

**ISTANBUL BİLGİ UNIVERSITY**  
**Summer School for Graduate Programs in Architecture**  
**July 2020**

**ARCH 561 / 477**

**ON THE WATERFRONT: NEW YORK CITY'S EDGES FROM LANDSCAPES OF  
PRODUCTION TO URBAN PARKS**

**Instructor: Tulay Atak**



Left: Buckminster Fuller, Dome over Manhattan, 1960; right: Michael Van Valkenburgh, Brooklyn Bridge Park (2005)

**Description:**

New York's waterfront is a contested landscape. The five boroughs that make up New York City are all connected to water. Surrounded by the Hudson River and the East River, Manhattan, the heart of NYC is a peninsula comparable to the historic peninsula of Istanbul. Yet most New Yorkers often don't experience water as part of their everyday lives. Many may even forget the proximity to water until it becomes threat like the Hurricane Sandy did in 2012, when NYC's subway system was flooded. Mannahatta of the Lenape people, the indigenous inhabitants of the region, was a wet landscape whose main source of life and communication was water. As the Dutch and the British settled on this peninsula, the water became a means for transporting colonial and industrial goods. Eventually, the gridded division of landownership became the main urban form of Manhattan, turning its back on water, and making Manhattan a closed world. The grid has its own advantages, such as homogeneity, equity and accessibility, which has made New York City one of the main urban centers of the world. Yet how the city connects to its edge, to water, has remained a persistent question throughout New York's modern history.

This summer studio will focus on New York's waterfront as a site and consider the relation between urban form and bodies of water. We will study the history of the transformations of the waterfront from industrial landscape to contemporary urban parks. We will analyze recent projects for the waterfront

such as the Battery Park, West 8's Hill and Brooklyn Bridge Park as well as proposals for the future of the city including responses to rising water levels, remediation of water ways and waterfront development.

The students will selected a site on NY's waterfront from a list. They will research the history of the site and develop analytical drawings of the site using GIS and Google Earth. The final project will be a speculative drawing that imagines the future of urbanism based on the initial analysis.

### **Schedule of classes:**

The class will meet via Zoom on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays beginning on July 7. The classes will be in two sessions: for each class, there will be a session for group meetings from 3 pm- 6 pm. There will be a second session for individual meetings scheduled between 7 pm – 11 pm, or by individual appointment.

1. Jul 7: Introduction, sites issued
2. Jul 9: Lecture on the history of NY's waterfront
3. Jul 10: Student presentations: preliminary research questions
  
4. Jul 14: Lecture on site analysis and drawing, layering information, introduction to GIS
5. Jul 16: desk crits
6. Jul 17: Student presentations: analytical site drawing
  
7. Jul 21: Lecture on speculative drawing
8. Jul 23: desk crits
9. Jul 24: desk crits
  
10. Jul 28: Final review
11. Jul 30-31: Individual exit interviews

**Tulay Atak** is an architect and an architectural historian. Her work focuses on questions of modern urbanism in a global context. She received her Bachelor's degree at METU in Ankara, Turkey and pursued her PhD at UCLA. Her dissertation, "Byzantine Modern: Displacements of Modernism in Istanbul," considers the place of Istanbul in the making of modern architecture.

Tulay studied critical theory in Paris for a year at the EHESS. During her doctoral studies, she conducted fieldwork in Chandigarh as part of the Getty Research Institute's project on Museology and the Colony. She worked as part of a team of scholars archiving the work of the structural engineer Heinz Isler for the ETH in Zurich. Her book, *Fragile City*, co-authored with a curator and a photographer, was published by MER Paper Kunsthalle. She was recently the recipient of a grant from the Graham Foundation for her current research project on the international panorama of urbanism in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. She has taught at SCI-Arc, Cornell, RISD, RPI and currently teaches at Pratt Institute and the Cooper Union.