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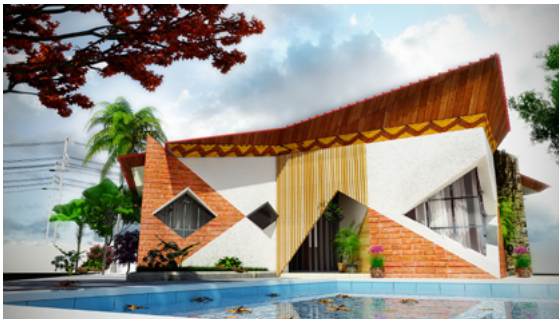
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NOKTECTURE

by Ojile Ameh Godswill
Architect | Nigeria

HONORABLE MENTION

Inspired by the Nok terracotta



DESIGN INSPIRATION AND SPATIAL ARRANGEMENT

Overall Concept

Major inspiration for my design prototype has its roots from Africa's number one and most magnificent art form of the ancient civilization Nok (500BC-200AD) and their art. The civilization inhabited the central parts of the Kaduna state, modern-day Nigeria.

Nok art was known for its figurines especially. The terracotta statuary of the Nok culture is a classic art style whose sudden appearance has radically challenged the traditional art history of African sculpture. Two characteristics are central to our design prototype. They include in the piercing of the pupils, the nostrils, the lips and the ears, and the treatment of the eyes, which form either a segment of a circle or sometimes a triangular form, with the eyebrow above balancing the sweep of the lower lip. In the prototype, windows are representative of eyes (pupils) and doors of mouths (lips), which take triangular/circular form.

The layout of the plan is inspired by many African cultures. However, a unifying feature is the popular courtyard setting, which is the focal point for the rest of the house's functions. In particular, the Hausa culture of northern Nigeria, by virtue of Islamic influence, portrays a housing setting that is based on gender segregation, hence the need for adequate zoning of the women's area from the public areas. We included the "zaure" beyond which visitors do not intrude. Visual privacy is important to protect the family, especially the female members from the sight of male strangers.

Roof Eave and Exterior Finish/Decor

The Zulu hats or "isicholos" are the inspiration for this aspect of the design. These hats originated from Kwazulu Natal, the stronghold of the powerful Zulu nation of South Africa. These hats are traditionally worn by married women for ceremonial celebrations. They are hand woven from cotton, rope, or vegetable fiber, dyed with ochre, and covered with a basket frame.

Space Planning

The plan adopts the polygamous setting that is predominantly practiced in African. Hence the women's area has been delineated and bordered by an accordion door that can be opened to allow for a larger communal space during events. The spacious living room, which dissolves into a sitting room, dining room, or others, can also borrow space from the foyer in the event of a larger celebration. However, functions can still be separated with the aid of sliding particleboard partitions.

The dining room has direct access to the outdoor kitchen and can dissolve into the courtyard where traditional delicacies can be enjoyed away from the conventional dining area. Fins provide a visual appeal to the courtyard and block the view of the women's area, allowing for communication but not viewing.

COURTYARD

The courtyard acts to enhance lighting and thermal comfort through the stack effect ensured through the use of low and high level windows. It provides the ideal space for socio-cultural and day-to-day activities such as eating, sitting, family gathering, and children's play. It simply represents a place where family can exist in a self-contained manner.

INDOOR AND OUTDOOR KITCHEN

The outdoor kitchen (African kitchen) is located within the courtyard with access to the dining room for ready movement of delicacies or the courtyard to be enjoyed. The interior kitchen walls are enveloped with brick walls particularly to help reduce the effect of heat that's generated. The outdoor kitchen is made

out of natural stone that is cheap and has good fire resistance and fortification and can be sourced from the local environments.

MATERIALS

Foundation and Walling Systems – burnt brick, hollow block work and natural stone

Flooring – rammed earth

Shading at Entrance – bamboo

Roof and Eaves – corrugated iron sheets and recycled wood

UNIQUE FEATURES THAT CAN SERVE AS BUILDING CODE FOR CONSTRUCTION IN AFRICA

Windows and Doors – to be represented as perforations with triangular or circular cuts

Courtyards – to be surrounded or built by movable or demountable partitions, not permanent ones, to enable transformation and flexible use of the space

POTENTIAL COST OF DESIGN

The approach toward design, construction and building materials are met with sustainability in mind. For instance, techniques for construction are simple and can be easily taught to involve community participation and hiring of cheap labor. Building materials that are cheap, yet of good quality with reduced dependence, on carbon were specified. After due cost considerations, the potential sum of the design prototype arrived at about N750,000 (Seven hundred and fifty thousand Nigerian Naira).

