

Learning Places Fall 2017

Site Report #1

Gowanus Canal



“This was one of the first bridges we came across on our tour. The Gowanus Canal calm at sea.”

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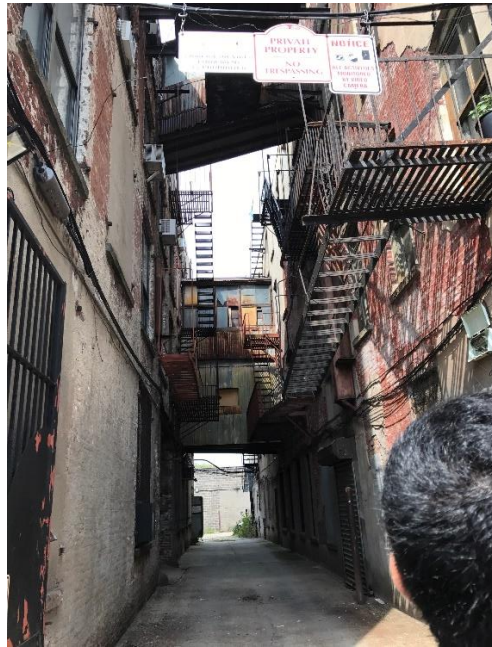
Introduction

The Gowanus Canal was a new trip visit for me. When driving on the street, I see signs for Gowanus Expressway but, never visited the Gowanus Canal. After listening to the professor’s talk about the canal, I thought it would be a nice visit to see a place that would be unfamiliar to me. Based on class discussions, in my opinion, Gowanus seems to be recognized as one of the most polluted bodies of Water in the United States. In other words, it is a polluted area from since the mid-19th century. Based on research, the canal is about 1.8 miles long.

Surrounding the Gowanus canal are mainly commercial and industrial properties such as

warehouses and parking lots. The Gowanus canal was created in the mid-1800s and was used as a busy cargo transportation hub. The canal was heavily contaminated from the sewage systems which carried waste from homes and rainwater from drains and industrial contaminants. Sediments such as heavy metals, mercury, lead and copper are found in the Canal. Today, the canal is still used for transportation of goods, oil and scrap metal.

Site Observations:



I chose this image because a movie was filmed in this alleyway. It reminded me of an action movie because of the design and layout of the steps and bridge connection.



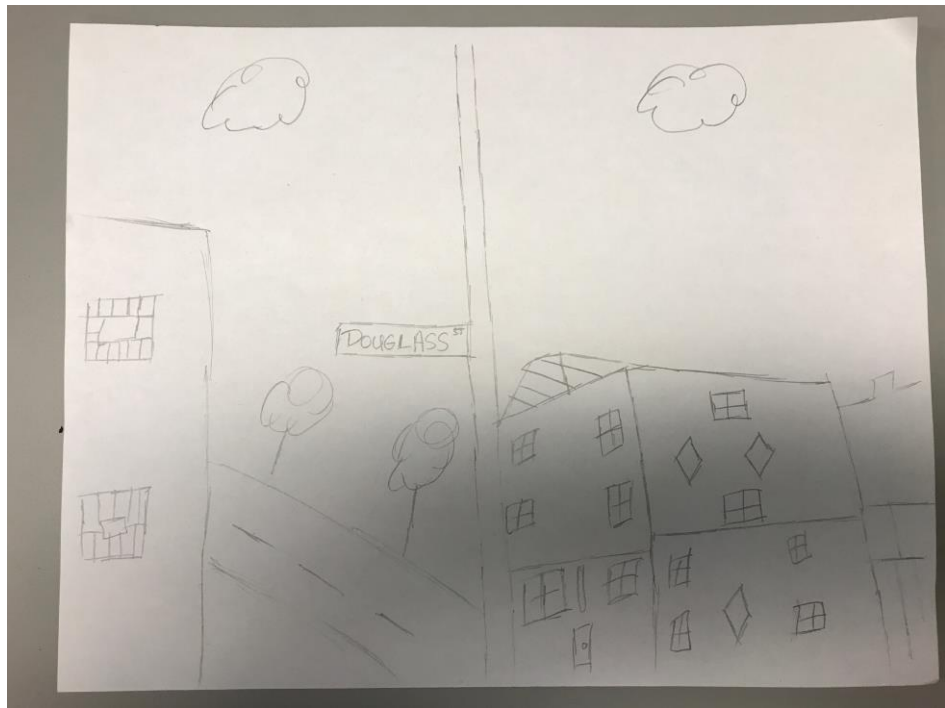
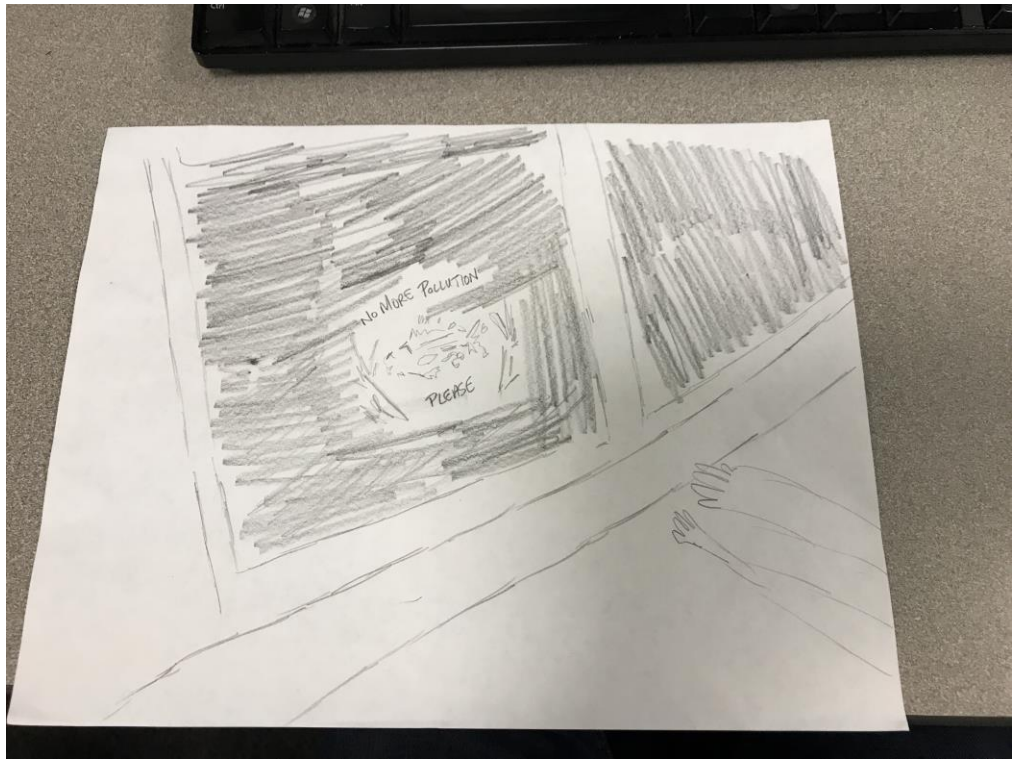
Apart from the older developments of Gowanus, this part of Gowanus looks semi developed with newly built construction. The building looks new and the layout also seems modernized.



I chose this image because it's a form of Graffiti. However, the detail of this image caught my attention because of the 3D and actual reality of the Graffiti.



The quality of this image is very new and almost unreal. If you pay close attention to construction aspect of this bridge, it is newly constructed and recently built to show development of the Gowanus area.



Many of the buildings in Gowanus are shaped in certain ways and forms. As we walked along the canal, I noticed that the water has a green color and very foamy at the top layer as well. This is because the water carries a lot of pollution. There is also rain water and a way for sewage nearby of the canal. Many of the buildings also have graffiti on the walls and the sides of the them. This was a sign that many artists lived near or visited the Gowanus canal often. While touring Gowanus, I also realized that where the residential buildings are, there are no industrial adjacent to them. This is more of a business or commercial area so many lots were in the area for trucks and trailers etc. In the more residential side of Gowanus, I noticed that the residential buildings are packed a way to fit more rooms and apartments for the area due to the population.

As seen in the pictures above, the details in the graffiti art are really realistic and detail oriented. The Gowanus street art is new to me because I've previously seen graffiti but not to a much detailed extend as this site. I had a thought that maybe art studios previously or currently were in these spaces to explain the graffiti. The last image on the previous page was built alongside the canal. This seemed to be eye popping for me because it is different from the rest of the areas we visited. You would think you're in a different atmosphere based on the infrastructure of this building. There is a nice seating area which is open to the public and it offers a nice view of the water and area.

Analysis/ Discoveries:

To conclude my visit to Gowanus Brooklyn, I learned that this is a mainly industrial area with few residential apartment buildings as well. I always heard of the term Gowanus but never seen what it had to offer. I wouldn't say the area is a rundown neighborhood. However, development is needed and in progress as well. The development process has already been

started and taking place. Commercial facilities are being modernized, the cleanup process for the canal is costly but will be handled efficiently for the environment as well. I also noticed that the ice cream trucks park nearby the canal. The residential side of Gowanus by Smith/ Bond street has more apartment buildings, small shops, delis, lots of trees, and more cars and people etc. I see a lot of potential in the Gowanus area that will be up rose by the different sets of construction going on.

Keywords/ Vocabulary:

1. Pig Beach
2. “No More Pollution Please”
3. Third Ave Clay – Pottery Business
4. Gentrification
5. Restoration/Renovation

Questions:

1. When is the expected cleanup process going to start for the canal? What is consisted in the cleanup and how will change be implemented?
2. During the gentrification process of Gowanus, how is it implemented of which areas are developed and constructed first?