

Learning Places Summer 2019

SITE REPORT #1

The Gowanus Canal



The illustration above expresses the inspection of the canal by the New York City Department of City Planning and the problems within the sewage overflow through the water canal.

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SITE OBSERVATIONS

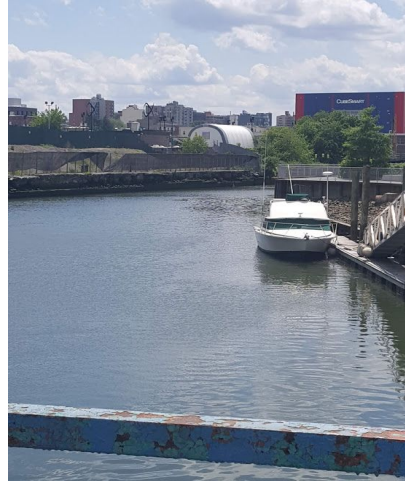
Insert 3 photographs and provide a *creative* title for each image. The title should be a a word or short phrase that suggests a theme or conceptual association related to the photo.



One of the most polluted
bodies of water



The Carroll Street Bridge



Historic landmark of the 20th
century

1. What are some general observations about the character of this neighborhood? What does it remind you of? How does it make you feel?

The Gowanus neighborhood is an urban commercial area with a lot of factories and buildings that surround the canal. The neighborhood consists of old warehouses and waterfront properties that have a potential for development. The reputation of this area has dropped due to violent acts in the 1900s in which people had seen it as a mafia neighborhood. It then became a run-down and a drug-related community. The place reminded me of wilderness and showed a sense of a lower-class environment. As per our visit to the Gowanus, I didn't feel safe because of many factories located within the area.

2. How is the natural world contained or shaped by human activity or architecture in Gowanus? In what

ways does the natural world invade or disrupt human activity or architecture in Gowanus?

The Gowanus Canal is a superfund site where the government is responsible for cleaning up some of the nation's most contaminated lands. The water sewage system within the Gowanus depicts the sense of contamination being done by the people. The architecture of the canal could have been different in a way that the sewage would not pollute the canal. When it rains the Gowanus Canal can become flooded and the people should avoid taking showers when it rains because at the same time the sewage overflows and the canal is quick to flood.

3. What people did you observe in the neighborhood and what activities are they engaged in?

There were people of all races being observed within the neighborhood. I had seen a person just sitting on the side with his headphones. I had seen a pair of tourists taking pictures as they were walking to see the Gowanus Canal and I also saw some employees working in the candle factory. What I had also observed were people walking their dogs or bicycling through the Carroll Bridge. There weren't many people whom we had encountered since in my opinion the neighborhood was really quiet. Some of these people seemed to live within the community.

4. Reflect on a **specific** space you viewed in this neighborhood:

a. Who was the space designed for and what is its general purpose?

One of the spaces that I had viewed within the Gowanus neighborhood was the Union Street Bridge where I had seen pedestrians walking on the Union Street Bridge. As well, there were cars passing by on the bridge and I noticed graffiti on the side wall next to the canal. The space is open to the public where they view the canal and cross on the bridge.

b. What are the implied rules of this **specific** space? How are people meant to interact with one another and with the environment?

I have seen some people just walking past the bridge without actually noticing how polluted and contaminated is the canal. Instead of looking at the trees or just taking in the breeze, people were on their phones either talking or listening to music. As human beings, we should give some time to ourselves and think about what's going on with the environment. There were no specific rules implied to the public.

c. Describe a possible creative reuse of this **specific** space for a theatrical event:

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

The Union Street Bridge crossing over the Gowanus Canal would be a good area for actors to show the different scenic views of the area, where there is a wall

with graffiti, a nicely constructed bridge/road over the canal and the polluted waterway underneath. The observers can have a chance to view how a place like this can be utilized in a creatively for a shooting.

- b) Describe the potential audience. Who are they (workers? inhabitants? recreational users? tourists?) and why would they be passing through? Where are they going and where did they come from?

The potential audience seeing the scenic view being acted out by the actors are the workers, inhabitants, tourists and others. These audience can be passing through the bridge to go to work, school, visiting tourist place, and other surrounding areas.

- c) Discuss how light and sound would support a theatrical event.

It is a brightly lit area and sounds of the pedestrians, birds, transportation would give a nice natural view to the theoretical event.

- d) What kinds of performance would work best (intimate or grand; processional or stationary; text and/or music; interactive or passive audience; etc.)?

Performance with interactive or passive audience work best in this area for the theoretical event.

QUESTIONS for FURTHER RESEARCH. Write down questions that require further research to answer. These should follow directly from your analysis section and be complex and specific enough to serve as the basis of a research project; do not include questions you can answer with a quick google search.

1. How can the government bring change into the community?
2. How can the trees and plants be saved from the polluted canal?
3. How can we raise awareness on the gowanus canal?

FURTHER RESEARCH

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

Revised Research Question:

- How can the trees and plants be saved from the polluted canal?

Revised:

- What are some types of plants that can be grown on the polluted area of the gowanus canal?

Find a book or newspaper article that could help you answer your question.

MLA Citation for source:

Lichtfouse, Eric, Didier Robert, and Jan Schwarzbauer. Green Materials for Energy, Products and Depollution. Vol. 3. Dordrecht: Springer, 2013. Web.

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

Finding a specific source for plants growing on polluted areas was a bit difficult. But the reason why I had select this book source was because it included plenty of information on the how the water gets polluted, how to decrease pollution in water, and other sources of information on plants.

Describe the process you used to find this source including any keywords and the search engine or tool you used to search.

Upon finding the book source I first searched the city tech library, then I clicked on find books, advance search which gave me an option of typing in specific words. On the bar first I typed plants, then growing, and lastly polluted water.

What other sources or further information would you need to answer your question? Where would you look for them?

For further information I would use the google search engine to look through other websites for more detailed information. Some of the other ways to conduct a research can be through EBSCO, JSTOR, or other databases.