

Jean Marie Tjibaou Cultural Center - Noumea, New Caledonia (Kanaky)

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Designed by Renzo Piano, the Jean Marie Tjibaou Cultural Center follows the curve of the Tina Peninsula, celebrating the culture of the Kanak people. The entire complex expands 250 meters incorporating 10 structures, known as hut pavilions. Each hut pavilion ranges from 20 to 28 meters tall and are separated into 3 categories, or villages, with the tallest representing the 'Great Hut' of the Kanak Chief. The first village contains a permanent exhibition on the insight of Kanak culture followed by temporary exhibitions and an open-air theater. The second village contains libraries and conference rooms for historians or researchers. At the end of the path, the third village contains creative activities, such as music, dancing, sculpture, and painting.

When designing the building, Renzo Piano wanted to create a symbol for the Kanak civilization that linked the landscape and the built structures in their traditions. Most of the Kanaks buildings were made of traditional materials and were mainly round and conical in the vertical direction. This is why Piano wanted to incorporate the use of materials such as traditional wood and stone. The wood that was used to construct the building is called iroko wood, which was used for its durability, since it is termite repellent and resists fungi and mold. Another one of the factors that contributed to winning the competition for building the cultural center was the landscaping ideas by Desvigne and Dalnoky. The 10 pavilions are connected by covered walkway paths, green spaces, and outdoor rooms. By using the landscape to introduce the material the architects made the area look unified and bring up a 'new interpretation of modernism'.

The facade of the structure uses a cooling and passive ventilation system which are obtained naturally through a double facade. The layout of the 10 pavilions fully take advantage of the winds blowing from the east to control solar heat gain. The structures contain staves, or curved ribs, that are made of iroko slats and steel connections, which serve as the main climate control device. The outer section of slats is curved and connects to a vertical section of slats, forming a case that looks as if the pieces are woven together. The bottom part of the staves contains special louvers that are computer generated based on the speed of the wind. All in all, the structure is designed in a way that represents the Kanak traditions and connection to nature while incorporating modern technology.

References

Inexhibit. (2022, September 7). *The Jean-Marie Tjibaou Cultural Center, New Caledonia*. Retrieved September 28, 2022, from <https://www.inexhibit.com/mymuseum/the-jean-marie-tjibaou-cultural-center-by-renzo-piano/>

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