ARCTIC
ADAPTATIONS

NUNAVUT AT 15 - CANADA AT THE 2014 VENICE ARCHITECTURE BIENNALE

Competition Brief

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Introduction: Arctic Adaptations

2014 marks the 15th anniversary of the founding of Nunavut. However, Canada’s largest, most northerly territory is still unfamiliar to many Canadians. The myth of the Canadian north is tied to its unique geography – vast, sparsely populated, fragile, and sublime. Yet Nunavut, like the entire Arctic region, is undergoing dramatic transformation as powerful climatic, social, and economic pressures rapidly collide. In Nunavut, over 50% of the population is under the age of 25, making it a young, dynamic nation. Simultaneously, most Northern municipalities are under pressure to address ongoing social and economic challenges regarding health, housing, education, and employment.

The theme of 15 is echoed in the team structure. Working in collaboration with five Nunavut-based organizations, design teams – comprised of a Canadian architecture office and a Canadian school of architecture – will develop a 15-year vision plan for both a regional (territory) and architectural (building) scale on a particular theme. The themes are: Arts, Education, Health, Housing, and Recreation. Arctic Adaptations seeks to foster a collective discourse in schools, amongst architecture practices, and within Nunavut communities, on a proactive architecture motivated by progressive social and environmental responsibility.
Map of Nunavut and its Communities distributed over nearly 2 million square kilometres. Communities are connected to each other and to the South only by plane year-round, and by boat in the summer months.
Introduction to Nunavut

Before the arrival of other peoples in the North, Inuit had always lived a nomadic lifestyle in ilagit nunagivaktangat or camps. In the Baffin region alone, families lived in over 100 locations in kin-based camps. Although the process of relocation to communities began as a response by Inuit to the presence of traders, explorers, and missionaries, it took new form during the ‘settlement’ period between 1940 and 1960. During that time, Inuit were moved off the land and into communities for a number of reasons, including policing, education, and the provision of health care for remote populations and reports of starvation among some Inuit camps (Kirmayer, Brass & Tait, 2000; Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), 1996).

The changes imposed on Inuit in order to achieve this goal were rapid and dramatic—this was not a gradual progression from a traditional to a modern way of life, but a complete transformation. As a result, families were severed, people were sent away never to return, and the way of life changed completely.

Today, there are 25 communities in Nunavut ranging in size from populations of 110 to 7500. All of the communities are geographically isolated and are only accessible by air, water, or snowmobile in winter. Nunavut has a very young population. In 2011 52% of the Nunavut population (31,906) was comprised of those 24 years of age and younger. While the North is increasingly becoming a mixed cultural population, 85% of Nunavut’s population is Inuit. Further, 68% of Nunavummiut speak the Inuit languages of Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun (Statistics Canada, 2011).

Today, all Northerners are facing a a new collective transformation together; a climate changing change climate where warming temperatures are challenging notions of permanence and transience alike (everything from melting permafrost foundations to shifting migration patterns of major food sources). However this rapidly warming climate is also yielding what many view to be unforeseen opportunities, including stretched transportation windows in the Arctic archipelago. These effects of climate change are especially challenging in Nunavut, with both a very young history as a territorial government and a youthful and growing young population confronted with these challenges and opportunities embedded in a terrain that is experiencing such rapid change.
Introduction to Recreation and Tourism in Nunavut

Recreation
In many societies, sport is a mechanism for personal, social and community development (GN: Canadian Sport Policy Renewal, 5). Health and well-being is affected by availability and access to extra-curricular activities. Such recreation activities (sport, leisure) could influence a child’s well-being by enhancing self-esteem and by structuring the child’s peer group (Barber & Stone, 2003).

Nunavummiut engage in a number of sports and competitive leisure activities, with over 150 Inuit games in addition to contemporary sports such as badminton, soccer, basketball, and of course hockey. (Heine, 1997). Almost three quarters of Inuit children participate in organized sports on a weekly basis, with one-third participating four or more times per week. ‘Territorial’ scaled-sports activities in the North include the famous dog sled races. Skiing, canoeing, kayaking, and snowmobiling offer unique opportunities to experience the land at a larger scale while requiring no formal facilities. Surprisingly, soccer is one of the most common team sport activities in Nunavut. Iqaluit has a summer golf course, as well as an ice golf course during Toonik Time, that is washed out with the tide when the annual winter ice melts.

Some Nunavut communities have dedicated recreation facilities such as community pools, arenas and gym complexes. Meanwhile, many team sports are often played in school gymnasia, school yards and ball diamonds. However, team sports face challenges of mobility. While in southern Canada, teams can easily drive to another town to compete, in the North, teams must fly to other communities in order to compete – making such outings onerous and infrequent and hence impeding the full potential of inter-regional team competitions.

Tourism
In addition to community-based recreation, there is also an emerging market for recreational tourism, which is bringing many foreigners to the territory. Until recently, there was a more informal system of outfitters and “adventure tourism” support operators. While the vast landscape of the territory rewards both locals and travelers with outdoor and extreme sport activities with the variety of national and territorial...
parks, locals and visitors experience recreation in fundamentally different ways. Key tourism draws are adventuring canoeing, kayaking, hiking, camping, iceberg watching, kite skiing, dog team expeditions, cross country skiing, wildlife watching – including walrus, beluga, polar bear, and bird watching in more than 11 bird sanctuaries – and many other unique outdoor adventure activities.

In the first few years following Nunavut’s official creation in 1999, tourism suffered from a lack of investments in all four forms of capital. It lacked tourism products, community infrastructure was poor, there weren’t enough trained tourist operators, and its organisational capital was in its infancy. In the years that followed, small improvements were made but in general, the investments were modest and the sector remained small (Nunavut’s Second Chance, 2010).

While there is a trend of increasing visitors to the territory, Nunavut Tourism has identified that high travel costs and Spring/Summer focused tourism packages is limiting more significant growth opportunity (Nunavut Tourism ref?). The current infrastructures to facilitate recreation and tourism are largely limited to air travel and cruise ships. The high cost of air travel in the North makes travelling from community to community costly, while the economic returns of cruise ships is relatively small to communities, as is the opportunity of knowledge and cultural exchange. However, ideally, recreation offers the opportunity to bring northern and southern Canadians together in powerful ways.

A well-run tourism industry requires coordination and cooperation between active participants, community and regional officials, and non-government organisations. There have been some initiatives, with new investments in products and infrastructure. Three communities have received special funding to develop specific tourism products: Arviat will develop an eco-tourism centre; Gjoa Haven will develop a tourist centre for cruise ship tourists; Cape Dorset will develop an arts centre (Nunavut’s Second Chance, 2010). A key challenge of such initiatives is how to enable them to work as a network or extend their social and economic impact such that they do not act as localized projects.

**Design Challenge for Recreation and Tourism in Nunavut**

Proposals for recreation activities and facilities require substantial consideration to local context, geography and culture but should also be bold in recognizing current trends and conditions. Both locals and visitors need to be acknowledged as recreational user groups of the territory, where increased recreational ‘access’ for both is needed. Proposals could choose to focus on either group individually or consider productive overlaps between them, and how these stakeholders intersect with other visitors to the territory. What other programs might intersect with recreation to support local economies?

What is noteworthy is that certain activities such as hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, amongst others, might be considered recreation for visitors, but central to daily life and food security for local northerners. How might one recognize but also capitalize on these two perspectives?
Key questions and design questions are summarized below:

- How can recreation and tourism be expanded and rendered more accessible?
- How might Nunavut envision other new models of recreation and tourism that embrace its geography, mobility networks and natural resources?
- How might new circumpolar initiatives, such as the Arctic Games, help strengthen access and delivery of recreation and/or tourism activities?
- Would territorial scale events, such as dog sled races or long-distance canoe and kayak competitions be a viable activity in Nunavut? Which communities would be along the route? Who would participate? What social and economic benefits might emerge from such events?
- What activities take place indoors versus outdoors? Can some take place in either?
- How can one facilitate intercommunity initiatives/programs?
- Given the very high cost of travel in the North for competitive sports - could sports activities be paired with other programs and events such as education programs, hands-on training, or tourism to help leverage economic resources?
- How might tourism and extreme activities influence local recreation and vice versa? What sorts of leagues could exist, and how would inter-community connectivity be nurtured or evolved?
- How might recreation and tourism collaborate with existing and expanding industries such as mining, energy resources, fishing, the presence of the coast guard and cruise ships, the activities of ice breaking, of research?
- What micro-economies might emerge with the advent of extreme tourism and northern adventuring?
- How does transportation (air, sea, over land) affect connectivity, access to the land, animals, etc.?

Scope of Project

With its 15th anniversary approaching, Nunavut now needs a 2030 vision for the promotion, delivery, and access to recreation and tourism across the territory. Design proposals should represent this vision at two scales: (1) a territorial or regional scale considering networks or exchanges of knowledge and ideas; and (2) an architectural and typological scale. The regional scale should describe how the proposal positively impacts a larger territory: through networks of mobility, trade, exchange, etc., and how it impacts environment, species or multiple communities. The architectural scale should describe ideas about site, and temporal changes of the building through seasons with respect to users, program and building performance.
Program and Site
It is up to each team to determine the site(s) and program relative to the theme of Recreation and Tourism in Nunavut. The expectation is that teams will select site and program based on in-depth research on the challenges and opportunities which Nunavut faces relative to the provision and expansion of recreation and tourism. Which communities are either in greatest need, or already thriving, or beginning new initiatives? And how might communities share recreation and tourism infrastructures?

Quick Facts
- Almost three quarters of Inuit children participate in sports on a weekly basis, with one-third participating 4 or more times per week. Approximately one in five Inuit children reported doing arts and music activities, clubs or groups once per week or more. It should be noted, however, that the availability of such activities in the Inuit regions is more limited than in other parts of the country (Inuit Children's Leisure, 2001).
- In 2001, approximately 17% of Inuit children were reported by their parents to have participated in cultural activities at least once per week, and half (50%) were found to spend time with elders.
- 45% of Inuit children were reported to watch three or more hours of television per day, and 24% played two or more hours of video games (Inuit Children's Leisure, 2001).
- There are over 150 traditional Inuit games, and contemporaneously many more are played, with hockey being a favourite (Heine, 1997).
- Travel required for competitive sports can be hugely expensive due to air flights and expensive accommodations.
- Tourism brought 15,000 visitors in 2011 and tourism-related businesses generated over $40 million in revenue and employed approximately 1,258 Nunavummiut. (Northern News Services) In comparison, Yukon receives 310,000 visitors and in tourism revenue. (2011–2012 Tourism Yukon Situation Analysis) which contributes $103.4 million to Yukon's total Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This is partly due to infrastructure and greater ease of access.
- There are currently several interesting tourism initiatives in Nunavut; these include Students on Ice, Adventure Canada, and many private adventure tourism companies, such as NorthWind outfitters.
- Majority of visitors to Nunavut are Canadian, with 96% of all travelers arriving from points inside Canada. With leisure travel 28% of visitors come from abroad

Resources
Recreation Online Sources
http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Traditions/English/inuit_games.html
http://www.sila.nu/pub/lessons/SILA_InuitGamesLesson.html
http://www.arcticwintergames.org/
www.tooniktyme.com/
http://www.outwardbound.org/
http://www.studentsonice.com
http://www.nfb.ca/film/northern_games
(This documentary short depicts the traditional games of the Inuit as they are practised 800 km north of the Arctic Circle by youth in competition from communities across the North. The film describes the skills, the traditions behind the games, and the spirit of co-operation, that inspires participants)
Recreation Literature


*available as a PDF in the Lateral Office archives*

**Architecture**


**General**


Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. *5000 Years of Inuit History and Heritage*. https://www.itk.ca/publication/5000-years-inuit-history-and-heritage


Competition Information

The Challenge
The focus at this stage of the competition is on strong ideas, rooted in thorough research and addressing clear, specific issues. Design intent needs to be clear, but not necessarily extensively resolved at a formal or tectonic level.

In developing proposals, teams are encouraged to carefully consider what issues the project is addressing? How does it respond to the region’s climate and geography in particularly appropriate ways? How does the project respond to the challenges of dispersed communities? To the challenges of energy and infrastructure? To local cultural traditions in modern ways? To seasonal patterns which already exist?

Design responses should focus on building typologies rather than forms. The interest is not in how a building might recall the form or appearance of existing vernaculars, but how it learns from traditional (and contemporary) programmatic or temporal performance. What programs are brought together in ways that leverage local traditions, and produce new collective realms, or new economies? Projects are encouraged to expand notions of sustainability beyond the technical or the building envelope, to consider social, cultural and economic sustainability specific to Canada’s North.

The projects should address two scales: the regional scale and the architectural scale. (See Design Challenge for further elaboration.)

Eligibility
Any student currently enrolled or graduating in 2013 academic calendar from one of the five participating schools may enter the Arctic Adaptations competitions. Participating schools are Dalhousie University, University of British Columbia, University of Manitoba, Université de Montréal, and University of Toronto. Each school is running a competition on one of the five designated themes.

Teams
Each team must be comprised of two eligible students (see Eligibility above) from the University of Manitoba.
Registration
Each student team is required to register by emailing register@arcticadaptations.ca by September 15, 2013 if participating in the theme of Education. In the registration email include which school you are registering from, your names, and your preferred contact email addresses. Arctic Adaptations organizers will send your team a registration number as confirmation of registration.

Submission
Each team should consist of two eligible students who thoroughly document their proposal for Arctic Adaptations at the two scales, on two boards sized 24” x 36” laid out horizontally. Board 1 should document a design strategy at the regional scale. Board 2 should document an architectural scale. It is encouraged to include research that supports design intention.
Boards are to be submitted as a PDF with the following filename designation: registration#_schoolname_1.PDF registration#_schoolname_2.PDF
More submission information will follow upon registration.

Schedule
September 1, 2013 - Competition opens
September 30, 2013 - Q & A period closes
September 30, 2013 - Registration closes
November 15, 2013 – Submission due
November 25, 2013 – Winner selected
December to January 20, 2014 – Project development with AA design team
June 2014 - exhibition opens at 2014 Venice Biennale in Architecture
2015-16 - exhibition tours Canadian venues

Jury
The jury to select a winning student team will consist of Arctic Adaptations team members including academics, architects, and the Nunavut-based organization.

Prize
One winning team will be selected and have the opportunity to continue to develop the proposal in collaboration with one of the Arctic Adaptations architecture firms and the Nunavut-based organization. This project will be one of five presented in Canada’s pavilion in Venice in 2014. The Arctic Adaptations team will facilitate travel to the north for the selected two-student team, and will work with them in coordinating their role within the design team structure that is suitable to all parties. The selected students will be recognised individually and as a representative of their school.