



January 2022 storm at Kitsilano Pool

LIDO x LIDO

UBC SALA | ARCH 540 | Fall 2025
 Tuesdays and Fridays - 1:30PM to 6:00PM
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Lido

/ˈlidoʊ/

noun (plural **lidos**)

- 1/ a public, open-air swimming pool or beach. (British English) *Kitsilano Pool*
- 2/ beach, shore, coastline (Italian) [ˈlido] *Kitsilano Beach*

A few years ago, a storm surge breached the seawall that fortified Kitsilano Pool, muddying the divide between its purified waters and the untreated waters of English Bay. For a time, the artificial pool edge disappeared and a new water's edge was defined. This may become more frequent as extreme storm events increase and as sea levels rise with the changing climate. Eventually the pool may be consumed by the sea.

Aside from ascribing a false sense of security, the seawall also reinforces a false narrative about the binaries of the coastline. These binaries perpetuate colonial tendencies to see the world in a dualistic way—land vs sea, wet vs. dry, us vs. them, public vs. private—which are made manifest by this hard infrastructure. The water's edge as a singular drawn line is a cartographic reduction of the border condition that Paul Carter describes as “a formula for the colonization of new territories” that eliminated “all facets of reality.” The reality of the water's edge is much more expansive, more fluid, and exists within continuous gradients of wetness. Kitsilano Pool emerged from the “wet” side of the thin mapped line of the coast, from an *aqueous terrain*. But now, it seems the sea is bidding for its return.

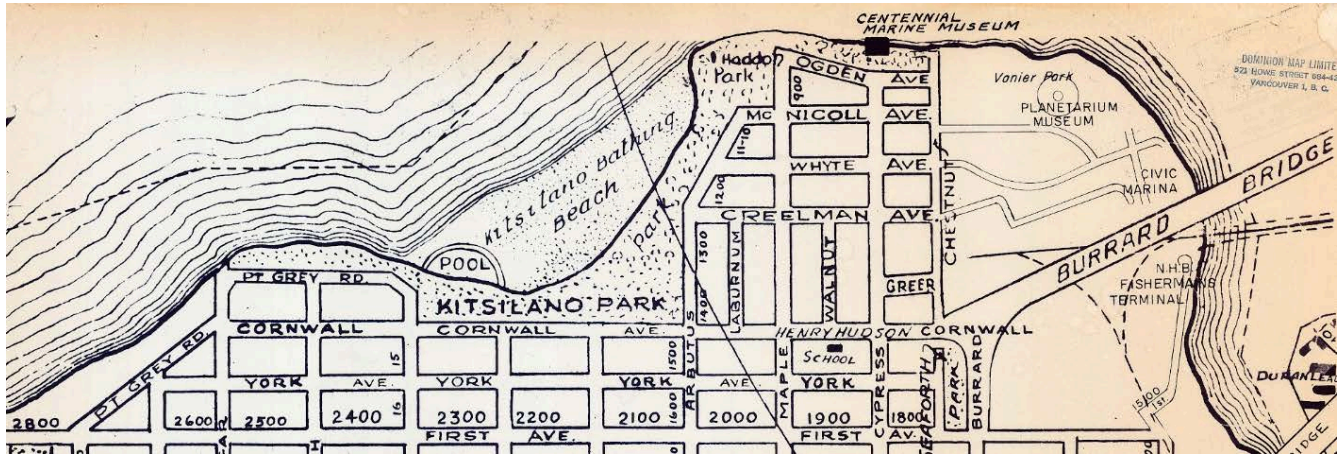
Kitsilano Pool has undergone extensive and ongoing repairs to remedy damages sustained during those recent storm events. As an aging facility that is already nearing the end of its service life, the City of Vancouver has commissioned a feasibility study that contemplates the pool's renewal or replacement. This studio runs in parallel with the feasibility study, but with hopes to rethink what might be possible for this popular public urban infrastructure.

This studio—LIDO x LIDO—will explore designing for wetness within a murky littoral zone. We will immerse ourselves in all states of water and its transmutations through the shared experience of public bathing. Public bathing, for us, will encompass all activities found in aquatic facilities. We will ask ourselves where the line is drawn between manufactured wetness and the natural water sources that they imitate.

When stepping into an aquatic facility, we enter a “world within worlds.” Here, we shed our everyday real-world drag and all its concomitant status markers and social norms, and adopt a new set of rules tailored to this “specialized” public space—a heterotopia.

These are highly regulated environments not only in how they engineer microclimates and atmospheres, but also in the way they dictate how bodies engage with hygiene, ritual, healing, spectacle, and pleasure. Using water as the universal medium that connects bathing practices from around the world, we will explore how the aquatic facility can promote a pluralistic experience of wetness.

For this studio, it is not enough to simply replace the swimming pool (*lido*) as-is on the beach (*lido*). This is an opportunity to reimagine the aquatic experience using a socioecological lens. We will consider how to shift to a soft, adaptive approach to engaging with water that responds to environmental crises and better reflects the relationship that we, as a society, would like to have with water. This may lead to a redefinition of what “LIDO x LIDO” means to us...



Kitsilano Bathing Beach and Pool, Map from 1791

Field Trips

Students will be expected to visit a local aquatic facility for independent research and will be responsible for the cost for admission.

Course Structure

Project 1 - WATER • BODIES

3 weeks

groups of 2 or 3

Students will expand the adaptive potentials of “wet” activities typically performed at aquatic facilities by their strategic coupling with other uses in a standalone installation to be located somewhere on the Kitsilano Beach site. This new “wet” experience should elaborate, question and/or challenge norms and conventions, and in doing so, pose new ways of interacting in the aquatic commons.

Project 2 - OF OTHER ‘WET’ SPACES

2.5 weeks

individual

In Part 2.1, students will analyze an aquatic facility for its set of programs and document its different types of gradients. The diverse selection of precedents will contribute to a collaborative research manual meant to expand our thinking about what is possible for a reimagined Kitsilano Pool. In Part 2.2, students will apply this research to the formulation of a functional program for the final project and test its deployment on the site.

Project 3 - DESIGNING FOR WETNESS

8.5 weeks

individual; groups of 2 upon request

Students will speculate on a new aquatic facility at Skwayoos/Kitsilano Beach. Building incrementally on the scales of focus from the previous two projects, the final project will explore the site’s gradients between individual/community, private/public, and building/landscape. Positioned at or in proximity to the dynamic water’s edge, the project must address how the aquatic facility situates itself within or in relation to the littoral zone and its varying gradients between wet/dry, soft/hard, visible/invisible, passive/active...