also where the technical skills of architectural thinking and design are developed as they would in a traditional studio. The idea of integrating spirituality into the design studio is not new to architecture and has had an integral influence on design throughout history. For example, François Charrin quotes Frank Lloyd Wright's description of his well-documented approach to organic architecture:

> An important tenet of the eclectic, the organicist, and spiritualist schools is that all things in the work are in fact relative or interrelated. Also for the vitalist or the mystic, this ensemble of interrelations constitutes an all-encompassing, inspiring, and dynamic "Whole"…The spiritualist and mystical trends, in the West and the East, emphasize the necessity of cultivating, of training one's spirit, one's consciousness in order to reach, or more accurately, to fully participate in the "Truth"…For the architect, 'if the significance (*spirit*) of form is lacking, creative art can be nothing of or for the soul.' (1992, 153).

Wright's emphasis on the necessity of spirituality in design thinking is an example of a branch of early Modernism similarly pursuing an architecture of

[3] See Davidts and Paice (2009) for a broader historical critique of the "studio" in artistic practice.

interrelatedness. Rebecca Lemaire argues there has been inadequate attention given to the effect that Native American cultures had on Wright's design philosophy in comparison to his Japanese and Mayan influences. Furthermore, in her comparison of Wright with Cardinal, she finds many similarities, including, "…a holistic, integrated design style, an architectural respect for the environment, the metaphorical importance of fire, the open plan, and a preference for forms inspired by nature." (Lemaire 2013, 92). Despite noting some important differences, Lemaire further emphasizes that certain tenets existed in Wright's thinking that appear closely aligned with Cardinal and other Indigenous peoples from around the world.

Wright is clearly not the only non-Indigenous architect who has been similarly inspired by nature-informed design throughout the modern and contemporary eras. For instance, Cardinal drew formal inspiration from other "organic" architects and thinkers, such as Rudolph Steiner, Antoni Gaudí, and Francesco Borromini, whose approaches to design he felt closely aligned with his personal reverence for nature. (Bonfitto 2021). More recently, an emphasis on sustainability has quickly become the norm as regenerative design, net-positive and carbon footprint calculations, water management, and passive heating and cooling, for instance, have all emerged as standard to architectural practice and academic discourse. However, like Cardinal's own dedication to regularly-scheduled ceremony throughout his life, the lodge would be differentiated from other forms of environmentally-focused design practice through an emphasis on individual and communal understandings of the spiritual interrelatedness of all living things, as taught by Elders and Knowledge Carriers.

While a full discussion of the ethical foundations of architecture far exceeds the scope of this essay, it is evident that for architecture to respond to Speth's call for transformation through a design lodge, a deep questioning about prioritizing Indigenous teachings and ethics is required. Leonidas Koutsoumpos and Yue Zhuang suggest the Greek term *phronēsis* and the traditional Chinese notion of *Dao* offer two philosophical terms that can help "redefine the concept of architecture from being only a product, towards seeing architecture as a practice through which ethics and wisdom can be cultivated." (Koutsoumpos and Zhuang 2016, 214). Informed by writers such as Karsten Harries and Alberto Pérez-Gómez, they argue that "Architects have ignored their task of encouraging people to engage with their minds and their attitudes, and with the world in which they live…What is lacking, most of the time, is an attitude in both teachers and students that seeks to cultivate an ethical understanding of the world." (226). For Koutsoumpos and Zhuang, the emphasis here shifts from the making of an object to the various dialogues and routines that occur during the specific activity of design. This is what ultimately structures an education of ethics, which can be applied through the act of teaching design in architecture. Furthermore, Koutsoumpos' doctoral research concludes that there is a need to "inhabit the largely neglected and underestimated area of *ethics,"* which is characterized by practical judgements based on internal customs, habits and dispositions, and can be acquired through habituation. (2009, i) Importantly, he argues that it is "in the mere doing of the most mundane and everyday educational activities, where means and ends conflate, *ethics* thrive." (i)

Thus, it is through thoughtful reflection on such "mundane and everyday educational activities" where the Design Lodge gains its unique potential. As a Métis teacher of architecture who has been mentored by various Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Carriers over many years, my previously-taught Indigenous design studios have often explored such everyday activities. For example, on the first day of classes, there are typically no syllabi handed out or conversations about academic expectations. Instead, it begins with the sharing of a meal, along with invitations to other Indigenous participants from the community who the students will be working with and/or other Elders and Knowledge Carriers of the region. This allows for the course to maintain relationships and build new ones over time. Often this takes place away from the campus, in the community, or in another less-urban location. Regional creation stories might even be shared on this first day for the benefit of students who may not be familiar with them. Every year, the stories are unique and offer a slightly different perspective about the spirit of the place. In this setting, hierarchies between professor and student, master and disciple, client and consultant, etc. are not relevant. The only emphasis is to enter the design process with humility and respect for the knowledge shared through the teachings. Similarly, as inspired by Elder and master canoe builder Marcel Labelle, every week of the entire semester begins with a communal sharing circle where students, instructors, and guests, are given the opportunity to share their reflections on

what they are learning, or any other personal circumstances or events that are occupying their minds. Often there are statements of thankfulness shared with the group, while vulnerabilities are also often exposed. This is one of the times when the Elder offers guidance that transcends design and it is here, in an equitable space of exchange, where important learning takes place and where a sense of community, not competition, emerges as central to the student learning experience. Wherever appropriate and invited, students are also offered the opportunity to join ceremony with the community where they can learn more about the protocols of sacred ritual through direct lived experience. Also inspired by the guidance of the Elders, assignments often encourage students towards self-reflection on what grounds them in their day-to-day lives and what intentions they bring to their individual and collective agency. For example, in a 2020 studio taught by Cardinal at the McEwen School of Architecture, students were encouraged to design a single-family home that prioritized two things – honouring and respecting Mother Earth through robust sustainable design strategies, and honouring and respecting their clients - in this case, their family and ancestors. Counter to the typical emphasis on critical thinking that is encouraged in architectural education, which can mostly be defined by the level to which one designs from a rigorously intellectualized and detached third-person position akin to that of the Renaissance "studio," Cardinal instead encouraged the students to deeply personalize their process to better understand who they are as designers and how they can best serve their clients and Mother Earth as their first priorities. Throughout the Cardinal studio, students were encouraged to lead their design process with their hearts, not their minds.

Community over commodity - Central to Speth's opening comment and the environmental devastation resulting from a broadly-adopted design ethos focused almost entirely on human needs, desires, and gratification, is the close relationship between what is typically designed in the studio, and the studio space where it is produced. Daniel Buren describes how the standard twentieth-century studio space shared an intimate qualitative link to the museum or gallery space, because this is where the work was most often exhibited. Importantly, he argues that due to the need for the gallery or museum to be able to accept various pieces of art over its lifetime, there emerged a "convention that establishes the museum and the gallery as inevitable neutral frames, the unique and definitive locales for art." (53) This "inevitable neutrality" that characterized the "eternal" gallery, he argues, had also come to define the space of the studio. This unique spatial synergy was problematic, however, because by "producing for a stereotype, one ends up of course fabricating a stereotype." (55) During the twentieth century, the Renaissance studio of isolated contemplation thus transformed into a space focused on the production of objects that were then often evaluated based on their presentation in the context of a gallery (i.e. the quality of the representation, the intellectual premise for the conceptualization of the thing, its compatibility with current aesthetic trends, etc.). During the 1980s, Thomas Dutton critiqued this form of studio culture by emphasizing the links the profession has with societal relations of power, because "what is taught in design studios plays a strategic role in the political socialization of students." (1984, 17). For Dutton, it was crucial to acknowledge that despite the perceived neutrality of studio culture described above, there is always an underlying "hidden curriculum" and that the predominant form of design studios in American architecture schools had essentially led to reproducing "the authoritative and competitive patterns of American schooling and society." (19) Inevitably folded into these American patterns of production, is the capitalist emphasis on producing objects as commodities for consumption. When compared to the construction of the *wiigwaam* described above, this is a very different kind of relationship between humans and material things than those shared through Indigenous teachings. As Anthony Ward has noted by comparison with the Maori, "the European experience of form…demands an allegiance to the objectification of aesthetic values irrespective of the process by which they were derived." (1990, 12). This then becomes "canonized" as "good design" and "having been once established as the dominant value system, it is then used to forestall the introduction of alternative models through which it might be challenged, thus ensuring the continuation of the power status quo." (12) If "good design" is left to definition by those in power, this results in a built environment founded on colonial design metrics. As Cardinal has expressed, "we [Indigenous peoples] have been programmed for self-destruction. We must understand that a programmed inferiority complex means that someone else has written the script." (Cardinal and Armstrong 1991, 20).

The approach to design within a lodge would inevitably counter such objectified and alienated making processes by writing a different kind of script for an alternative "hidden curriculum." In addition to the process of making the *wiigwaam* described above, there are countless other examples of Indigenous design that follow similar lessons whereby a relationship with the Land, its stories, sacred teachings and often prayers, are woven into materials throughout the making process. For example, birchbark canoes, or *jiimaan*, are similarly considered named community members (Figure 4). The erection of tipis involve the repeated sharing of traditional teachings, while various other forms of construction and visual arts similarly pass on stories and lessons in their own unique ways. In all cases, the material production of things is deeply informed by place-based knowledge and history that strengthens collective and individual identity and culture. In this type of making, individual authorship is far less important than the work's ability to express and share cultural meaning and traditional knowledge. Furthermore, many Indigenous objects are developed within a gift economy that measures 'value' in very different ways that can encourage students to consider alternatives to the tyranny of capitalism. For these reasons, like with the *wiigwaam* described above, the designing and/or construction of buildings and structures within a lodge would be led by Indigenous community-based values and methods, where all participants can play an essential role. The architectural studio has historically been understood as delivering a unique "person-centred approach" to education that reaffirms the prioritization of individual achievement over the collective. (Brocato 2009, 139; Schön 1984) However, the Design Lodge would

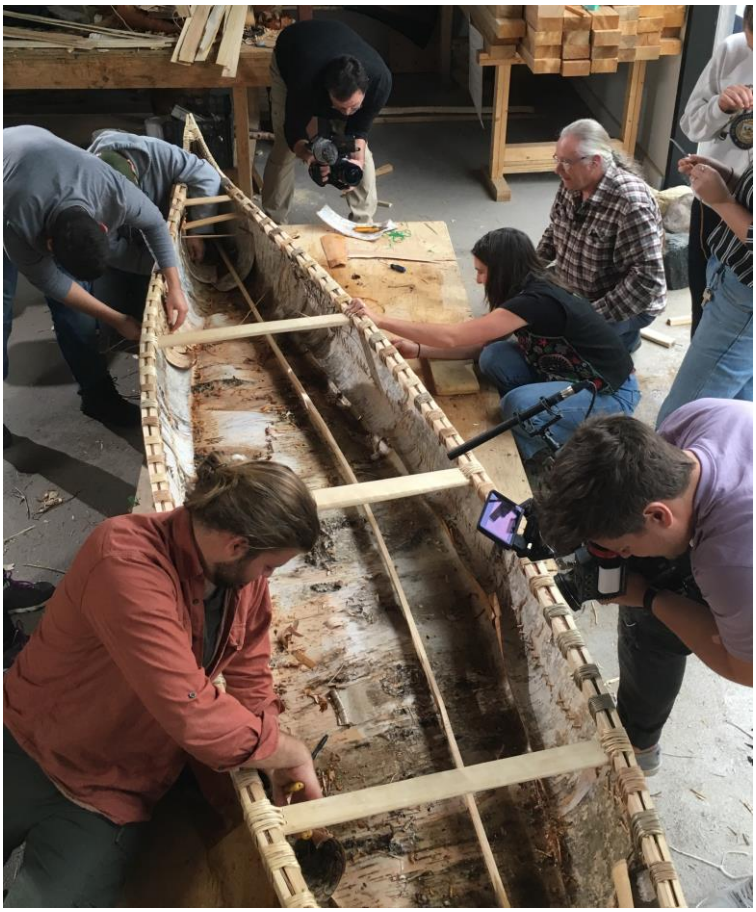

Figure 4. Graduate students build a birch bark canoe or *jiimaan*, named "Hope" with Elder and master canoe maker, Marcel Labelle in 2019. Photo by author.

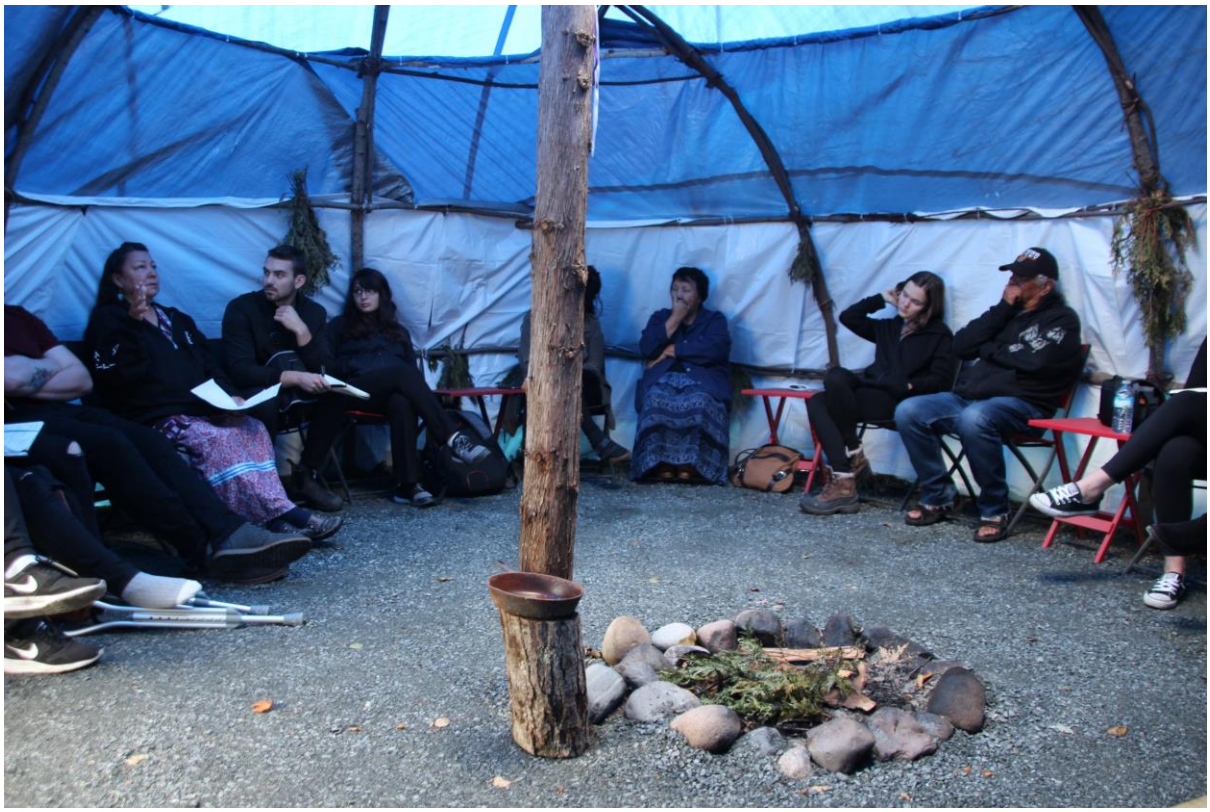

Figure 5. Students listening to teachings by a community leader in a lodge at Batchewana First Nation, Ontario, in 2017. Photo by author.

instead follow a similar structure to the various community-led design initiatives that have gained prominence in many institutions over the past few decades (see Robbins 2002). Working closely with Indigenous communities is central to universities building trust through respectful and reciprocal relationships over time, and therefore their meaningful engagement would be a foundational aspect in the establishment of a lodge for design. A Design Lodge would thus not only be an inclusive space grounded by Indigenous design practices for architectural students and faculty, but where Indigenous community members would feel welcomed along with other interdisciplinary contributors such as ecologists, social scientists, engineers, and artists. As such, the Design Lodge would embrace a sense of collective ownership and pride as a space where Indigenous language, culture, and teachings guide an approach to the design process that both preserves and innovates through life-centred design principles.

How might a design lodge look and feel?

The Design Lodge holds infinite possibilities in terms of a contemporary purpose-built structure as each would need to be regionally-specific and developed over long periods of time. The above photo was taken in a community lodge at Batchewana First Nation in Northern Ontario during a graduate studio visit to the community (Figure 5). Students sit amongst an Elder, a Lodge Keeper, and another community leader who is explaining how the lodge works. The lodge itself is a lesson on design – the students learn that the number of horizontal and vertical structural members hold specific meaning. There are sacred medicines hanging in strategic locations. There is a vessel for water used in ceremony beside the fire pit. This lodge has a centre pole while others don't. The circular arrangement of the seats is egalitarian as all people are valued equally; all have the chance to speak, and no one is perceived as in a position of power over another. Respect, however, is expected when the Elder and the teachers speak. The blue tarps enclosing the space emphasize the activities taking place in the lodge far outweigh the building as an aesthetic object.

The fire is not lit so this event is not in ceremony, it is instead being used a teaching space where a photo can be taken.

The architecture of a purpose-built design lodge in Anishinaabe territory would require a similarly egalitarian arrangement of desks. Teachings about the land, the cardinal directions, and the materials from the region would likely define its interior and exterior arrangements – the sunrise might impact its openings and there would likely be strong connections to the exterior landscaping and water if nearby. Smudging likely takes place here so the space often carries the smells of the sacred medicines. Students easily transition to work outdoors and are encouraged to do so. A bent wood structure might reflect the ceremonial lodge if deemed appropriate by the Elders, and the ability to make and tend to a wood burning fire might be considered essential. Perhaps a model of the site, or another reminder of the community values, sits at the centre of the room. Perhaps it is made from materials from the site. Perhaps students have previously left tobacco on the land in gratitude for using the material to construct that model.

However, a design lodge on the prairies would likely be quite different. Though similar spatial arrangements might reflect the sacred directions and possibilities for ceremony, the relation to the land might be unique. Perhaps a prairie-based design lodge might require storage for mobile design "camps" that can move onto the land during different seasons, like the traditional communities did for their hunts. The glowing translucency of the tipi and its malleable hide canvas might offer different spatial qualities. The wood is not often bent on the prairie, as thicker structural members make stronger poles that flex to withstand the wind. On the west coast, a design lodge might instead be named something different altogether, but related. Heavy timber and carvings might compliment the traditional teachings of that region. In all directions, landscapes, and responding to all different Indigenous languages, ecosystems, watersheds, animal inhabitants and other environmental influences, the Design Lodge would ground students firmly in an approach to design that inspires a sanctity of place and respect for the peoples who have lived there since time immemorial. Lastly, each would likely receive its own name in the Indigenous language of the region that would further weave it into its place in profound ways, while acknowledging the colonizing impact that alienating words, including "lodge", can have when used as descriptors.

CONCLUSION

The concept for the Design Lodge offers an alternative learning model to the traditional studio that would strive to meet the cultural and environmental demands of our current era. The studio has thrived as the creative space for design during the centuries of globalizing capitalist ideation and production, as an active forum for how we best navigate through the necessary complexities of our diverse perspectives through making. However, the neutrality of the studio has also historically attempted to reduce design into one universal discourse instead of respecting and prioritizing the importance of diversity. During the first quarter of the twenty-first century, it has become increasingly evident that we must question the limits of such an approach. Economic disparity is reaching unfathomable levels and core values such as freedom of speech are being used to justify xenophobia, discrimination, hatred, racism, and other ideologies that do not align with a pursuit of a future founded on kindness and caring for each other and Mother Earth, as the Elders have all told us is essential to our collective well-being. As Elder Petahtegoose notes,

> "[We are] not to be dealing with ideas like today, where you're seeing a lot of racism through things going on. When you come into this lodge, this is a place where those ideas are known - they are not to be lived. Not to be nurtured. We have a teaching which we share with the people which gives you instruction about how to make that happen." (Petahtegoose 2021).

Thus, while the work of a design lodge may not at first appear to be radically different from any other studio, lab, collective, etc., it can provide a viable pedagogical space for learning architecture in a setting that is grounded in clear principles, which encourage the idea that all life is sacred and where students and faculty alike can feel that they are "walking into their future with a warm heart and an open mind," as the Elder suggests. In this way a design lodge for the twenty-first century, led by the Elders and Knowledge Carriers of the place, could indeed provide a radically different set of objectives for architectural education. It would reflect the inherited values and languages of the local Indigenous communities, and it would ground itself in a practice of ethics and collaboration over individual achievement and competition. If this can be achieved within the political and economic frameworks that currently structure our societies,

including emerging technologies and building systems, it might then be able to establish a different form of "hidden curriculum" that would signal to Indigenous peoples that their ancestors' teachings are heard and embraced, and that they will be honoured into the future. If design education can better inspire the kind of "cultural and spiritual transformation" that Speth passionately calls for, perhaps it is time for the profession to listen closely to the Elders and renew our priorities to love and care for our planet and each other, and perhaps this might best start in a lodge.

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