

## Manhattan Pier 52 Urban Beach



### SITE:

This studio will engage one of most important remaining public space sites on the West Side of Manhattan; the 5-acre waterfront peninsula situated between Gansevoort Street and Little West 12th Street at the nexus of the **Whitney Museum** and the **High Line** and the **Hudson River Park**, a 4-mile long, 550-acre riverfront park along the edge of Manhattan. The site is currently being cleared of the Marine Transfer Station that for many years has been operated by the NYC Department of Sanitation for shipping garbage via water to remote processing locations. While originally part of the landfill of the Hudson River, the Gansevoort Peninsula now is the sole remnant of the 19th Century-constructed Manhattan shoreline.

### PROGRAM EMPHASIS:

In essence, this studio's central focus is **Water Urbanism** and the next generation of development of cities on water, in an era of increasing water-based hazards related to sea-level rise, climatological change and extreme weather events. The site affords the opportunity to integrate such questions within the realm of a major new public space in New York City to be developed within the next decade. Apart the programming and design of the immediate peninsula site, we will explore potential connections to both the Whitney, which is separated by the intense traffic of the West Street highway, and to the **High Line**, which parallels the **Hudson River Park** for 1.5 miles.

### URBAN ECOLOGY STUDIO:

The Urban Ecology Studio affords the opportunity for collaboration across design disciplines in architecture and engineering, with emphasis on the relationship between urban ecology and public space. It is an innovative teaching forum on questions pertaining to the ecological impacts related to urban development. It comprises a team of graduate architecture and advanced engineering students that is tasked to work with place-based community stakeholders as clients in addressing their pressing developmental issues. Students and faculty represent both the School of Engineering

and Applied Science and the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation. The Urban Design Lab (UDL) <http://urbandesignlab.columbia.edu/> at Columbia's Earth Institute plays an important role in expediting this initiative.

#### **CLIENT:**

We will work closely with the **Hudson River Park Trust**, which is the owner of the site and is currently considering plans for the peninsula development. In 1998 state legislation was passed to create Hudson River Park Trust to develop the stretch of West Side waterfront from 57th Street to Battery Park, as into a unique asset for the city's residents. The Trust operates as a city-state entity and is responsible for the maintenance of the park, as well as design, construction, public events and education programs that happen within the 4-mile stretch of land. Since its inception, the Hudson River Park, along with Manhattan's lower west side, has seen tremendous investment and renewal. The goals of the Trust include:

- Bringing more people to the water's edge and onto the piers from the main park corridor along the Hudson River edge.
- Informing the public about ongoing developmental projects within the park, including some that are underwater.
- Engaging visitors with seasonal events and activities.
- Public education relative to ecological issues including on-going monitoring activities
- Ecological restoration of the formerly industrial park edge.

Apart the principal client, we collaborate with the **Friends of the High Line**, which is currently evaluating critical design and development options for the next further development of this innovative park concept.

#### **DESIGN AND PROGRAMMATIC INTENTIONS:**

Starting from the Hudson River Trust goals, the Studio will emphasize ecological restoration, public education, and a new urban/water relationship. We will experiment with **design and programmatic intentions** across scales, culminating in **programmatic innovation and architectural design** residing in an overall infrastructural and ecological framework concept and a **detailed formal node** that is place specific. We will explore a range of distributed micro-infrastructure ideas fundamentally derived as social fabric first and foremost. "Social" includes urban **life and livelihoods**. For architects and engineers desiring expanded studio involvements with cutting-edge issues pertaining to our next generation urban development; as well as a robust design project of immediate use in advancing beyond the normative academic project, this studio experience will be a rewarding one.

#### **IMMEDIATE FURTHER INFORMATION:**

Shannon, Kelly et al., editor, Water Urbanisms. Amsterdam: SUN Academia, 2008.  
De Meulder, Bruno, Shannon, Kelly, eds, Water Urbanisms: East. Zurich: Park Books, 2013.

Hudson River Park Trust <http://www.hudsonriverpark.org/>

Hudson River Foundation <http://www.hudsonriver.org/>

Hudson River Estuary Program <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/4920.html>

Riverkeeper: NY's Clean Water Advocate <http://www.riverkeeper.org>

Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance <http://waterfrontalliance.org>