KAIRA LOORO | WOMEN'S HOUSE

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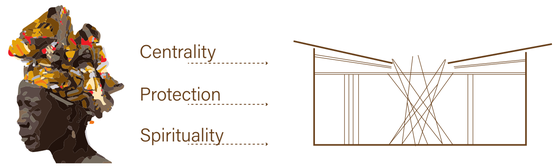

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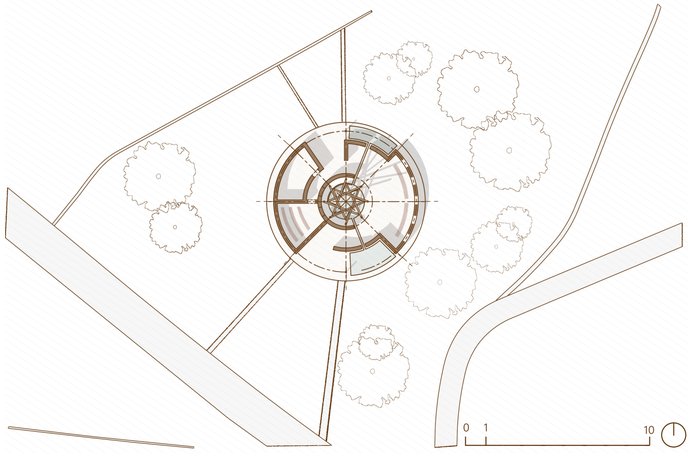

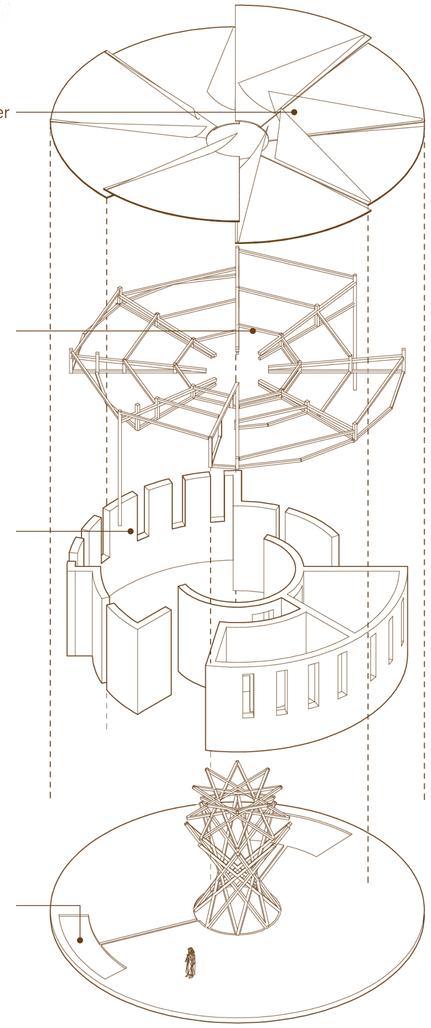

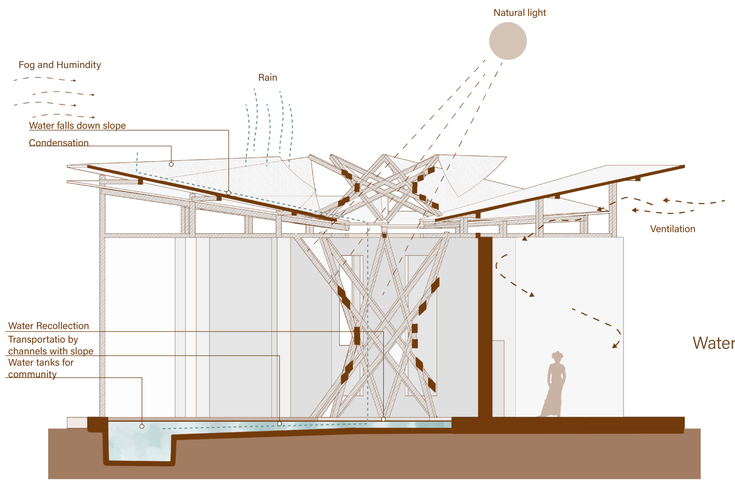

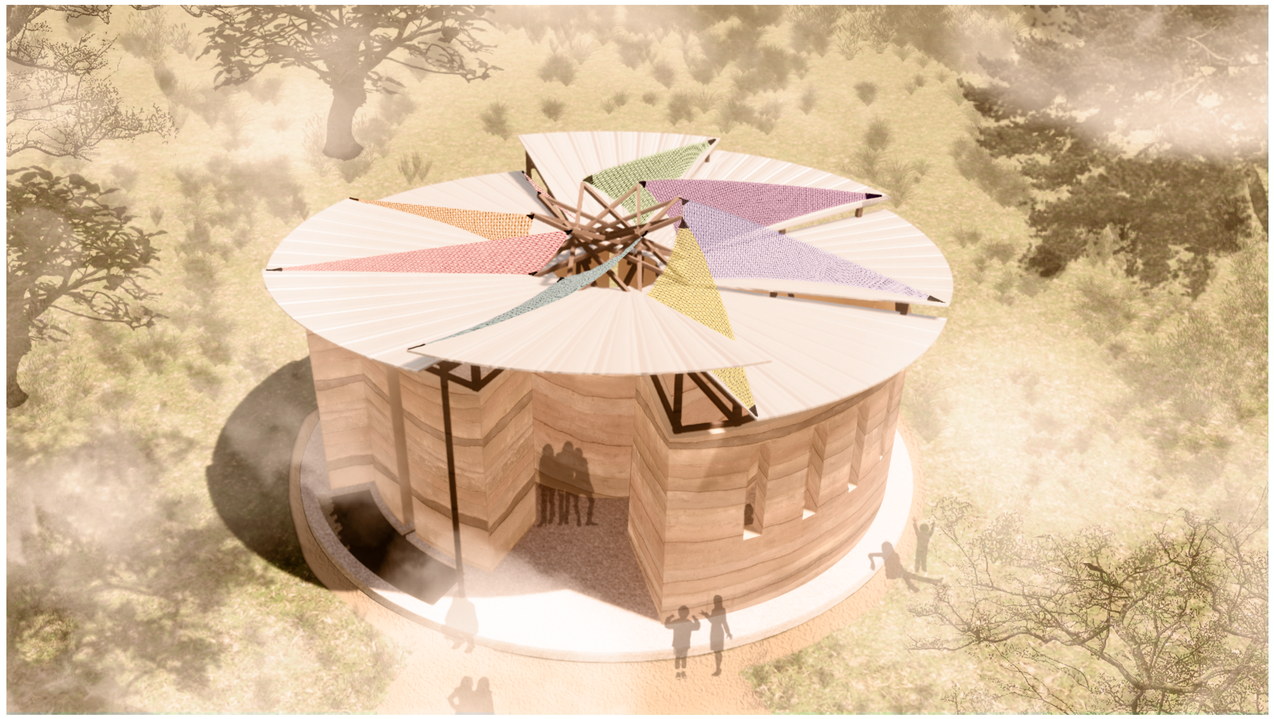

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Concept

The Women House`s architecture should be based on the embodiment of women in Senegal. We believe that a place where women can start a conversation about their rights should be a place where they feel identified. The moussor garment is the main inspiration for this project due to the symbolic importance it has on them. Through design and culture, we hope to encourage the acknowledgment and celebration of women.

In the process of finding an object that could succeed at these goals, we ran into the moussor, a distinctive garment among the African culture. The colors, patterns, forms and usages are striking. The moussor has different meanings; it represents the roots of a pre-colonial time, social status and a religious practice, among others. Nevertheless, we wanted to focus on the uniqueness it gives to women rather than its specific meanings.

The moussor has now become a headscarf that is known in the whole world and it's a source of inspiration for fashion and art. Young women are proud to use it for its representation; they believe it has become a statement of strength and fight.

We aspired to create an architecture that could easily blend in with the culture. By using a concept that is familiar to the community and reflecting it in the architecture, we were able to build a house that has renewing and helpful ideas, but isn't imposing on the societal or cultural customs. A real contribution can only occur when one understands the community, not only by its needs, but by the culture and way they perceive the world. As for the concept of culture, the relationship with objects it's one of its most unique traits. In order to build the house, we took into account an architecture that reflected those relationships with objects; a house that could feel acquainting.

The moussor represents protection as well as identity for women because of how it protects them from the sun and other climate issues, likewise, The House protects people from the wind, sun and rain, making it a comfortable place to discuss gender-equality related subjects, among others. The structure from the outside has a strong appearance, but on the inside, it's a centralized and open space. The strong structure and calm inside is designed to make women feel protected and safe.

The architecture is composed of meeting salons divided by rounded walls around the main area at the center of the monument, resembling the structure of the moussur. In this main area, the water harvesting and collection installation is located, alluding to one incredibly important use of the moussor; carrying water. It's important to understand that without the fabrics on the roof, the process of recollection and harvesting of water wouldn't be possible, so, as the moussor is made up of folded fabric, this same fabric is essential for the mentioned processes. The fabrics used have the same material and patterns as the moussor. The walls symbolize the folding's, and the core of the construction is the core of the folding's themselves.

By understanding the limited access to clean water in Baghere Village and how women are most often responsible for its recollection; in this project, we used a humidity harvesting and rain collection system to harvest the water and transport it through channels from the center to outside of the building. Consequently, people from inside and around can have access to water and simultaneously create an environment of community where women are invited to create relationships.

Not only does this project wish to inspire women towards empowerment, but also take into account one of the most serious problems of the community to bring a sustainable, long lasting and innovative solution that will hopefully have an impact over generations.

Materials

The project will include the following materials: local Laterite earth soil for the construction system of tread wall, with color variations that occurs through the different soil shades. Concrete for the floor, with Shells from river that will be engraved within the earthenware as decoration. Rosewoood beam, for the main structure and the central water collecting element, Corrugated Sheet metal for the roof that rests on the wooden structure and finally colored fabric on the roof connected to the water collector, which fulfills the function of capturing the water.

Construction process

The construction process begins by leveling the soil for the foundation, this is achieved by aligning stones. Subsequently, the formwork is placed with a thickness of the dimension of the wall, in this case 40 cm, the formwork boards must be oiled on the inside. Next, a layer of mortar (lime and sand) is added which prevents the material from coming out of the lower part of the formwork when starting the construction of the wall. Immediately the earth is poured into the formwork in layers that do not exceed 10 cm, in this case they will be poured by layers that gives different tones due to variations of the earth. Finally the earth is pressed with a ram, leaving no trace and creating 10 cm grooves between rows, improving the union between them, this process is repeated until the wall is completely finished. Eventually the formwork is removed, and the construction of the roof begins, made up of wooden slats that are tied with knots at the intersections, this structure supports a galvanized steel sheet from which the cover fabrics that are part of the system of the central element that collects water are tied.

BUDGET					
	ITEM	UNIT	AMOUNT	UNIT PRICE	SUBTOTAL
1	Wall in Tapia	M2	179	€ 61,93	€ 11.085,47
2	Rosewooor beam (5cmX8cmX4mt)	ML	95	€ 8,50	€ 807,50
3	Shells from river	KG	1	€ 15,00	€ 15,00
4	Cement 32.5	UN	45	€ 120,00	€ 5.400,00
5	Sheet metal corrugated (2mtX0,8mt) (258m2)	M2	118	€ 4,80	€ 566,40
6	Fabric	M2	82	€ 1,50	€ 123,00
7	TOTAL	€			17.997,37