Project Title

The View From Above: Inclusion, Exclusion and Aesthetic Experience in the Luxury City

Participating Faculty

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Abstract (200 words maximum):

Our research will explore class contradictions and processes of social inclusion and exclusion generated by the development of the High Line Park and, by extension, other new forms of revitalized public spaces. Fashioned from an abandoned section of elevated railway, the HLP is an urban brand designed to sell the city in a globalized world. It was constructed only after initial supporters sold this project to diverse groups of stakeholders based on appeals to both economic growth and a version of public good and community benefits that go beyond economics. For some, the High Line resolves tensions between neoliberal urban development, with its prioritization of economic gain, and a modernist urban utopianism of democratic access to nature and aesthetic experience. Our research will explore, document and analyze the processes by which culturally driven urban revitalization reinforces class boundaries and social exclusion through aesthetic experience. To this end we will utilize qualitative methods including the use of participant observation, interviews, photo-documentation as well as secondary data from a variety of extant data sources in light of current scholarly debates on urban development, neoliberalism and the post-industrial city.