In an era when identity is synonymous with brand, and place with commodity, this project proposes we shift our lens toward an era of empathy. We cannot decolonize, but today and for the future, we can shift the ways we want to be together in this world. Yet if the Dakota philosophy of mitakuye oyas’in – all my relatives – is to be understood and internalized, we must understand a world view that understands the web of all creation as our relative: your neighbor, a stranger’s child, the disabled, those in the Minneapolis encampment, the fish, the water, the wind, and the fire, spirit, and energy among us.

I come from a place of power and privilege, a place in a competition like this. This privilege automatically leaves out a cacophony of unheard voices. In that regard, this project does not mandate a single story, but instead leaves space for the multiplicities of histories, perceptions, and privileges. The design fosters mutual connections with the earth, embraces the severe and transient climates of Minnesota, and acts as a non-icon, a non-symbol of our priorities today and in the foreseeable future.

This project is envisioned as a seasonal, temporal, and humble shed perched in mni sōta makoce—the land where the water reflects the sky. The structure is lifted from the earth for shoreline restoration, water permeability, and integration with topography. On the platform, 5 kiosks work as seasonally rotating markets. Similar to food trucks, accessibility is enhanced with a diverse palate of cultural foods and prices. The space is zoned as shade, shelter, and warmth allowing for three climate conditions during all seasons. By heightening awareness of the interconnection and diversity of people, environment, and climate, the project works toward empathy and understanding over sympathy and assumptions.