



THE COUNCIL OF
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**NYC COUNCIL MEMBER BRAD LANDER LAUNCHES
GOWANUS PUBLIC ART PROJECT**

*Supporting Community Arts Organizations Lead
Public Walking Tour of New Works*

Brooklyn, NY – Council Member Brad Lander, along with representatives from Arts Gowanus, the Old Stone House & Washington Park, and Groundswell today celebrated the launch of a new series of seven public works of art at sites throughout the Gowanus neighborhood.

Community members from across Gowanus and surrounding neighborhoods joined Council Member Lander and the local arts organizations for a public walking tour of the new works of art, and a celebration of Gowanus' thriving arts community.

The Gowanus Public Art Project, funded by Council Member Lander, and supported by arts organizations with deep ties to the Gowanus creative community, is part of the [Bridging Gowanus](#) community planning framework. The framework, which is the product of more than 300 stakeholders from a wide range of backgrounds, calls for "an arts and culture plan to build on the vibrant arts, artisan and non profit presence," and specifically for a standing public art program.

The Gowanus Public Art Project includes the following seven works, which will be on display over the course of the next year:

Completed and currently viewable:

8th Street Neighborhood, Photo Mural

This photomontage depicts community activities that have taken place on this one block of 8th Street over more than a decade. The photographer is a resident of the block and has documented people and families who have lived here over the years. The images capture this block specifically, and also the more broad spirit of Gowanus, Brooklyn, the people who live here, and the communities they create.

Artist: Joe Cantor

Location: 8th Street, just above 3rd Avenue

Parklet for Ennis Playground, Functional Sculpture

As a parklet within a park, Michael Clyde Johnson's Untitled Benches, Patios, Planters in Arrangement (Parklet for Ennis Playground) provides additional public amenities to Ennis Playground, and by extension to the wider Gowanus neighborhood. This multi-faceted project

includes three modular components (patios, benches, and planters), which create additional distinct lounge and play areas within the park. By extending the idea of a parklet – generally conceived as an extension of sidewalk space into the street to provide additional seating and green space – to encompass these same functions within an existing public space, Parklet for Ennis Playground creatively augments the existing park infrastructure and enhances the community's experience of their local park. Special thanks to the NYC Parks Department for their support on this piece.

Artist: Michael Clyde Johnson

Location: Ennis Playground (between Second and Third Ave. and 11th and 12th streets)

Gowanus: Industry & Ecology, Mural

The mural connects its urban audience to nature in the Gowanus through the use of organic forms native to the area. This artistic intention parallels the environmental work of the Gowanus Canal Conservancy, which provided invaluable volunteer support to complete the project. Other inspiration is drawn from the mixed use industrial landscape of the Gowanus neighborhood, as well as the canals and floating gardens of Xochimilco in Mexico City and Patricia Johansson's functional eco-art.

Artists: Julia Whitney Barnes and Ruth Hofheimer.

Location: Wall of Dykes Lumber on 6th Street, viewable from 3rd Avenue and the Whole Foods Esplanade along the 5th Street Extension of the Gowanus Canal.

Born & Raised, Mural

"Born & Raised" examines the history and present of the Gowanus neighborhood and its enigmatic symbol, the Gowanus Canal. While the neighborhood is home to a great and increasing diversity of people, it is an area shaped by a history of industry that often behaved irresponsibly towards its natural resources. The mural is dominated by contrasting areas of red and white that symbolize the NYC Housing Authority developments that bracket the neighborhood: the red-brick Gowanus Houses and the white-brick Wyckoff Gardens. The mural was produced by Groundswell

Lead Artist: Chris Soria. Apprentice muralists: Youth from the Gowanus Houses

Location: Douglass St. btw Bond & Hoyt

To be completed October 2015:

Intersections, Mural

The movement expressed in this artwork reflects the traffic of the busy 4th Avenue and Prospect Expressway in a way that makes everything calm and reflective. The illustrative black line work contrasts with colorful accents and original designs influenced by calligraphy and Indigenous patterns. By experimenting with mediums from sumi ink to spray paint to acrylic paint, and incorporating fine art techniques of drawing, painting, and printmaking, the artist's intention is to cultivate a sense of higher consciousness with unique creative expression. Special thanks to the NYC Department of Transportation for their support of this piece.

Artist: Miguel Del Real

Location: Underpass of 4th Ave and Prospect Expressway, at 17th Street

To be completed Spring 2016:

Gowanus Outdoor Art Lab, Interactive Pop-Up Space

This temporary pop-up space will be used as a gathering area for small-scale art happenings and workshops, and become a catalyst for engaging the local community with arts and the landscape.

Artist: Gowanus Canal Conservancy

Location: At 3rd Avenue along the 5th St extension of the Gowanus Canal

The Keepers, Performance art piece

The Keepers are a fictional and unusual life form living on the border between animal, plant, and human consciousness. They are the original protectors who maintain the balance of nature in the Gowanus Canal and surrounding area. This series of outdoor public performances feature artists in full-body costumes made from a variety of materials gathered from the banks of the Gowanus Canal.

Artist: Ed Woodham

Location: Throughout Gowanus in Spring 2016

“These murals, photographs, interactive structures, and performance pieces highlight what makes Gowanus ‘Gowanus’. They capture the history, character, diversity, and creativity that makes Gowanus a special place,” said **Council Member Brad Lander**. Congratulations to the many talented local artists on their works, and an enormous thank you to Arts Gowanus, the Old Stone House, and Groundswell for their support in implementing this series, and all they do to support Gowanus’ talented and growing arts community. Like all good public art, these pieces not only make our community more attractive and more interesting. They also illuminate the big issues and hard questions: How do we understand this historically industrial, highly polluted, low-lying, mixed-use, rapidly changing neighborhood? And what do we do about it?”

“Arts Gowanus is honored to work with Council Member Lander, the Old Stone House, and Groundswell to support and promote artists, public art projects, and our neighborhood,” said **Abby Subak, Director of Arts Gowanus**. “Artists and creativity are such an integral part of what makes Gowanus so special, and this Public Art Project has brought that art and creativity into public spaces. We look forward to interesting conversations and insights with artists, art enthusiasts, and the art-curious as we look at the public art together.”

“Working with Arts Gowanus and Groundswell on Council Member Lander’s Gowanus Public Art Project created an amazing opportunity for the Old Stone House to engage artists and community members in a vital conversation about neighborhood history and contemporary issues that led us well beyond the confines of Washington Park,” said **Kim Maier, Executive Director of The Old Stone House**.

“Groundswell is delighted to participate alongside Council Member Lander, the Old Stone House, and Arts Gowanus in this celebration of the vibrant public artworks on view throughout Gowanus today. Through this tour, neighborhood residents and community members will have the opportunity to discover the rich stories behind the public artworks they walk past each day, and to engage with many of the community stakeholders and talented artists who have made their creation possible,” said **Groundswell Deputy Executive Director Sharon Polli**.

Underwritten by a total of \$35,000 in funding the Gowanus Public Art series aims to create new platforms for public art and new opportunities for the artists, while at the same time showcasing Gowanus’ unique past, present and future.

Known for its industrial past and polluted canal, Gowanus is now home to hundreds of artists and creative businesses.

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