Kanak Cultural Resistances and Innovations: The Tjibaou Center of Noumea, New Caledonia

We may wonder whether the construction of the Tjibaou Cultural Centre constitutes a typical case of “the invention of tradition”. However, such a question would amount to ignoring the very distinctive significance of the “Kanak customary area”, situated just below the large building designed by the architect Renzo Piano and his team. This space was conceived, by the Kanak in charge of the site, as the place that “commands” the entire Cultural Centre. I will demonstrate how this “customary area” ensures continuity between the contemporary Kanak world and the Tibaou Centre.