



UN
2023 WATER
CONFERENCE

NEW YORK
22-24
MARCH
2023

UN 2023 Water Conference Side Event
***CONDENSATIONS Designing In Water Part 3 (of 3) Design and Action;
Reciprocity from South to North***

Saturday, March 25 2023
10:00am -5:00pm
Pratt Institute Research Yard
Side Event #OS162

Organized by: Host - Pratt Institute. Co Hosts - Rebuild by Design, Water as Leverage. Academic Partners - University of Pennsylvania, Singapore University of Technology and Design, Universidad del Desarrollo, Anant National University, Harvard University. Industry Partners - Arcadis, Inhabit, Egis

Background:

Pratt Institute hosted a three-part series of events on the occasion of the United Nations 2023 Water Conference (UNWC). Layered upon one another, *Condensations Designing in Water Parts 1-3* examined how design and the built environment intersects with issues of permanent climate change and adaptation. The interactive discussions and workshop focused on the role integrative design can have in holistically addressing and communicating water challenges with a specific focus on some of the most dense and vulnerable areas on the planet in the coming decade.

This all day workshop brought together five international institutions of higher education, their faculty and students to work with various local, national and international stakeholders on one of three particular communities and sites in NYC. Representing three water challenged urban typologies (Inland, Island, Tributary), the workshop sought differing scales and approaches for the development of nature-based green, gray, blue infrastructures and complementary non-structural solutions. Located in Brooklyn and Queens, the sites represent a sampling of water challenges facing Long Island (the densest island in the US and 18th densest on the planet) and the 32-46 islands comprising the NYC Archipelago. Teams were formed across sectors including a mix of students, academic leads, industry experts, government officials, community organizations, representatives from the UN and NGOs. There were also non-human AI counterparts visualizing conversations and input from teams, trained and monitored by Pratt students.

Charge: To demonstrate how design can contribute to holistically addressing water challenges. With, as a sub-question: what principles of (indigenous) water management of natural systems from other parts of the world could be scaled and/or useful in developed dense urban archipelago-based cities like NYC for improving water safety, access, delivery and/or quality.

Key Issues discussed

- *Tributary* (Guardians of Flushing Creek/Flushing Meadows)
 - **Future Histories:** Using historic Flushing Creek as an underlay, this team examined opportunities for daylighting the historic creek while balancing any such “exposures” against planned and future development pressures.
 - **Primary Goals:** To minimize combined sewage discharge into the Flushing waterways due to current uses and new development, and mitigate localized stormwater flooding by amplifying infiltration areas in public park spaces by 2050, 2080, and 2100.
- *Inland* (Chhaya CDC/Jackson Heights-Hollis Neighborhoods)
 - **Porous_city:** Leveraging green roof and green infrastructure policies and regulations to expand implementation, this team examined how dense city blocks could become increasingly pervious including strategies for absorbent buildings and absorbent green spaces; public and private.
 - **Primary Goals:** To foster ongoing advocacy and protection of accessory dwelling units, while minimizing localized stormwater flooding improving the potential for greywater reuse, and leveraging financing tools.
- *Island* (Coney Island Beautification Project, Coney Island)
 - **Re-Contour:** Explored and studied possible methods for capturing water and inhabiting amphibious edges subject to periodic (permanent) two-sided inundation.
 - **Primary Goals:** Improve coastal protection from rising waters protecting existing residents while also amplifying water resources. Erode existing landfill to restore original Coney Island estuary.

Key recommendations for action

- **Document:** A full report of the work, ideas and processes is in progress and anticipated to be released by June 1 or sooner.
- **Act_ING:** Pratt and some (if not all) of its partners will continue research and investigations on each site. Artificial intelligence workflows, and methods will continue alongside (where applicable) to further sample and visualize various aspects of ongoing discussions.
- **Next Steps:** Pratt and its partners will follow up with all three community organizations to continue the discussion about the strategies initiated during the workshop and consider iterative future workshops and collaborations to develop/collaborate including outreach and exhibitions slated for Summer 2023.