

LEADERSHIP IN ACTION + ECEM SUNGUR

Camp New Circadia

How might we engender a communal network of New Circadians, and produce a novel, but important compendium of democratic dreaming?

NEW
Circadia



I would like to thank the **Laidlaw Foundation** and the **UofT Laidlaw Scholars Program** for supporting me to become an ethical leader.

I would also like to thank my supervisor, **Professor Richard Sommer**, for providing me with this opportunity to work on this inspiring project.

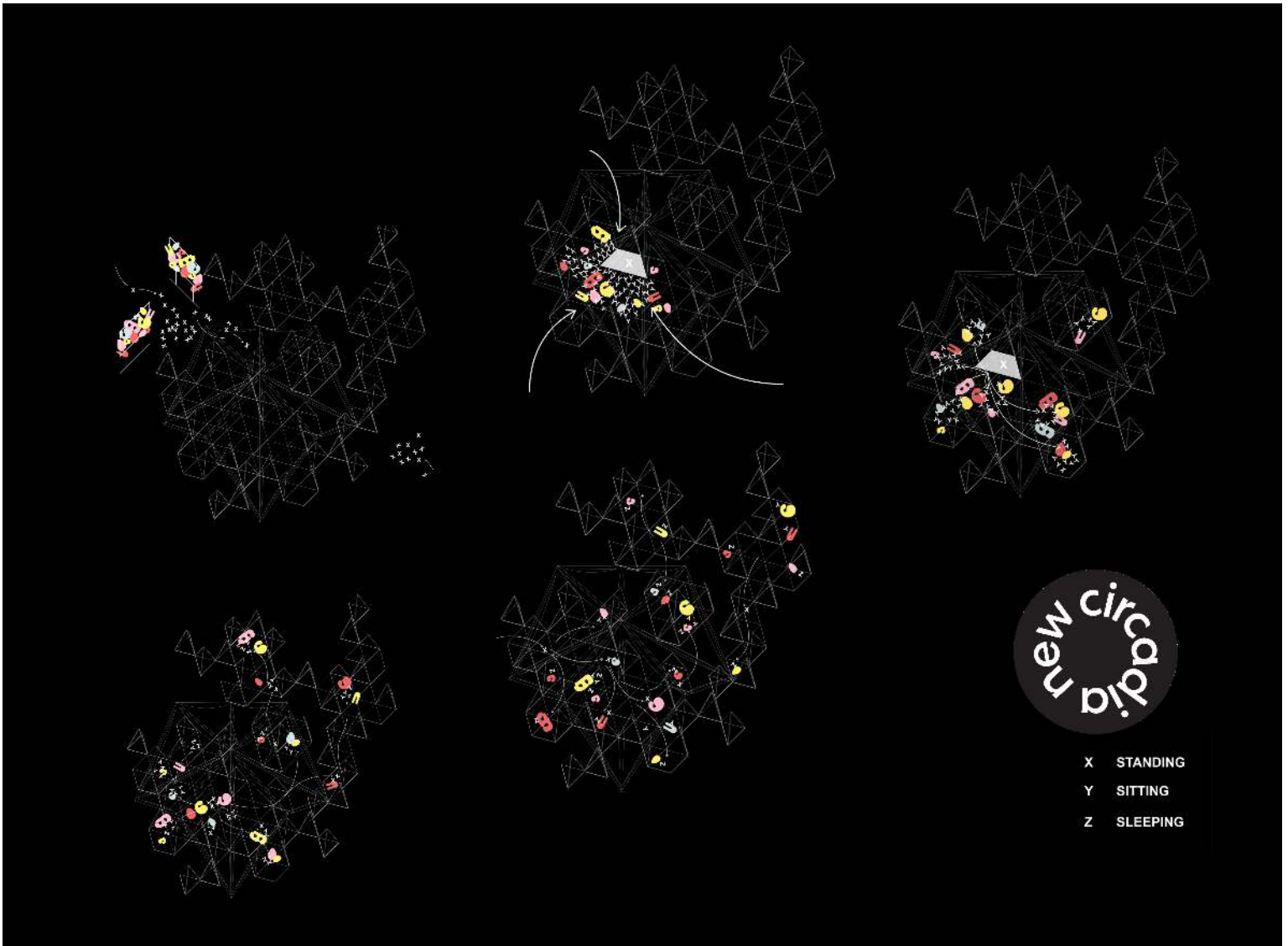


Figure 1: Abaton of Epidaurus, 2010. Image from "Abaton." Wiktionary. <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/abaton>.

Project Overview

A mobile architecture that shapes time as much as space, CampNC re-imagined the ancient Greek abaton (Figure 1), along with other more indigenous spaces of dream-sharing and circadian ritual, as the basis for a landscape- conditioned and sensorially-tuned proto-community.

Taking cues from popular roadshows, rec centers, bookmobiles, and mobile research units, CampNC was designed to be a performance and convocation space that instigates, gathers and circulates cross-cultural practices that focus on restorative repose, sleep and dreaming. Moreover, the Camp's mobile, big tent architecture and flexible interior - designed for easy packing, deployment and adaptation to a range of changing social and physical/weather conditions - allows use for a greater audience.





About the Project: Camp New Circadia

Camp New Circadia (CampNC) is a travelling, mobile variation of *New Circadia: Adventures in Mental Spelunking*, which was originally mounted in the Daniels Faculty Gallery in 2019/20. Featured on media like CBC, Canadian Architect, ArchDaily, and Toronto Life, *New Circadia* provided a disconnection from the fast-paced, tech-infused life, and allowed relaxation inside a “soft utopia” of pillows and felt.

Different from *New Circadia*, Camp New Circadia was imagined to be a mobile troop dedicated to collective idling, dream-sharing, and recording the exquisite life of stories/dreams as they evolve through time and place. The ongoing project aims to engage and mobilise a diverse set of communities within an array of distinct indigenous and colonial geographies - to optimize their spatial experience.

Responsibilities

I got the opportunity to work on this project between July 18 – August 26. Having previously worked in the design aspect of the project, my role as a part of the Laidlaw Program focused more on communications and digital marketing. Some of my potential responsibilities included:

- Finding/researching groups in need
- Communicating with related NGOs and support groups
- Finding a way to effectively work and communicate with different groups (since some of the existing partners are in the US)
- Helping raise support and funding for the project
- Creating a social media strategy
- Connecting with academics in the field, ex. People who explore the indigenous philosophies and landscape
- Surveying communities to understand their needs and wants
- Researching similar projects, potentially to collaborate

Project Timeline

Week 1: Onboarding

In the first week, I learned more about the second phase of the project, its expectations, and my role as a part of the Laidlaw Scholars Program.

- We identified tasks, goals, and the process of the project throughout the six week program.
- I learned about what changes were made to the project with the Design Build Studio summer course at UofT.
 - The changes to the design
 - Improvements to prototyping
 - Material changes
 - CampNC sites

Week 2: Background Research

To better understand the context, audience, and range of the project, I was tasked to do research about the identity of the project.

- I looked into the previous actions of the project, its identity, and goals - and how they have changed over time.
- To identify potential collaborators, I found previous media features.
- I prepared a project identity guide with fonts, colours, and styles.



Figure 2: The Merry Prankster's tour, 1964. Image from "Speculation 08: Camp Circadia." Pillow Culture. <https://www.pillowculture.com/speculation-08-camp-circadia>.

Week 3: Competitor Analysis

One of the questions I was looking into for the project was: "how can we make CampNC known?" To answer this question, I looked into precedents and competitors.

- I researched similar projects to CampNC to identify their strategies and outreach programs (Figure 2).
- I identified projects with similar scopes to CampNC and looked into their success stories to better understand the growth process of smaller projects.

Week 4: Project Strategy

After fully understanding the project, I identified potential options and opportunities to make the project more accessible to a greater audience.

- To make the project more accessible and known, I researched and suggested digital ways of representing the project.
- By highlighting opportunities for the project, we were able to choose a direction for the project easier.

Week 5: Case Study Part 1

To apply my ideas, I was tasked to choose a site that could be a good location to set CampNC. I spent this week considering site options to find the best fit for the project. I asked the questions:

- Which area would suit this project best?
- What communities are located in the area?
- How might the area benefit from CampNC?
- Are there any potential groups we can collaborate nearby?

Week 6: Case Study Part 2

After a week of research, I decided to go with Sorauren Park, a residential park in Toronto (Figure 3). I looked into the below features to better understand the qualities of the park:

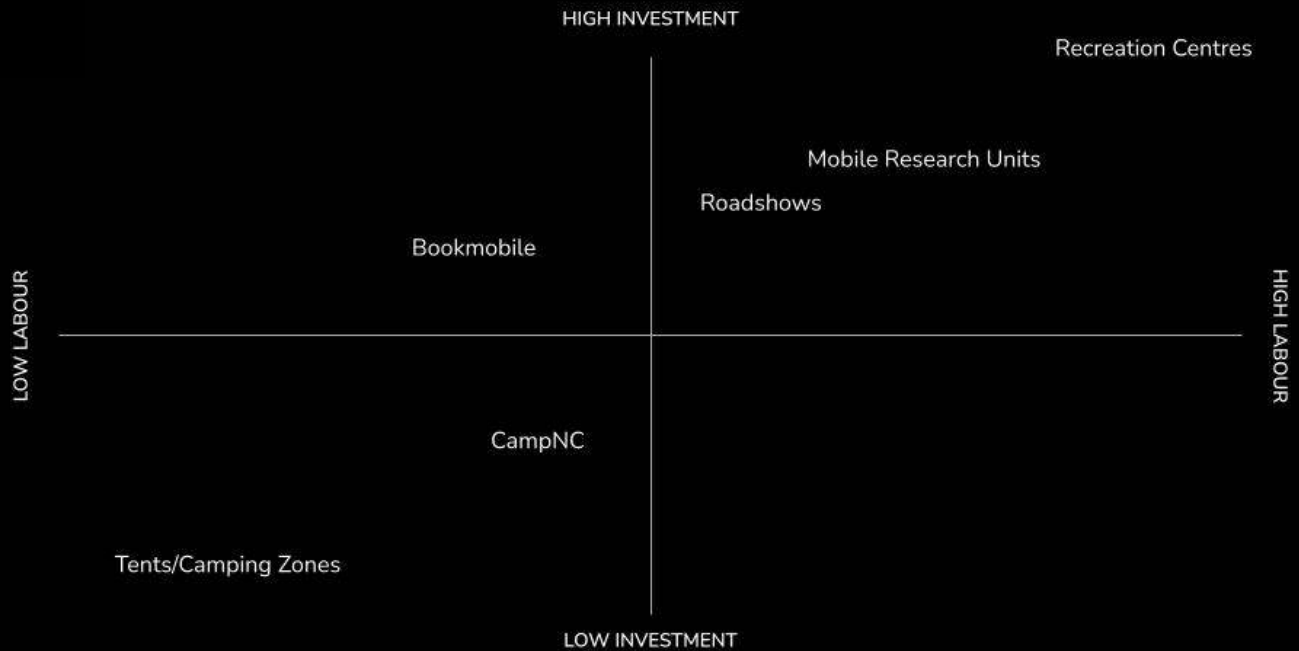
- Physical qualities: site information, transit options, permanent features, interior and exterior spaces, temporary features, location for CampNC, constraints, SWOT analysis, nearby locations, top collaborators
- Social qualities: community, demographics, diversity, fit with CampNC
- Events: hosted officially, hosted independently, top potential events, contacts
- I also created a site proposal template document to be applied to other potential locations.



Figure 3: Sorauren Park. Image from "The Park in a Pandemic." Chloë Ellingson Photography. <http://www.chloeellingson.com/the-park-in-a-pandemic>.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

There is a lack of a space that instigates, gathers, and circulates cross-cultural practices that focus on restorative repose, sleep, and dreaming.



Project Outcomes

At the end of the program, we created a project strategy, case study, and site proposal template for CampNC. These documents will not only be helpful in the next steps of the project, but they will also be essential in finding collaborators and potential sites in the future.

The project itself thrives from a diverse set of communities, therefore, I believe that my work will be impactful in their access, engagement, and inclusion to CampNC. Since CampNC aims to create a travelling ensemble for collective idling, it has the potential to bring communities together, provide a place of rest/assembly, and offer engagement/entertainment through hosted events.

By working on the social media strategy and communication of this project, I hoped to incorporate the voices of the people I will be serving. In this way, the project acts as a gateway to benefit communities that have been underrepresented and make their voices heard better through the outcomes of this project.

Luckily, I have the opportunity to continue working on this project - focusing on the digital and physical experiences of communities we will be working with. Moreover, as this project has the potential to expand to other areas, especially places in the USA where a partner is located, CampNC will have an even greater impact with its range.

Leadership Skills and SMART Goals

Research & Project Management Skills

This project required a lot of individual and collaborative working, and presentation skills. As a part of my role, I conducted research about various topics including project strategy, community engagement, and site selection. In this way, we were able to take the project to the next level. I developed my ability to work within deadlines, track multiple tasks, and conduct qualitative and quantitative research.

- **Specific:** Planned and organised a site proposal template and case study to find out which sites would be best suitable for the project.
- **Measurable:** Found out a site within proximity to Downtown Toronto to build CampNC and host events for an active community of 5,000+ people
- **Attainable:** This was achievable because there were many opportunities to find sites near Toronto that would be suitable in size, population, and availability.
- **Relevant:** This project helped me better align my skills as a product designer with the current market, especially with the community engagement and project management aspect.
- **Time-bound:** The research and case study were achieved within 3 weeks of the project. The template is timeless since it can be reused for other site proposals.

Social & Cultural Intelligence & Awareness

This project required in-depth research of potential sites and the communities involved with it. In this way, I was able to see the way people live, their activities, and what they would gain from CampNC. This allowed me to better empathise and understand the needs of a community, and how we can organise the project to better fit their needs.

- Specific: Better understood communities in proposed sites through primary and secondary research.
- Measurable: Investigated five sites and chose one for the case study.
- Attainable: This was achievable through secondary research of nearby areas of Toronto.
- Relevant: This improved my research, analysis, and empathy skills.
- Time-bound: The case study was prepared over two weeks.

Creative & Critical Thinker

A part of the project involved looking for collaborators near the proposed site. For this, I had to find if the potential collaborator was a good fit, if they would be interested in working with us, and if there are any limitations (in terms of access, etc.).

- Specific: Found, identified, and located potential collaborators for the project near the proposed site.
- Measurable: Identified near ten groups that have previously worked or might be interested in working in Sorare Park.
- Attainable: This was achievable through common contacts and my communication skills, used in reaching out to people.
- Relevant: This project has helped me develop my communication skills with outside groups and organise potential collaborations.
- Time-bound: Finding collaborators was done over a week of work.

