

Learning Places Summer 2019

# SITE REPORT #1

## Gowanus neighborhood



The green toxic Gowanus canal in the middle of nature and the nontoxic concrete jungle at the back.

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## SITE OBSERVATIONS

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



Colorful toxic canal



Green neighborhood



Fierce tree

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 neighborhood is a quiet place and graffiti on the walls and lonely streets made me feel at some point insecure. It reminds me of old movies, the place made me feel lonely there is no people around or places where people can do activities, at the time that I was close to the canal the air became uncomfortable to breathe due to the smell and knowing the canal toxicity.

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?

In President St. in Carroll Gardens which is covered by a fresh green air and is an expensive area, plants play an important role, making the area look beautiful and purifying the air. Also, all the fierce plants growing around the canal and in streets helping to purify air and filtrate water are helping a lot to people in the neighborhood. Also, the paulownia tree which is originally from China and is growing near the canal is a sign of hope for a better environment, the tree itself is performing daily purifying the toxic air and maintaining itself alive, some small plants are growing in wood in the middle of the canal as well.

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

There were few people most of them old people walking with their dogs, also I saw EPA workers at the canal, and people working in fabrics around the area. Based in my observation there were not places for outdoor activities that engage people to go outside, I just saw some restaurants around and train stations.

4. :

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

The Carroll Street Bridge which is a retractable bridge and a landmark that was designed to allow ships to pass across the canal. Also, it is a shortcut for a lot of people around the area to walk to train stations daily.

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

Carroll Street Bridge has a weight limit (10 tons) and also a nice sign that says “ ORDINANCE of the City Any Person Driving over this Bridge Faster than a Walk will be Subject to a Penalty of Five Dollars For Each Offence” , which is a really old sign we can tell by the grammar and penalty fee. The bridge is just a place to walk to train stations or houses around the area, nobody stays there to view the canal or hangout.



- 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. A good place for actors can be the canal (in boat), and for observers the bridge (Carroll bridge). Occupying the canal as the stage to call the attention of the people directly to the problem that need to be solve.

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 can be people from the neighborhood that are daily passing by the bridge to the train stations (R, F trains) or walking to their jobs around the area or just walking back home from their daily activities.

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

Light will not be necessary, the performance could be at the sunlight to transmit a more nature meaningful and the sound will be very important to call attention of the audience, also the distance from the canal and the bridge will need a

loud megaphone probably to transmit a feeling of urgent help from the canal and to catch audience attention.

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

I think an interactive performance to know what people think and find the solution for the problem getting ideas from people around, also the performance should be processional (in the canal) in a boat passing under the three bridges.

**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. Question?

Can marine creatures such as fishes or bacteria living in the canal mutate?

2. Question?

How the zoning proposal can help to the Gowanus environment?

3. Question?

How neighborhood's health can be affected by living close to the canal?

## FURTHER RESEARCH

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

Revised Research Question:

Can marine creatures such as fishes or bacteria living in the canal mutate?

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

MLA Citation for source:

Agrawal, Anju., and Gopal, Krishna. *Biomonitoring of Water and Waste Water*. New Delhi: London: Springer India; Springer [distributor], 2013. Web.

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

Because the book contains biological information and it helped me to find a closer answer to my question, by explaining the background of sea animals and how they are affected by the environment where they live.

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

I used City Tech library site – books- and in search I wrote: “marine animals” , “mutations” , “toxic water”.

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

I might need to talk to a scientist or read another book about fishes or bacteria evolution or mutation.