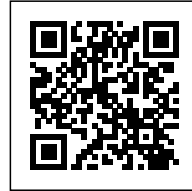




THREAD

Posted on January 2, 2016 by Urban UrbanNext



Categories: [africanCities](#), [expanding design practices](#), [Low Density](#), [Politics and economics](#), [Project](#), [Technology and fabrication](#), [Toshiko Mori](#)

Tags: [Africa](#), [africanCities](#), [Cultural agitator](#), [Culture](#), [Local fabrication](#), [Local resources](#), [On Discourse and Practices](#), [Political & Economic Approach](#), [Project](#), [Public buildings](#), [Senegal](#), [Social cohesion](#), [Social culture](#), [Technological Approach](#)

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It is a strange idea to talk about “expanded practice” because our project, Thread: Artists' Residency & Cultural Center, was not expanded. Instead, it had deeper engagements involving more direct relationships with people and the process of construction. Necessitated by the remote location and limited resources, we worked with local materials and skills.



Although this effort is quite common in our daily practice, throughout this project, we learned more intimate details about the local materials; which required little cost and transportation. We primarily used bamboo, grass, and mud. We were also able to obtain reject tiles from Dakkar, which the Sinthain locals used to create their own mosaic pattern and floor, inspired by the work of Josef and Anni Albers.

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Based on the skills available in the village, we were able to come up with the design of our building. During this process, we gained insight into how the Senegalese build their traditional and vernacular buildings. From there, we were able to figure out how best to utilize their expertise to come up with a building that had a larger roof span, stronger structure, and different geometry. In this case, we were able to expand their own building practice to come up with something new, but it was always within Sinthian's capacity to accomplish it.

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Context Plan

This project required sensitive and close observation of the local building process, and close coordination with the doctor, who organized the 40 villagers to build the project. As the architect, we were open to their criticisms towards the angle of the roof, procedures, and building schedule. We were working as a team, encouraging members to contribute their own ideas, opinions, and aesthetic to the project.

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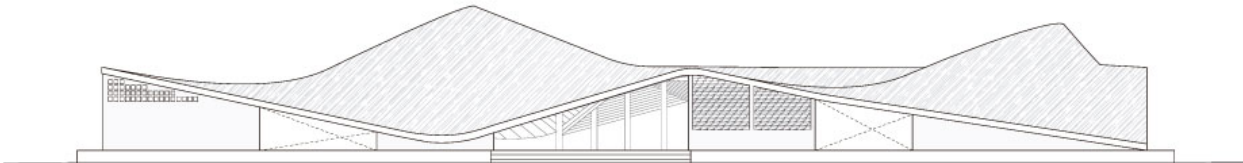
Site Plan

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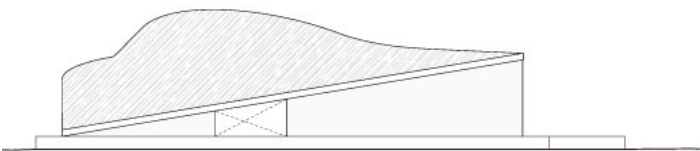
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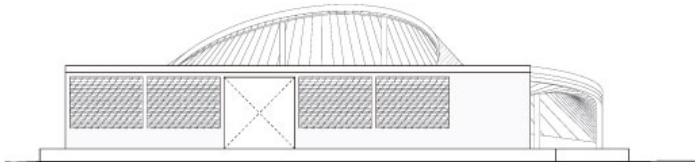
EAST ELEVATION



WEST ELEVATION



SOUTH ELEVATION



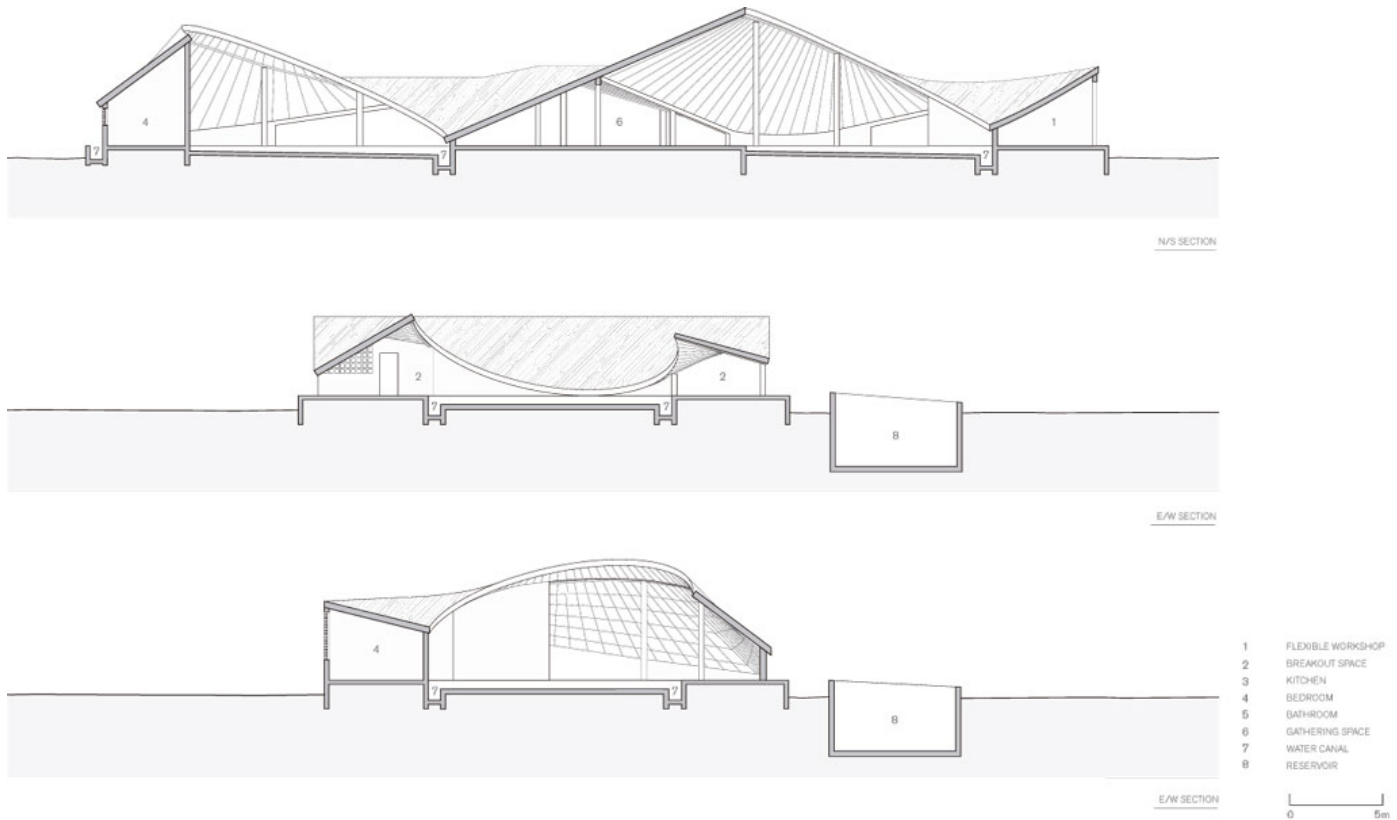
NORTH ELEVATION



Elevations

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Sections

Our role was similar to that of a conductor of an orchestra, or a director of a film; we let each musician and or actor have their moment to shine so that our collaborative efforts were more lateral than linear. We endeavored to be more empowering as a whole, rather than act as a service organization that handed down commands and responded to inquiries. We always took the position that the completed building would belong to Sinthian's, being theirs to maintain and operate with the program director of AFLK, enabling them to contribute resources and organization.

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We worked intensely in program potential and spatial variation in the building, which allows for multiple activities to take place, even at the same time. As in any cultural project, one starts by establishing a trust between architect and community. Through intensive collaborative and iterative process of communication, one will create a new place which will influence the life of the community's future. It is about expanding our vision, including the community, and intensely working together to make our common dream a reality.

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