Julie Bargmann

The Michael Kalil Annual Lecture on Natural/Technological Systems

unCity

New York, New York

On April 19, 2004, Parsons' Kalil speaker Julie Bargmann, of D.I.R.T. studio and the University of Virginia School of Architecture, presented her work at Tishman Auditorium, New School University. One of the projects presented during the Kalil lecture is represented here. D.I.R.T.'s collaborative projects focus on the design, regeneration and research of the working urban and postindustrial landscape. Embracing existing structures and systems, multiple layers of social histories and natural processes form evolutionary places connecting to the individual and the larger environment. Since 1992, D.I.R.T. studio has joined teams of architects, engineers, scientists, artists, and historians, along with corporate clients and local communities, giving simple and dynamic form to complex landscapes.

Invited Competition, 2001.

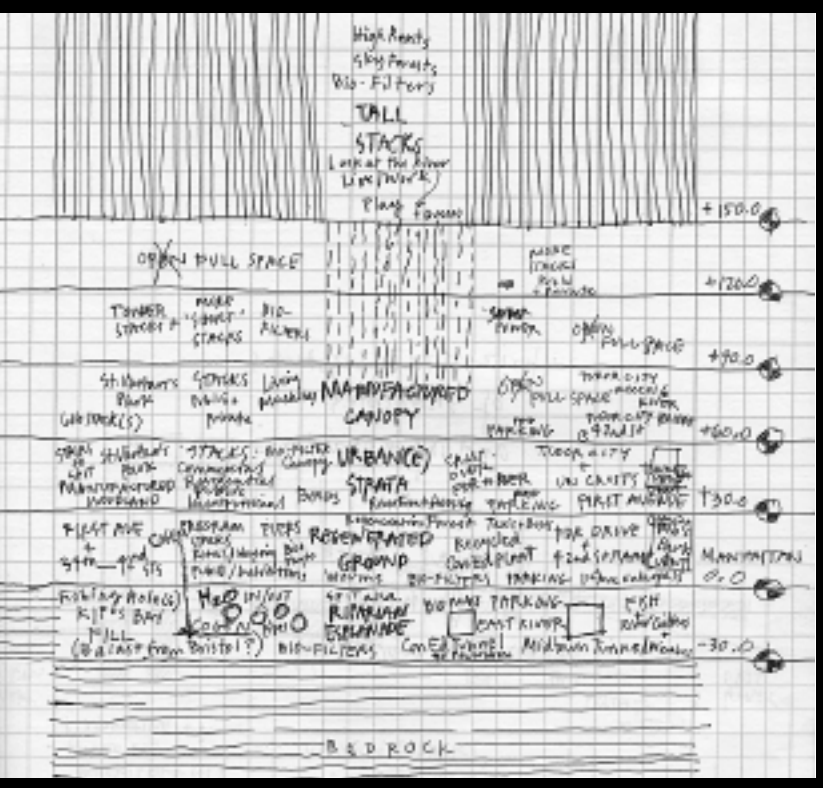
Proposal for Con Edison Site on the East River

Collaborators: Office of Metropolitan Architecture, Kohn Pederson Fox, Davis Brody Bond, Office of Toyo Ito, architects; D.I.R.T. studio, Olin Partnership, landscape architects; Arup Associates, engineers; 2X4, graphics.

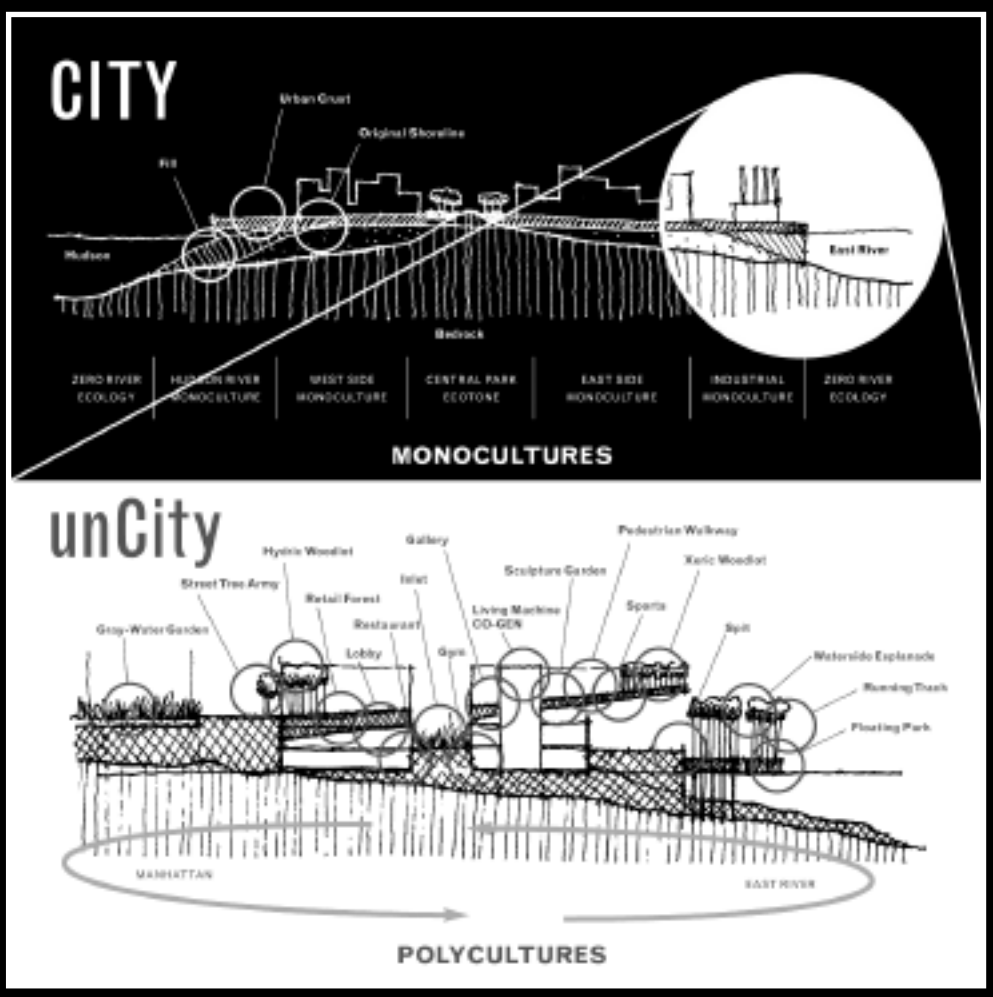
The isolated nine-acre Consolidated Edison power plant is transformed into a thriving new community at the edge of the East River and a model for a new kind of work/live urbanity. Adjacent isolated communities–the United Nations, Murray Hill and Tudor City–are interwoven with unCity in horizontal and vertical urban dimensions and reconnected with the over-and-under-looked East River.

A thick urban wedge of public and commercial life, above and below the street, supports strategic towers slipped into the Manhattan skyline, enriching the river edge site so that it becomes a diverse urban ecotone.

Construction begins with a proposal to harvest demolished materials and to clean degraded soils on site - challenging conventional 'hog and haul' remediation. Eco-technologies employed in unCity project forward to a Co-Gen plant, providing clean power for the development and neighborhood. Regenerative water systems create filtration loops through the site and towers, returning clean water to the river.



BUILDING AN URBAN ECOTONE: unCity taps ecological technologies to define a new diverse community on and of the East River. The monoculture of industry and development as a superimposition on the urban landscape delaminates into a polyculture of interwoven systems. Productive hybrids are cultivated in overlapping urban ecologies of a power plant as water treatment garden, a highway interwoven with a rich riveredge landscape, and lots of retail imbedded in a water filter inlet.



THICK CRUST OF URBANITY: Rather than rebuilding a monolithic privatized plaza stuffed with a fortress of residential blocks, unCity offers a porous edge. The tall thin work/live towers are layered with public gardens that create a loop between bedrock, street and sky. The stratified urban wedge draws the shoreline inland to the city and thrusts New Yorkers out toward the river.

OLD POWER PLANT, NEW NEIGHBORHOOD: South of the United Nations and adjacent to Tudor City, unCity challenges conventional notions of remediation and redevelopment. An imbedded renewable energy Co-Generation plant renews power in an urban wedge of everyday consumption and production wired with regenerative natural systems.

EVOLVING OVER TIME: ConEd Waterside is harvested (aka demolished) and cultivated (aka developed); locals and tourists witness a regenerative transformation.

FUN, FUN, FUN: unCity 'Open Space' is packed full of energy, work and play in the heat of city summers and on frosty days along the river.