

Learning Places Fall 2019

SITE REPORT #1

Gowanus Canal

NAMING PROTOCOL. When saving and posting your site reports on OpenLab, please follow the following format: SiteReport#.LastnameFirstname



Select a meaningful image that captures your perception of the site we visited.

STUDENT NAME: Keron Anthony Smith

PART 1: SITE OBSERVATIONS

1. What are some general observations about the character of this neighborhood? What does it remind you of? How does it make you feel?
 - It seems like a much more gentrified area than the surrounding neighborhoods around it. It honestly feels like a gated community without the gates. While on the tour the neighborhood I was actually reminded of my own neighborhood, Cypress Hills. I saw this because the people with a much lower annual income area generally found on the bottom of this hill but when you get to the top you would notice an extreme change in demographic and income level.
 -
2. How is the natural world contained or shaped by human activity or architecture? In what ways does the natural world invade or disrupt human activity, planning or architecture?
 - One way nature is shaped by human activities is through our own desire for personal gain and expansion. This could be represented through constant zoning changes, real estate development, and/or over population of a certain area. In some cases the natural world would invade our personal domain, for example when there are storm surges and the Gowanus Canal and nearby waterways overflows therefore causing severe flooding.
3. What people did you observe in the neighborhood and what activities are they engaged in?
 - I mostly observed children and either they are grandparents or their babysitters taking them home from school. I also noticed there wasn't a lot of diversity, although they are changing times encourage it you can still sense a trace of a dominant Caucasian presence.
4. Reflect on a **specific** place you viewed in this neighborhood. A specific place means a single building, or an intersection, or an individual built structure, etc.
 - One place that stood out to me were the apartment houses that were considered historical sites near the Gowanus border. These apartments stood out to me because they were deliberately preserved while you can visually see how time and neighboring blocks have adapted to the present. All of the apartments on this block had front yards which were not too common in this area, also the material the houses were made out of itself was unique. They were a type of stone derived from overseas caves that were carved into larger blocks in comparison to our average brick.

a. TOXIC OR NOT, THIS IS OUR LAND TOO !



b. What is the *program* of the space? How are people meant to interact with one another and with the environment?

- I think the program of this space is to be used as a viewing space to observe the canal and its contents from a closer but safer point of view.

c. describe a possible creative reuse of this **specific** space for a performance:

- Protests
- Picnics
- Social Movements

a) Which areas are best for performers/activists and which areas are good for observers? Do these spaces overlap? Mention specific objects and structures in your answer.

- I think this is a case where the space does overlap. For example if your

an activist devoted on the reversal of polluting the gowanus canal, you could use this space in order to protest or have a performance that could be viewed as a protest in order to relay your message to your desired target. I think the canal itself along with the two viewing center at each side of the canals are spaces that can utilized in order to carry out these protests.

- b) What kinds of performance would work best (intimate or grand; processional or stationary; text and/or music; interactive or passive audience; etc.)?
- For this specific space have a grand performance wouldnt be ideal because this space is kind of tucked away in a dead end. This allows for a much more intimate interaction where you could have a stationary performance or hand out information cards or flyers about your cause.

QUESTIONS for FURTHER RESEARCH. These should follow directly from your analysis section and be complex and specific enough to serve as the basis of a research project.

Questions might relate to architectural or environmental observations, socio-political problems and/or solutions, demography, history, zoning, civic processes, performance strategy, etc.

1. How does bio hazardous reputation of the gowanus canal affect food businesses located near it ?
2. Although the canal might pose a threat to the health of humans, is it beneficial for other species

of life ?

3. What can be done to reverse years of environmental destruction in order to clean up the gowanus canal?

PART 2: RESEARCH

Choose and revise one of your research questions for further research.

Revised Research Question: Although the canal might pose a threat to the health of humans, is it beneficial for other species of life ?

Find and cite 2 sources that address your question in MLA format. Respond to the questions below.

CITATION 1: Klein, Joanna. "Rapid Evolution Saved This Fish From Pollution, Study Says." The New York Times, The New York Times, 9 Dec. 2016, www.nytimes.com/2016/12/09/science/atlantic-killifish-evolution-pollution.html

Why did you select this source? How does it address all or part of your research question?

- I selected this source because its an article that talks about that aquatic life that has adapted to the toxic waters of superfund sites due to humans increasingly adding pollutants to natural waterways.

Is the source credible? Why or why not?

- Another reason I selected this source is because I believe it to be a credible source. It comes from a New York Times article written by Joanna Klien who is a freelance writer based in brooklyn. Her passions include nature, deep sea, and its preservation according to her personal website so it's another reason I would use her article as a credible source.

What further information would you need to answer your question? Where would you look for additional sources?

- The further information I would need for this question would be the past history of the Atlantic Killifish. This would be instrumental in answering this question because according to scientist it is said that this fish actually adapted over time to the toxins of the water it was living in. You could look for this information in science journals or and encyclopedia.

CITATION 2: Kerlin , Kat. "Against the Tide: A Fish Adapts Quickly to Lethal Levels of Pollution." UC Davis, 14 Dec. 2016, www.ucdavis.edu/news/against-tide-fish-adapts-quickly-lethal-levels-pollution/

Why did you select this source? How does it address all or part of your research question?

- The reason for me choosing this source is because it addresses the specific aquatic sealife living within the toxic waters and how these fish start developing such resiliency.

Is the source credible? Why or why not?

- I believe this source can be considered a credible source because it comes from an educational institution (UC DAVIS) which has a whole department dedicated to superfund research.

PART 3: Performance Reflection (after second site visit)

Write a 200 word reflection about how you felt during the second visit to the space and during the performance activities. How did this visit change your perception of the place and your relationship to the natural and built environments? Did the experience of 'performing' in the space (i.e., moving your body) teach you anything new about the landscape or architecture?

- The second visit was interesting for me because as we left the park and headed towards the canal site it felt as if I were transitioning back into time. I say this because as we headed towards the canal there was less human traffic and interaction going on and you were able to see how humans have been inhabited and populated the area over time. Also these visits have opened my eyes as to how there are serious issues that affect the environment and nearby communities that aren't given enough publicity (ex, toxic canal and zoning). If not treated soon the long term effects of the gowanus can be drastic on the nearby residents and wildlife. Performing in the space made be realize that the canal could be seen as a barrier by many instead of a natural man made phenomena. In the area of our performance there were many dead and cut down trees/wildlife that could have been done by any of the neighboring businesses in an attempt to push back the toxic feel of everything associated with the canal.