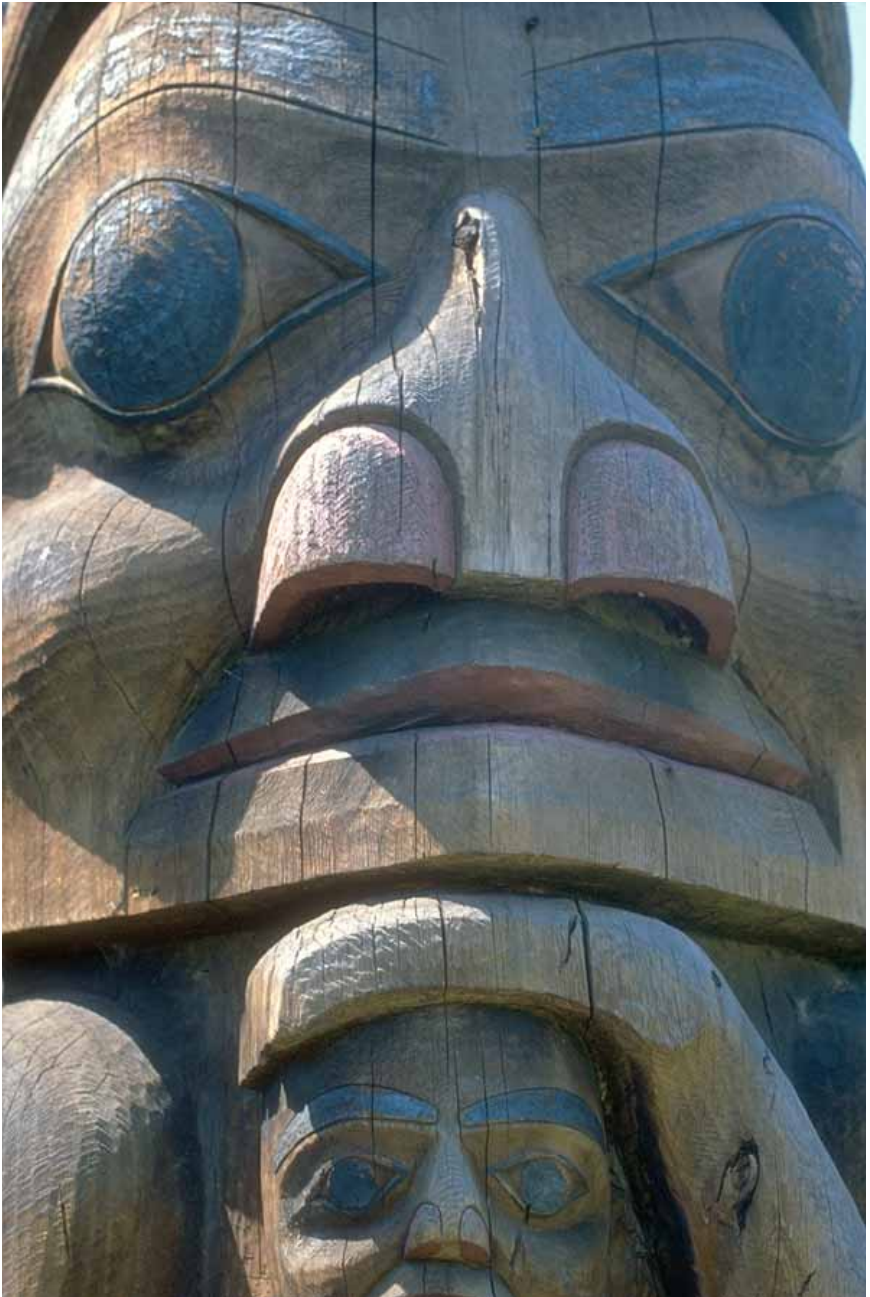


Stand in Our Ways & Beliefs



presentation for *Construction in Indian Country*
by Johnpaul Jones · 13 May 2008

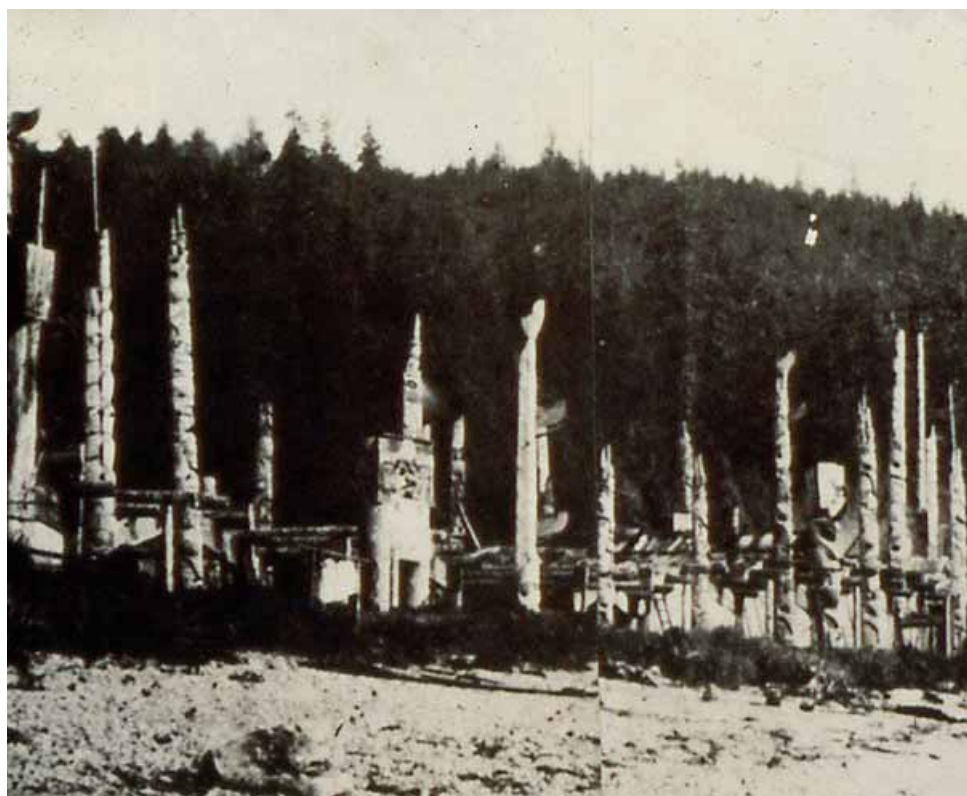


Is Design & Construction a sensible/worthy profession for future Indian generations?

Can American Indian designers & construction professionals have one foot in the non-Indian world and one foot in the Indian world and not go crazy?

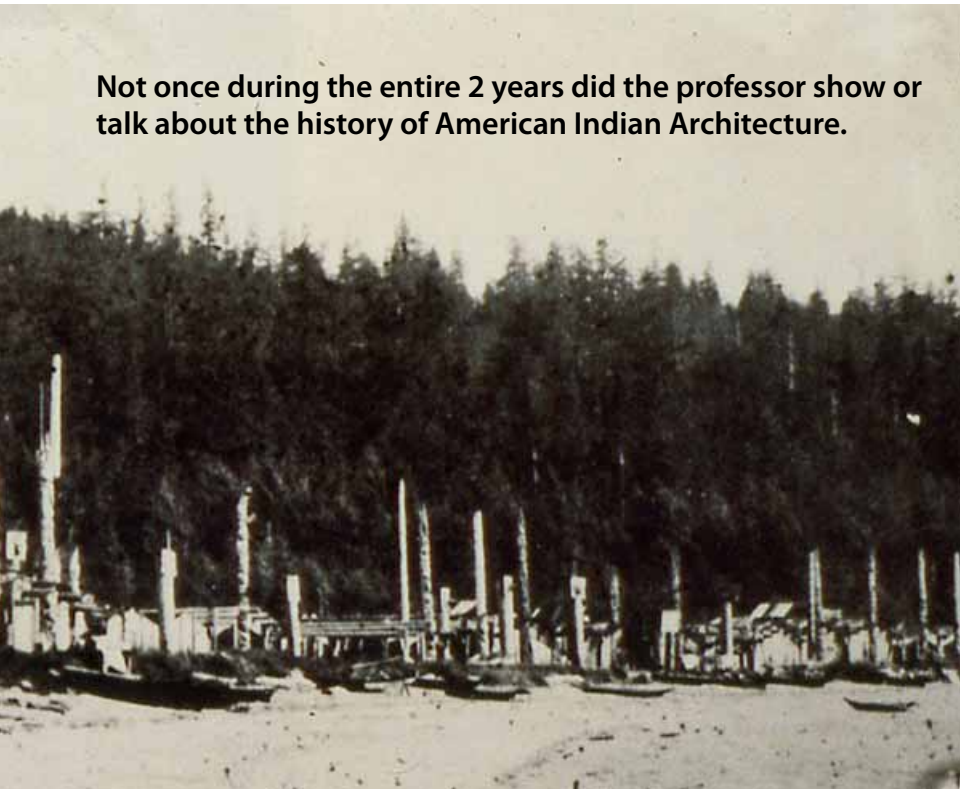
It might be helpful for Indian professionals to remember the ways and beliefs of our ancestors. Our ancestors have passed on to us many things that we can use to solve current Design & Construction issues and problems.

This is not an easy thing to do! There are many things that work at keeping us from listening to our ancestors.



I was the only American Indian student in the School of Architecture at the University of Oregon back in the 1960s. One of the requirements of study in the School of Architecture was to take a 3-times-a-week 2-year course about the history of World & American Architecture.

Not once during the entire 2 years did the professor show or talk about the history of American Indian Architecture.





We mainly studied the great architectures of Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and Modern America. As a young American Indian studying the history of Architecture, I was not given a complete picture.



There are some really magnificent ancient structures, all over America, built, built, by our indigenous ancestors.

A lot of these ancient structures have not even been uncovered, let alone restored.



We have been here a long time...we have a deep history in this country! There is not a place in America without an indigenous story.

Our ancestors have left many signs that rival anything left by ancient people anywhere in the world.



However, much of what our ancestors have left us is verbal. It was passed down through many generations. Stories from experience!

These verbal stories are the most important thing for us to listen to! These are the things that can help us span two worlds. These are the things that we as American Indians can bring to the Design & Construction table that can help solve difficult issues and problems.

Before I show you what my indigenous family gave me as a gift to help solve difficult Design & Construction problems, there are three things that it would be good to remember about indigenous people of America:

#1: We are a diverse people that have survived!

We are not just “Native Americans” living in tipis, chasing buffalo—we are not what you see in movies!



We are an ancient people that span the entire country—

- north to south
- east to west
- cold to hot
- wet to dry

And we don't all live on reservations.

Without our indigenous ancestors and our relatives in the Americas, there would be

- **no “hot salsa”**
- **no “corn chips”**
- **no “tomatoes”**
- **no “pumpkins” for Halloween**
- **no “French fries” to go with your hamburger**



We are a diverse people that have given many things to the human family.



#2: We are still here; we have survived!

Even though the American government has tried repeatedly to eliminate us in many ways. This story is often not understood by the non-Indian public!

However, we are still here and we still practice what our ancestors passed on to us. The government was not successful in eliminating our ways, beliefs, and practices.



Today we influence and bring changes in the American legal system about the care of this country: the land, the rivers, the desert, the air we breathe, and the animals that share these places with us.

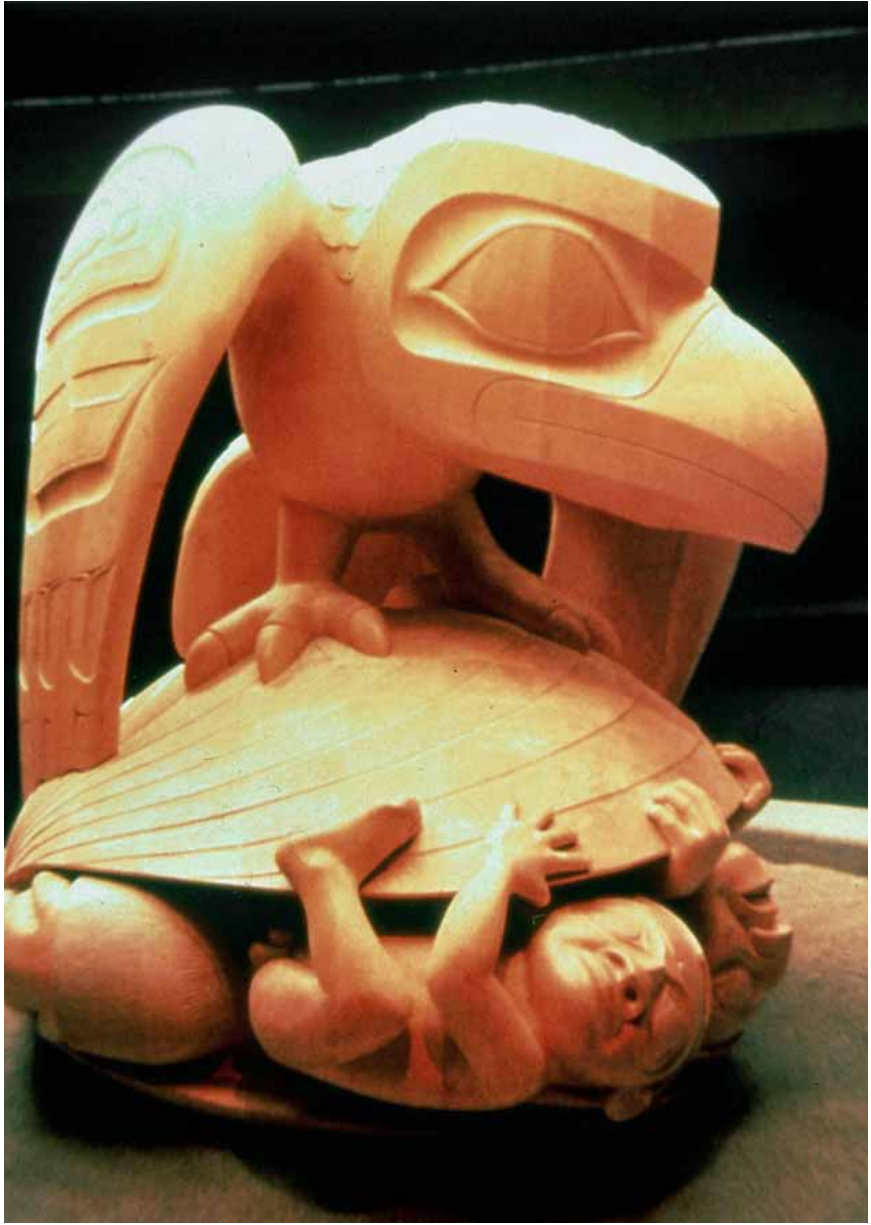




Without our insistence concerning our treaty rights in the Pacific Northwest, the salmon fisheries would be in worse shape than they are now. Our Northwest relatives are working hard to bring back the Salmon people to our rivers and lakes.



We are still here and we have survived.



#3: We have unique ways and beliefs.

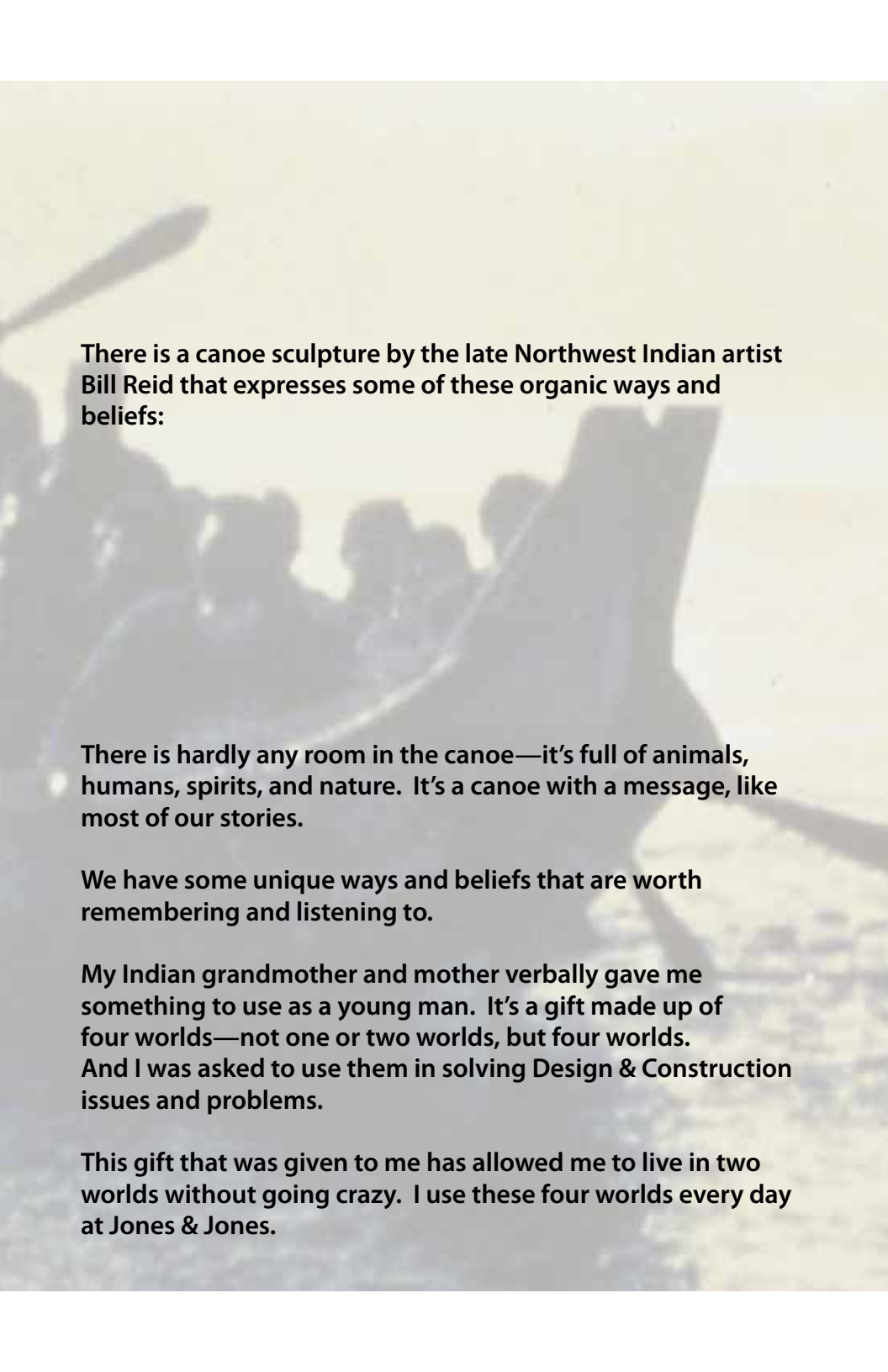
Relationships with everything around us. It might be good for others to know about these ways and beliefs. They just might be helpful in solving some of our American problems.



As American Indians involved in Design & Construction we should use what our ancestors verbally passed on to us. We should stand in their ways and beliefs—not somewhere else!

These ways and beliefs were sent to guide us in whatever we do.





There is a canoe sculpture by the late Northwest Indian artist Bill Reid that expresses some of these organic ways and beliefs:

There is hardly any room in the canoe—it's full of animals, humans, spirits, and nature. It's a canoe with a message, like most of our stories.

We have some unique ways and beliefs that are worth remembering and listening to.

My Indian grandmother and mother verbally gave me something to use as a young man. It's a gift made up of four worlds—not one or two worlds, but four worlds. And I was asked to use them in solving Design & Construction issues and problems.

This gift that was given to me has allowed me to live in two worlds without going crazy. I use these four worlds every day at Jones & Jones.

Natural World



Seasons • Cycles

Cardinal directions • Various doors to our universe

Equinox • Solstice

Organic • Nature of life • Plants

Rocks • Soil • Water

Plants with power • Healing • Blessing • Cleansing

Sky • Earth connection (above • below) • Clouds

Non-structured places

Mountains • Horizon • Orientation

Sunrise • Sunset • Beauty • Color

Night • Day

Odor • Smell

Rivers • Lakes • Streams • Rain • Oceans

Power of natural elements • Living

Connecting to family • Power

Messengers • Spirit lines

Protection

Healing power • Ceremonial ties

Connection to seasons and cycles

Non-structured places for animals

Sounds • Color • Beauty



Animal World

Spirit World



*Creation • Renewal
Continuum of time
Visioning • Dreaming
Fire • Smoke • Healing • Cleansing
Ceremony • Many Worlds
Symbolism at all levels
Songs • Ritual • Renewal
Birth • Death*

Teaching / transfer of knowledge

Community / family

Structured places

Welcome / hospitality

Humor / looking at self

Support / helper / unity

Celebrate

Connection to past / generations

Respectful

Color symbolism

Female/male

Creativity



Human World

What I've found using the **Four Worlds** approach in Design & Construction is that it connects the point of view of Indians and non-Indians into a solution much different than "what happens currently"...where our ways and beliefs are left out...where only one world is considered.

Find your message from your ancestors and try using it to solve issues and problems in Design & Construction. We need to move beyond one stereotyped way of solving problems, to solutions that represent us.

Where what our ancestors verbally passed on to us is "somewhere where we can stand."

And I invite you to stand inside your ancestors' ways and beliefs—not somewhere else!

A handwritten signature in orange ink, appearing to read "John Paul", written in a cursive style.



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