

A clover field grows in Brooklyn: John Street Pasture opens to the public on Saturday

By Rob Abruzzese
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Here's something you don't see in Brooklyn everyday — a clover field

John Street Pasture, located at 1 John Street in DUMBO, will open to the public this Saturday, but a group of reporters got a chance to preview the temporary park along with Regina Myer, president of the Brooklyn Bridge Park, and Andrea Reynosa, the artist/farmer responsible for



John Street Pasture, a temporary living earthwork under the Manhattan Bridge will open to the public on Saturday. The Brooklyn Eagle got a preview of the exhibit that celebrates green space, agriculture and the transitional nature of urban land. Photos by Rob Abruzzese.

creating the installation, on Tuesday morning

The park is currently covered in magnificent green clovers and will bloom crimson flowers over the upcoming weeks. It's a temporary design meant to celebrate green space, agriculture and the transitional nature of urban land. It will eventually be taken down toward the end of July to make room for construction of a 42-unit condo building

"Just to establish public use for the first time on this site from the aspect of building a park is such a wonderful milestone for the Brooklyn Bridge Park," Myer said. "That we can start our park in the northern section by the Manhattan Bridge using Andrea's vision is a wonderful collaboration."



Amy Lipton and Kathleen Gilrain of Smack Mellon. A.J. Pires, from Alloy Nancy Webster, executive director of the Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy Regina Myer, president of Brooklyn Bridge

"The fact that the soil has been donated by the park, it brings meaning and purpose and creates a new interpretation of place," Reynosa added. "1 John Street, people will remember this as the first initiative step as an art piece also as community awareness and giving it meaning that it didn't have before"

Aside from being a fantastic living art installation, John Street Pasture has a more practical application. The clovers are acting to nitrogenize the soil which will then be reclaimed and used throughout the other areas of the Brooklyn Bridge Park.

Plans for the pasture started to come together last July with Reynosa working with Smack Mellon. Alloy Development, who owns the lot, approved the project in September and by December Brooklyn Grange joined and began constructing it. Because of the especially cold winter, seeds weren't planted until March 21st, but Reynosa said that ended up being great timing as it is just blooming now less than a week before it opens to the public

There is an irrigation system in place to water the clovers, but Reynosa said that is mostly a backup and that seasonal rain should be proficient to keep it healthy. When the project is ready to be taken down, pygmy goats will be brought in to graze

"It speaks volumes about the sustainable farming process, especially in an urban environment where you are not exposed to clover crops," Reynosa said. "There will be a lot of educational opportunities to have children come in and witness that."



Amy Lipton of Smack Mellon A.J. Pires of Alloy Kathleen Gilrain of Smack Mellon Nancy Webster, from the Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy, Andrea Reynosa designer of the installation

The land was formerly owned by Con Edison, however, it's been in a state of neglect for many years and has never been a spot Con Ed used to produce energy. Even though the pasture will eventually be removed, construction has already begun to build on to Brooklyn Bridge Park surrounding the entire area, to the waterfront and all the way up to Jay Street.

John Street Pasture is only one part of Smack Mellon's FOODshed: Agriculture and Art in Action exhibition that will open this Saturday. It's focused on sustainable agriculture, entrepreneurship and the artist's use of food as subject matter. The exhibition and programming will also include 14 artist exhibits in the Smack Mellon gallery as well as a project on Old Fulton Street and one near the Squibb Park Bridge near Columbia Heights.

"People are invited in to check it out," Reynosa said. "It's a beautiful garden and a peaceful space. It is a minimalist rectangle of green and soon to be crimson. People can come here, it's a bit noisy with the bridge overhead, but visually it's a very calming place"



Eventually this lot will house a 42-unit condo building but until July it will be a lush pasture of clovers beneath the Manhattan Bridge in DUMBO