



Daylighting Democracy: Repairing Tibbetts Brook

Seunghu Kim

This proposal frames the daylighting of Tibbetts Brook, a long-buried Bronx stream, as not only ecological restoration but also civic repair. To unearth the brook is to unearth relationships—treating dismantling itself as design: confronting histories of neglect and inequity while bringing suppressed narratives back into the light. Daylighting becomes more than restoration; it is an act of environmental justice and democratic repair that reclaims ownership, dignity, and belonging for the Bronx, while reminding us that repair is as architectural as building itself.

Advisors and Supporters

* Letters included

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Center for Architecture Lab Advisory Committee
Center for Architecture
536 LaGuardia Place
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September 10, 2025

Dear Members of the Advisory Committee,

It is my pleasure to write in support of Seunghu Kim's application for the 2026 Center for Architecture Lab residency. As the Deputy Director of Van Cortlandt Park Alliance (VCPA), I have seen firsthand the transformative potential of the Tibbetts Brook daylighting project and am excited to see Seunghu's proposal, *Daylighting Democracy: Repairing Tibbetts Brook*, bring renewed attention to this decades-long community effort.

Van Cortlandt Park Alliance is a public-private organization dedicated to protecting, improving, and advocating for Van Cortlandt Park. VCPA, and its predecessor organizations, has been at the forefront of Bronx-based environmental stewardship and advocacy for over 30 years. Our work on daylighting Tibbetts Brook reflects our commitment to environmental justice and to ensuring that major infrastructure investments serve local residents equitably.

Seunghu's recent publication in *URBAN* magazine, "How to Break a City," highlights daylighting Tibbetts Brook and demonstrates a deep understanding of its environmental and cultural significance, as well as the decades of advocacy that have brought us to this moment. Seunghu's CFA Lab proposal builds directly on this foundation, emphasizing collaboration with local organizations like VCPA and BCEQ and centering Bronx community voices through creative public engagement strategies such as cyanotype workshops.

For over thirty years, VCPA and our partners have advocated daylighting Tibbetts Brook as a symbol of environmental justice and resilience for the Bronx. Seunghu's residency project would amplify this legacy, documenting and interpreting the daylighting process in ways that celebrate advocacy while inviting broader civic participation. His interdisciplinary practice, grounded in journalism, urban design, and visual storytelling, will help ensure that this infrastructure project is understood as a cultural milestone for the Bronx.

I strongly endorse Seunghu's selection for the CFA Lab residency. His proposal reflects a genuine respect for Bronx leadership and offers a thoughtful vision of how design can serve democracy, ecology, and community-driven change.

Sincerely,

Christina A. Taylor

Christina Taylor



www.bceq.org

September 12, 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

As a Bronx Council for Environmental Quality (BCEQ) Board Member, it is a great pleasure to provide a professional and personal letter for Seunghu Kim for his proposal entitled: Daylighting Democracy: Repairing Tibbetts Brook. I worked with him last Fall during his earlier research on the Daylighting of Tibbetts Brook project.

This current proposal in expanding the role of Architecture – and thinking out of the box on the important project to Daylight Tibbetts Brook in the Bronx – is both extraordinary and professional. His proposal positions Tibbetts Brook as a lens to reframe Architecture uniquely as more than concrete construction to include restoration or in his words “repair” of Tibbetts Brook from the pipe to the Harlem River, itself.

BCEQ is a 54-year-old environmental group aimed at protection the Bronx. We are an all-volunteer group consisting of advocates and experts. Since 1998, we have advocated for and successfully managed to convince New York City Parks and Environmental Protection Departments to fund the Daylighting of Tibbetts Brook. Our recent goal is to build a waterfront along the Bronx side of Harlem River to protect water quality, and encourage recreational activities. Seunghu Kim’s proposal compliments these goals.

Sincerely,

Karen Argenti

Karen Argenti, BCEQ Secretary

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