

THE NEWARK PUBLIC LIBRARY
5 WASHINGTON STREET, NEWARK, NEW JERSEY 07102

PRESS RELEASE

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New Exhibit Opens at Newark Public Library, *At Home in Newark: Stories from the Queer Newark Oral History Project*



The Newark Public Library will open a new exhibit on Thursday, December 14, 2017, about the LGBTQ community in Newark. Entitled *At Home in Newark: Stories from the Queer Newark Oral History Project*, the exhibit will examine how lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender, and queer people who live or have lived in Newark

claimed space for themselves in the community, in the face of poverty, violence, illness, racism, and discrimination.

At Home in Newark will be on view at the Main Library, located at 5 Washington Street, across from Washington Park. Visitors will begin the exhibit in the atrium and continue to the first floor gallery. The exhibit will remain on view during regular Library hours through Thursday, March 1, 2018.

The opening reception begins at 5:00 pm on Thursday, December 14, and the program begins at 6:00 pm. Program speakers will include two of the cofounders of the Queer Newark Oral History Project (QNOHP), a representative from the Newark LGBTQ Community Center, and Pastor Kevin Taylor, who will speak about the life of Rodney Gilbert, the Newark community arts leader, who worked with the QNOHP on two special programs.

At Home in Newark will feature several interactive and multimedia elements. Visitors to the Library will see quotes from some of the oral history interviews on walls and on the supporting

piers of the Atrium's arcade, helping to direct visitors to the First Floor Gallery. Video clips with historic footage from the elaborate balls held by the LGBTQ community, part party, part community gathering, part educational center, will be shown. In the 1990s, at the height of the AIDS epidemic, events like the Fireball were places where safe sex information was available.



Newark Pride Festival, 2015. Photo: Devin Nuñez.

Exhibit visitors will be able to listen to extended excerpts from the oral history interviews either with MP3 devices or smart phones. An interactive station will enable visitors to explore critical issues examined in the exhibit: how do you identify yourself, and where do you feel at home and safe in Newark. A large map has been compiled that shows the locations of bars and nightclubs such as Club Zanzibar and Murphy's that

became sanctuaries for members of Newark's LGBTQ community, and visitors will be encouraged to identify any other places that may be missing from the map.

The exhibit was curated by students in Dr. Mary Rizzo's American studies class "Place, Community, and Public Humanities" at Rutgers University-Newark, drawing content from the life history interviews that are included in the Queer Newark Oral History Project, begun in 2011. The exhibition panels and graphics were designed by students in Professor Chantal Fischzang's graphic design class "Visual Means."

Students also worked closely with a team of community advisors: Corey Clawson, Jim Cramer, James Credle, Anthony Escarraman, Mel McCuin, Tiffany Moreno, Abby Oquea, Jae Quinlan, Yoleidy Rosario, Peter Savastano, Christina Strasburger, Whit Strub, and Emma Wilcox. The Newark LGBTQ Community Center and the Rutgers-Newark LGBTQ and Intercultural Resource Center both served as resources for the students preparing the exhibit.

Dr. Mary Rizzo is Assistant Professor of Professional Practice and Associate Director of Public and Digital Humanities Initiatives at Rutgers University-Newark, and teaches in the Department of History and the Graduate Program in American Studies. Her scholarly work examines

cultural representation. Chantal Fischzang is Assistant Professor of Graphic Design in the Department of Arts, Culture and Media at Rutgers-Newark. Much of her design work deals with identity, immigrant rights, acculturation, and language.

The Queer Newark Oral History Project was begun by activist, writer, and chair of the City of Newark's Advisory Commission on LGBTQ Concerns Darnell Moore, Rutgers-Newark history professor Beryl Satter, and Rutgers-Newark administrator Christina Strasburger, in an effort to record the lives of LGBTQ residents, past and present, with the goal to make those lives visible. Since 2011, the QNOHP has conducted interviews with more than 40 individuals, many of whom were leaders in the LGBTQ community. Many of the people who have recorded oral history interviews have also donated personal records and objects, which enrich the narratives found in the interviews.

In conjunction with the *At Home in Newark* exhibit, the Newark Public Library is hosting the inaugural Naughty & Nice Ball | Our House Too, featuring some of New Jersey's premier voguers, runway walkers, and battlers, to be held on Thursday, December 14, 2017. The Ball will be emceed by Gregg Lanvin, with music by DJ MikeQ, and special performances by Leiomy Maldonado, Tornado, and Dawn Ebony. Held in Centennial Hall, the Ball will be held from 7:00 to 11:00 pm. There is a \$15.00 charge for the Ball. Further information about the Ball is available by calling organizer Tehsuan Glover at 973-391-3371.

\$15

14TH
DECEMBER
7PM - 11PM

THE NEWARK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
PRESENTS

**NAUGHTY
& NICE
BALL**

**OUR
HOUSE 2**

**DJ
MIKE Q**

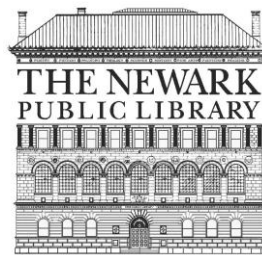
EMCEE **GREGG LANVIN**

PERFORMANCES BY:
LEIOMY MALDONADO | TORNADO | DAWN EBONY

CATEGORIES:
**RUNWAY \$300 + POT | PERFORMANCE \$400 + POT
FACE \$100 | REALNESS \$100 | BEST DRESSED \$100**

About the Newark Public Library

Since 1888, the Newark Public Library has been an anchor institution in Newark. It is New Jersey’s most comprehensive municipal library, serving some 10,000 patrons per week and providing equal access for all to vast educational, cultural, literary, historical and digital resources, including the Charles Cummings New Jersey Information Center, the New Jersey Hispanic Research and Information Center, and the James Brown African American Room. The Library serves as a gateway to knowledge and lifelong learning, presenting programs that serve diverse audiences, including art and history exhibitions, author readings, children’s programs, film screenings, and music, dance, and theater performances.



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