INTRODUCTION – This studio will consider the interests and aspirations of Yunets’in, B.C., one of six communities of the Tsilhqot’in Nation (TNG). Its leadership is allowing us to explore possible futures for Yunets’in and the Dasiq’ox Tribal Park, and ways of life within the cultural, physical, ecological, and economic dimensions of its ancestral and unceded Land.

OVERVIEW – “What is the Indigenous in-between...?” This is the question posed by Yunets’in Chief Russell Myers Ross when we discussed the possibility of this studio. How will looking inward help Yunets’in develop strategies for engaging the wider world? How does it use space, material, function, and time to regenerate and self-determine? Embedded in these questions are opportunities to produce work that reflects Yunets’in’s aspirations and provides paths to pursue individual research and design interests.

The studio will include online exchanges with Yunets’in leadership and community members as well as with a network of environmental groups and foundations with whom the Yunets’in work, including EcoTrust Canada and Tides Canada (now MakeWay). We can fill a gap in this network’s capacity, using our skills in research, visualization, and design to complement policy and inspire action. Since travel to Yunets’in is not possible, these online exchanges will ground research and support the play and curiosity of speculation happening in our own online conversations and collaborations.

Key research materials will include Nagwedizk’an Gwanes Ganau Ch’inidzed Ganexwilagh: The Fires Awakened Us, a TNG climate change and planning document; and Appendix 3: Tsilhqot’in Pattern of Claim Area Occupation, a monumental legal document about Indigenous practices and rights. We will also learn of the many initiatives already well underway in Yunets’in. These will be important points of connection and departure for your ideas.

“The story beings in darkness, where we learn to shed light on truth. Then we reveal our story, within a story.”
From “Voices From Here: Chief Russell Myers Ross”

“In modern Athens, the vehicles of mass transportation are called metaphorai. To go to work or come home, one takes a ‘metaphor’ - a bus or a train. Stories could also take this noble name: every day, they traverse and organize places, they select and link them together; they make sentences and itineraries out of them. They are spatial trajectories.”

SCHEDULE – For the day-to-day of desk crits and group meetings, we will be flexible and work out our meeting times to respond to student locations and circumstances. The studio itself is organized in four parts. We will begin with an initial three-week research and knowledge exchange with our collaborators, using this exchange to generate a collection of “spatial trajectories.” We will hang elements of stories onto a hypothetical “trail” beginning from the Chilcotin Highway, passing through Yunets’in, and moving through the Tribal Park. Overlapping with the first exercise will be a two-week analysis exercise to situate specific interests somewhere along the trail by illustrating intentions about material, program, phasing, and partnership. This will provide a foundation for an eight-week design project, done either individually or in small groups, at appropriate sites and scales, from material investigation to landscape ruralism and everything in between. The studio will conclude with an online community presentation and final review.