



**RESSOURCER NINAN NITASSINAN [NOTRE TERRITOIRE]**  
*Un réseau écorécréotouristique comme pivot d'une territorialité innue*

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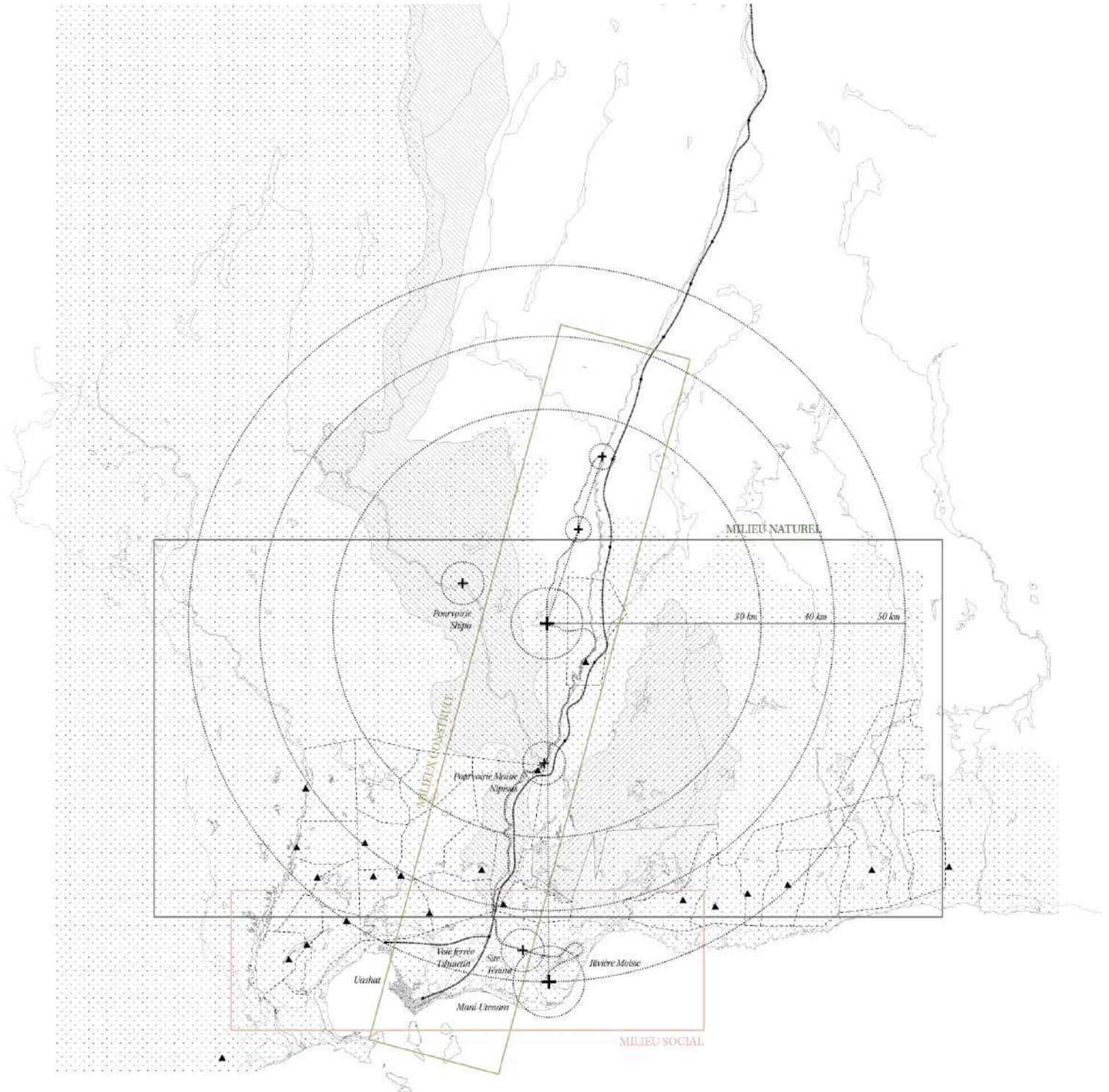
Start date : 01.09.2018

End date : 14.12.2018

Under the supervision of : Myriam Blais

Partners involved : Innu community of Uashat mak Mani-Utenam





## // ABSTRACT

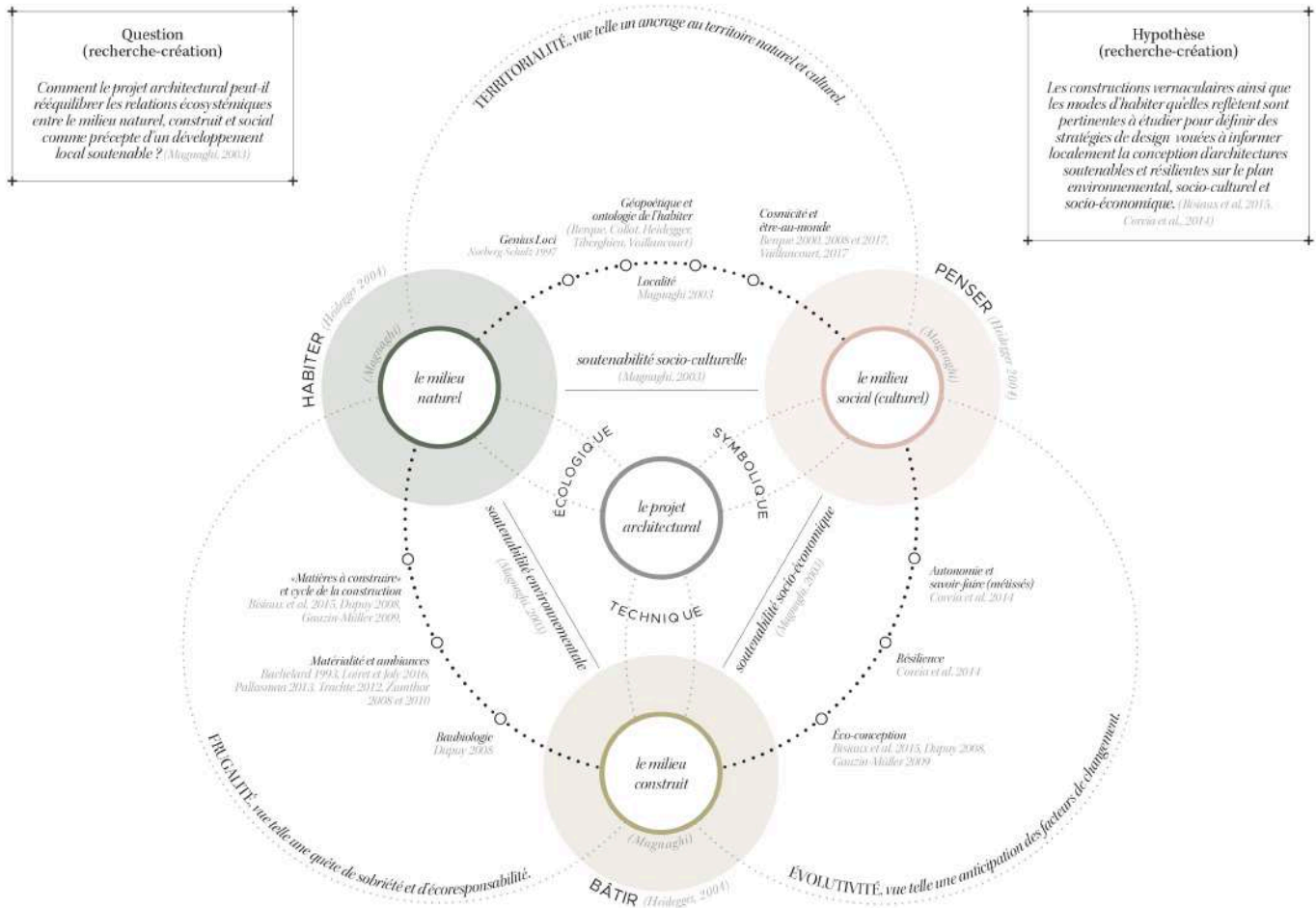
*How can the architectural project serve as a founding intervention to rebalance ecosystem relationships between the natural, social and built Innu communities, although more particularly that of Uashat mak Mani-Utenam, as a precept of their sustainable local development (Magnaghi, 2003) ?*



Being very young and sedentary, the relationship between the Innu and Nitassinan, their traditional territory, is necessarily tinged with an ontology that is unique to them. Although this has not ceased to evolve in recent decades, particularly because of their confrontation with the modern Western paradigm which, in this frantic race for development, considers the territory more like a space to be exploited in terms of its natural resources, Nitassinan remains today still the matrix of their culture and distinct identity (Vaillancourt, 2017).

Thus, in the image of an ancestral relationship that is plausibly not overdue, but at least updated by this consideration of contemporary Innu discourse, which today reflects a plural territorial conception - political, ecological, economic, social, cultural and symbolic -, the architectural project revolves around the establishment of an indigenous eco-recreational tourism sector, an alternative that many communities consider to date to be faithful to their concerns, values and aspirations for municipal development (Martin et Girard, 2009).

More concretely, the proposed eco-recreational tourism network takes root along two major Innu access roads to the Nitassinan territory: one belonging to the traditional era, the portage trail along the Moisie River, which the Innu used to travel up the territory in the winter and down in the spring; and the other belonging to modernity, a vestige of the bankruptcy of a mining company, the Tshiuetin railway line linking Sept-Îles to Schefferville. By promoting and supervising the sustainable practice of traditional activities, particularly hunting and fishing, the project plays a pivotal role at the junction between tradition and modernity to celebrate this relationship with the contemporary Innu, "imbued with a reinvented or at least adapted nomadism" (Vaillancourt, 2017) by these comings and goings between the Innu Assi, seen as the reserve space, and the Nutshimit, the inland; where Innu culture then takes on its full meaning.



// OBJECTIVES AND CHALLENGES

Interested more particularly in this relationship between the notion of living in a territory, thinking about it and building it (Heidegger, 2004 ; Berque, 2008), three verbs of action being, at one time, univocal, but which, faced with the functionalist dogmas of the modern movement in architecture resulting from a globalized industrial revolution, saw themselves distanced, my hypothesis of research-creation, or rather my conviction, takes root in this idea that Innu vernacular architectures, traditional as well as contemporary, as well as the ways of living that they reflect are relevant to study in order to define design strategies aimed at informing locally the design of architectures that are sustainable and resilient in environmental, socio-cultural and socio-economic terms.

Although I do not validate all these aspects of sustainability within the framework of this research-creation process, the architecture project nevertheless approaches them by responding to the given mission of developing a design approach rooted in the territory in terms of its culture and nature by exploring the technical and poetic potential linked to the use of its resources, both tangible and intangible. Without necessarily freezing in a precise form, it is rather articulated as a progressive process; thus participating in the elaboration of a new territorialization cycle of the Uashat mak Mani-Utenam community (Magnaghi, 2003).



All in all, the objectives of the architecture project are based on three key concepts, namely:

**1.0 TERRITORIALITY** *cosmicity, being in the world, geopoetics, ways of living, locality, genius loci*

Architectural and programmatic objectives

\_Designing an architecture rooted in Nitassinan from the point of view of its nature as well as its culture; the contemporary reinterpretation of ways of living and traditional Innu constructive practices, the use of materials to be built on the territory and the enhancement of local know-how will strengthen this territorial anchorage.

\_Develop programming that encourages this notion of a nomadic journey between the community and the territory; a journey that is now repeated by many and often considered as a way of nourishing the being in the world.

**2.0 FRUGALITY** *"building materials", construction cycle, materiality, eco-design, building biology*

Constructive and architectural objectives

Design a frugal architecture in terms of materials and energy, through the use of natural and local materials used in their raw or slightly transformed state and the promotion of a low-tech approach.

Limit the ecological footprint of the building by developing bioclimatic architecture through the adoption of passive strategies (passive solar heating, natural ventilation, etc.) and the sober use of technologies.

**3.0 RESILIENCE** *flexibility and adaptability, autonomy, empowerment, local know-how, cross-fertilization*

Constructive, architectural and programmatic objectives

\_Design the architectural project simply and soberly to encourage flexibility and adaptability of activities and spaces according to the seasons, years and needs of the community.

\_Develop an appropriate design approach that values local skills to ensure the autonomy and perpetuity of the architectural project.



**// CONTEXT AND COLLABORATORS .....**

The Uashat mak Mani-Utenam community being the main concerned by this research-creation project, the various collaborators who were consulted [directly or indirectly] throughout its development all came from it.

Directly, Denis Vollant, former director of the Tshakapesh Institute, served as the first referent for the validation of the initial reflections and their possible articulation on a territorial scale, and then for the architectural project. It was he who specified the cultural potential he saw in developing this eco-recreational tourism network along the former Innu portage of Mile 56 and in positioning the reception pavilion at the mouth of the Moisie River, for a question of accessibility for people in the community on a more daily basis.

Indirectly, it was my participation in the various activities carried out within the framework of the Habitats and Cultures Workshop (ARC-7047) as a teaching assistant that led me to discuss certain points of the project with other members of the community, in particular Ingrid Tshirnish, Heidie Vachon, Jean-Guy, etc. As the students of the workshop were working on a centre for the transmission of culture and traditional knowledge on the territory, our research axes were intersected on several points. Whether they are developed during a short stay in the territory from October 4 to 7, 2018 or during a second meeting at Johnny Pilot Elementary School in Uashat on November 6, 2018, these informal discussions have allowed me to enrich my vision of the project on several aspects.

**// RESULTS AND SOLUTIONS .....**

The results of this research-creation project are currently being measured in an oral and visual presentation, mainly in maps, images and other documents of a more technical nature (diagrams, plans, sections, axonometry, etc.). Although all of this work was presented to the jury on December 14, 2018, no member of the Uashat mak Mani-Utenam community was unfortunately able to attend the presentation due to a scheduling conflict with the posting of the Habitats and Crops Workshop projects (ARC-7047) for which Denis Vollant, Ingrid Tshirnish and Heidie Vachon were indeed members of the jury. Towards the end of the day, Denis Vollant nevertheless took the time to present the main lines of the project to him, and I was thus able to obtain some external comments.









