The American Indian Culture as Design project seeks to take a detailed ethnological/anthropological study of the Crow Tribe’s traditional culture and identify opportunities for an alternative mindset in terms of architectural design and planning. The project aims to discover multiple aspects of traditional culture more rooted in the region of Montana that can similarly be applied and used to generate a more appropriate current context for design in the region. Accomplishing this task includes leveraging more appropriate uses of passive strategies, site planning, community planning, and regional cultural significance to persuasively address existing strategies that may be misplaced. The tools used to accomplish these goals were a series of literature and systematic drawings and analysis.

The drawings included are connected bodies of study in a series. While most of the line work and imagery are done by hand, the digital supplements the work by representing itself in acetone transfers, custom laser cut templates, and stickers.

The decisiveness of the chosen mixed medium leads to a certain set of advantages. The thought process can be erratic since one side of the page can be worked on and then later be left incomplete to jump to another opposite side of the page. This also changes the way the scale of the drawing is constructed since the operator can then jump to a different layer of information that may cover the entire sheet. Therefore, a drawing can piece together slowly or all at once. This dynamic process also leaves interest in how things are potentially constructed due to the fact that pieces and parts do not necessarily end up being what they originally intended to be. Additionally, some pieces could be left unfinished for various reasons and actually mean something else than its imagined purpose, changing the way things relate to each other compositionally.

There are three drawings in the study set: History of the People/Land, Driftwood Lodges: Social Structure, and Application to the Grid.

**History of the People/Land**

This drawing sets a base for the sequential studies by developing a visual history of the Crow Tribe. There is a recording of the people’s migration story from the Midwest and the adoption of the mobile lifestyle on the plains. The drawing also communicates the changing amount of the tribe’s territory and population.

**Driftwood Lodges: Social Structure**

Drawing two describes the relationship between the tribe’s social structure and how it directly relates to the environment. This is the first emergence of linked rings that describe a shifting and moving population, intensely based on the changing resources of the region through seasons, held together by the Crow’s clan system.

**Application to the Grid**

Last in the set is a multilayered drawing discussing the application of the Crow’s traditional epistemology to the current state of understanding. The grided planning that has largely ignored the environment and shaped the current discourse can begin to involve the notions of these changing resource rings. The intent here is to begin to extract various design implications relevant to modern times.