

Learning Places Fall 2017
SITE REPORT #3

In Depth Gowanus



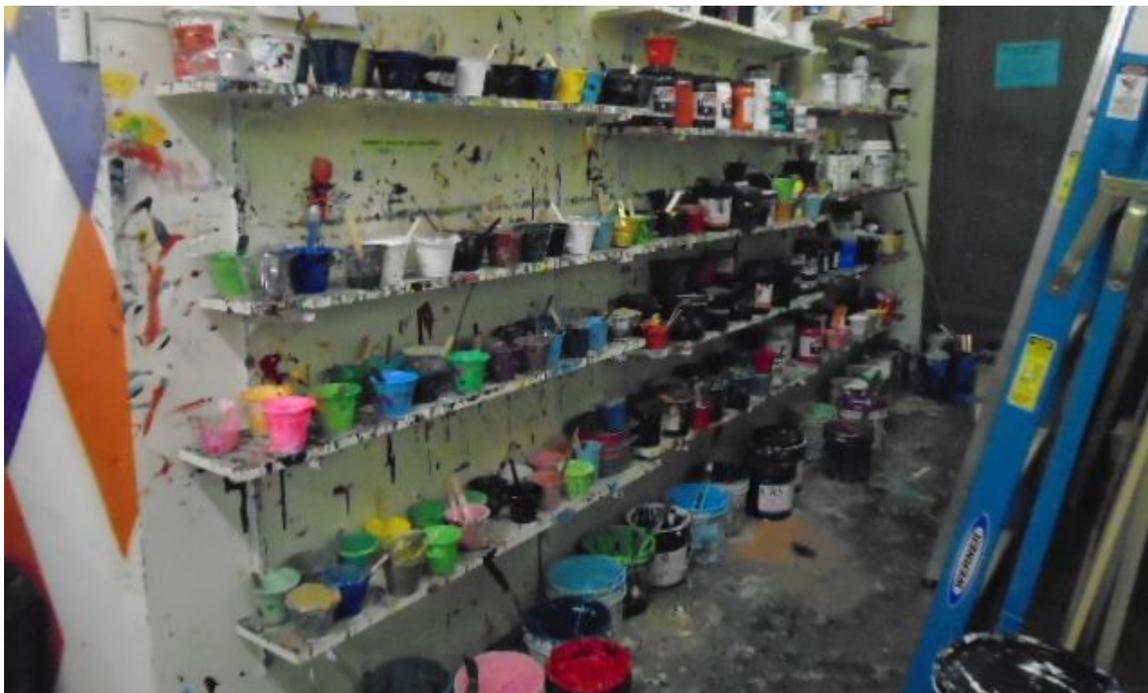
Cover Image: Right after the Smith/9th street station

Asli Oney

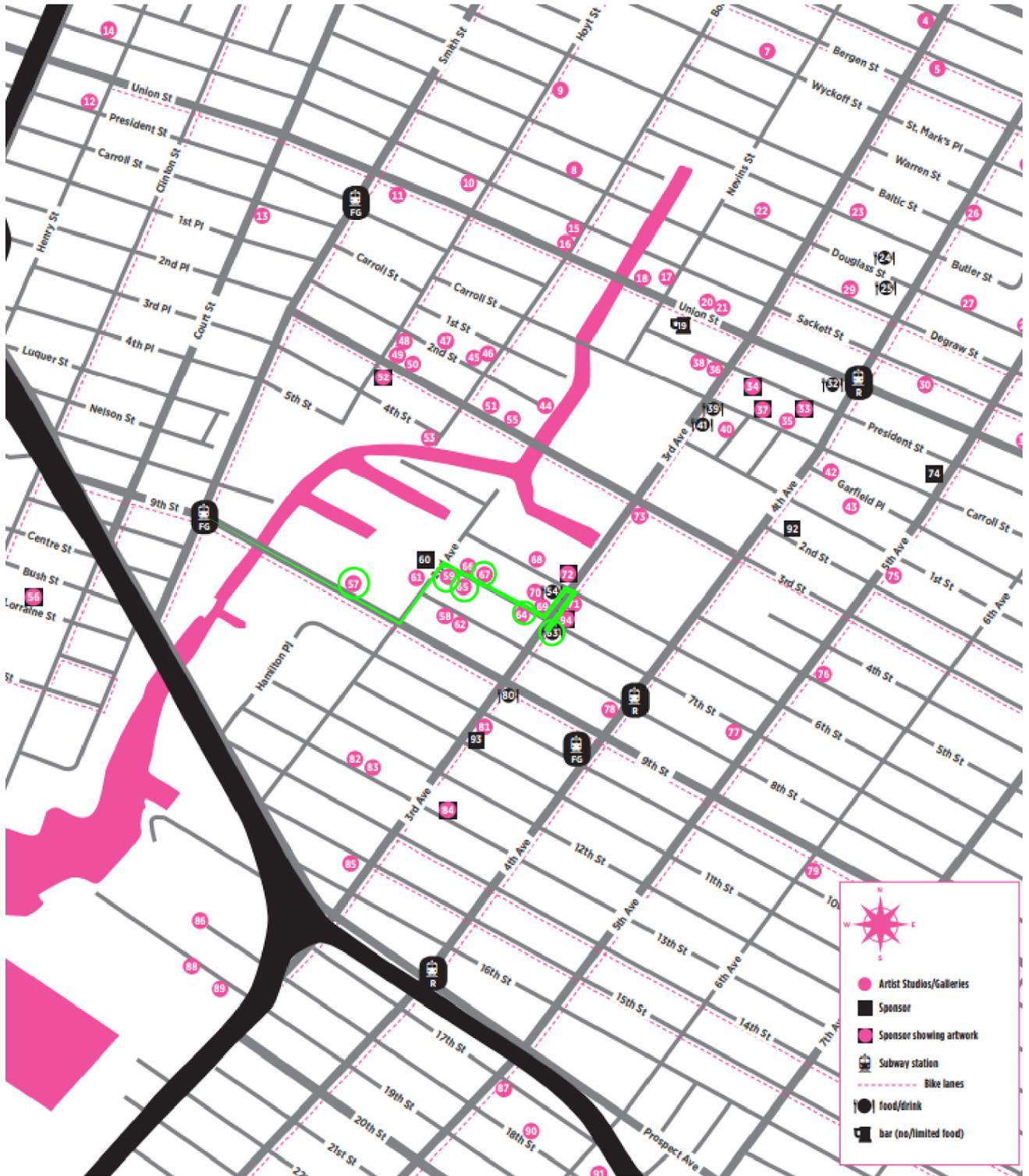
10.22.2017

INTRODUCTION AND PRE-VISIT REFLECTIONS

Gowanus Open Studio Event is a not-for-profit organization working to support, promote, and advocate for local artists and a sustainable arts community. Arts Gowanus accomplishes this by nurturing relationships between individual artists, arts organizations, and the broader community through such events. I am looking forward to talking to artists.



SITE DOCUMENTATION:
Path:



From the 9thstreet train station my path is mapped in green, and circles are the studios that I spent most time in.



Artist: Dennis Degraw,
www.denisdegraw.com

Abstract Expressionist Painter

He currently resides and creates from his art studio in Gowanus. DeGraw is a captivating artist who incorporates personal writings alongside his paintings, introducing viewers to his visual work through a personal expression of words and stories. I told him that the compositions remind me of this mysterious place called Gowanus, and he laughed and we started to talk. His series of ONLY black paint on canvas, have a human story with greater emotions that fit into a canvas. He has small writings next to the artwork, explaining his visual images and allowing you connect more to the work. Dennis moved 3 times through his career, starting from Lower east side art studios, to

Dumbo, then to Gowanus, and each time he moves shop, he moves his home closer as well. He as all tenants of this studio has faith in his landlord that he will have a space in this energetic place.

Key words in this conversation was: Void, Peace, mysterious Gowanus, lines path, stability, Lower east side, multi direction, broken borders.

One of his notes: *“dear Beautiful thing, be willing to dare be willing to believe, light your desire on fire and release your arrow from your bow.”*



Artist: Danielle Ezzo
Post photography Editor

She lives and works in Gowanus for 2 years. She has a 6' x6' small table space, the smallest workspace I have ever seen. She had a few printed images at the entrance of the studio, the Intentional objects and Hidden parts series. The artist blurs the picture then contours some spots, and these spots reminded me of the oil spots in the canal. That is what opened a conversation. I found out it was not her intention since she is focused on fashion and glamour images and converting them into imperfection. She promised she would study the canal and allow it to influence the next time. Unlike others that had tons of tools, media, material laying around her practice was different very minimalist compared to the majority artists, all she needed was a small table mac and a printer. All her art work requires is a small table, but she also makes an extra effort is to create networks with the artist in this community.

Oil spots on the canal



Kenneth R. Shaw
ctznken.myporfolio.com

Design animation, illustration, printmaking artist that does really cool pop art. He has 9-5 job at NBC studios as a graphic artist. He is a long time local, that had a really nice corner space within this big studio. He worked with old fashion silk press. He seemed to be well connected to the community. You can tell that through his art work. He is into comic art and posters, but also has a Gowanus halftone collection that was interesting. The artist also had photos of Gowanus converted into halftone dots art. These small poster were the opening conversation. The prints are this mystical image of Gowanus nature. And Kenneth has been here for a very long time, which might explain why he was the only artist in the studio that had a connection to That is what got our conversation going. He explained that the 365 Bond Residential owners have the local artists teach their children art courses for very cheap. Relaying that they should be the first at appreciating their work.



Ari S. Pescovitz
Artist, Designer, Metalsmith, Architect
Aripescovitz.com

"the pleasure to be found in object if great beauty and ornament is produced with by invention and the working of the intellect, or by the hand of the craftsman, or it is imbued naturally in the materials themselves." Leon Battista Alberti. This series of work, is architectural lines and drawings skills gone abstract. He wants you to be able to see the comical image from all sides of the canvas. From there I understood that this was a reasonable person that also feels the same about the changes of Gowanus. He likes to see all sides of the matters on the canvas, a really creating and authentic style. Since he worked with many medias, he had metal studies, drawings, and casted art. Most of his metal work would not be able to cut in this studio. So I asked him the fabrication location, which happens to be at his 9-5 job. He told me for the past 5 years he is in this studio after work creating things and collaborating the with other artists, critiquing each others work just like in architecture school. He hope the landlord fights for their studio space, because this is what he can afford. He also thinks the new residents should be more active within the community. He graduates 5 years ago from architecture school and moved to NY and is currently a metalsmith in Gowanus during the day.

ANALYSIS:

Once you get off the train you are in the middle of metal parts, the canal, and steel bridge above you. There is hardly anyone on the street, and some cars on this Saturday morning. I have planned to visit 3 studios, 57, 65,70 during the Gowanus Open Studio 2017 event. Most of the studios are big warehouses that were converted into studio/ makerspaces (somewhat reminds me of the 1865 “tenement housing plan”). These long warehouse buildings are scattered apart from each other, making the streets somewhat empty, and creates a cold industrial feeling. But this event brought people from all over to converse on the street or in the studios. On the outside there are pink balloons, warm and welcoming, but the interior conditions cold and falling apart. Some doors to the studios are not up to code, some of the artists have sub-studios within a studios, creating *Inception* layers of studios. Interestingly this shows how a tight system creates the warmth art community once inside. It was really interesting to be apart of this energy created by close proximities of easy accessible human interactions. You can randomly have numerous conversations throughout a hallway. During our conversations, the artists generally make me feel as if half of their job is to promote the Gowanus for more visitors, and the other half is to sell their artwork and make sure you come back. They seem very lonely in this part of brooklyn, for the first thing every artist asks have you been here or heard of us before & please bring friends next time... and this event was something that allowed us to connect. These artists are fully aware that the canal is not attractive and once it's cleaned their space is in jeopardy, for soon enough “offers” to leave will start raining... Maybe this moves give different types of opportunities or influences to their work. They all mention a worry of temporary studios with the fear of landlords that controls the rules. But as a shareholder in the system, (being the tenant) I feel like these artist should be able influence his landlord to improve their interior and perhaps exterior work conditions which would eventually become a more welcoming neighborhood. To point out the pink theme of the event, and the pink balloons(a bright attention grabbing hue) in front of participating studios means that this area needs more attractive working spaces. These artists deserve better infrastructure (for the same price), instead of working in slum like conditions. I would like to understand the architectural standards for and artist studio and how the government plans to protect the infrastructure and maintain a art network.

KEYWORDS/ VOCABULARY

1. Boundaries
2. Collaboration
3. Community
4. Open Studio

QUESTIONS for FURTHER RESEARCH:

1. Does relocation effect the creativity level?
2. Some of these spaces are just a tiny box, is this healthy for the artist? Should their spaces be required to be in compliance with code?