



Beyond the Edge: New York's New Waterfront

Raymond W. Gastil

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Before September 11, 2001, New York City was in the process of transforming its waterfront after decades of neglect. The tragic events of that day brought into sharper focus the issue surrounding the development of the water's edge, along with a host of more complicated issues involving monuments and icons, public space and public safety, reconstruction and renewal. Will New York's future waterfront development be ruled only by issues of economic necessity, infrastructure, and politics, or can it embrace innovative design as well? Raymond W. Gastil, director of the Van Alen Institute, an organization dedicated to improving the design of the public realm, makes a case for the importance of inspired design in the redevelopment of Manhattan's waterfront. Gastil's detailed analysis of current design proposals is set against the backdrop of the city's history, its public process, and its ecological priorities and is informed by interviews with project architects and other key players. Taking as points of reference the recent reinvigoration of London, Amsterdam, Barcelona, and Bilbao—all cities with high-profile waterfronts, where designers, landscape architects, and artists have been instrumental in creating memorable buildings, parks, and spaces—Gastil proposes an approach to the redevelopment of New York's waterfront that is as visionary as it is pragmatic.

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