Kristyn Scorsone: Today is May 13, 2019. My name is Kristyn Scorsone and I'm interviewing Marina Carreira in Conklin Hall at Rutgers-Newark for the Queer Newark Oral History Project. So again, thank you.

Marina Carreira: Thank you for not butchering my last name. That was actually really great.

Kristyn Scorsone: Oh, good.

Marina Carreira: I was like, "Oh," I was getting ready to correct you, but you got it, thank you.

Kristyn Scorsone: Awesome.

Kristyn Scorsone: Thank you for inviting me.

Kristyn Scorsone: When and where were you born?

Marina Carreira: I was born in 1982 in St. James Hospital in, from what one of the nurses told my mom was, Whitney Houston's room.

Kristyn Scorsone: Really?

Marina Carreira: Yeah. Fun fact. Who knows if it's true, right? But my mom was really excited about it. Not that she even really knew who Whitney Houston was, she just knew she was famous. She's like, "Yeah, you were born in her room." I lived in Newark until I was 10. I moved out of Elizabeth, and then I came back to Newark in my early 20s and was here for a while. Then I moved out, and now I currently live in Union.

Kristyn Scorsone: Cool.

Marina Carreira: Yeah, I spent the better part of my childhood here.

Kristyn Scorsone: Who raised you?

Marina Carreira: I'm first generation American. My parents and grandparents are from Portugal. I was the daughter of immigrants. They came here. My grandfather, my grandmother and my mom came here in 1974 when my mom was about 15 years old. She went to Lafayette and then she went to Eastside High School, but she didn't finish at the time. Then she went back to Portugal for a little bit, got married to

my father, and then they immigrated here a few years later, so essentially my family has been here for about 40 years or so, a little bit over 40 years, 40 something years.

Kristyn Scorsone: Wow. What did your parents do for a living?

Marina Carreira: My mom still works as a cosmetologist. When she dropped out of high school, she did a number of service jobs. A family friend who had been here for a while as well put her through beauty school. She started out working at a salon on Congress, which I believe the address was 60, and now that salon was bought and has a new owner. She's still at a salon on Congress Street on the weekends mostly 'cause she's semi-retired. It's been almost 40 years of being at the same place, or at least on the same street working in the same community, for her. My dad worked construction. Yeah, he retired about two or three years ago. He worked in the City of Newark and then he ended up working in New York City.

Kristyn Scorsone: Awesome.

Marina Carreira: Yeah.

Kristyn Scorsone: What's one of your earliest memories?

Marina Carreira: It's funny because when people ask me to tap into memories of my childhood I always think about the poems in my book. The collection, "Save the Bathwater," is essentially this documenting of a first-generation childhood here in the Ironbound section – well not here – in the Ironbound section of Newark where I was raised. I think one of my earliest memories or one of the memories I always go to is when there was a Dairy Queen on Market. My grandfather would take me and my sister for ice cream at Dairy Queen. Then we would go to Riverbank Park and hang out there either after school or mostly in the summer. But my memory always goes back to my grandparents' home on Market Street and then the Dairy Queen that was there and a very different Riverbank Park at the time than the way it looks now for sure.

Kristyn Scorsone: Different how?

Marina Carreira: I remember being a kid and my grandfather wouldn't let me go to certain areas of the park 'cause there was needles there. There was drug paraphernalia or condoms or just something that he was just like, "I don't want to have to explain this to this kid," right? So, there was areas that we were segregated to, interestingly enough, which is mostly the playground. But it just was pretty sparse. You know, the space is the same, but it just seems like now there's

areas for sports that are maintained and kept. The park looks beautiful. They redid it, and not to mention the Riverbank, I mean the whole river front is just, I mean I remember it was essentially a swamp. Growing up we would've thought of it as a swamp. Right? And now it's this really gorgeous kind of space where people gather and hang. It definitely gave some life, some renewed life to the skyline, to the Newark skyline as people like to call it. So yeah, it's a very different park and it's a very different Market Street from my childhood. But, I still feel like there's the same vibes, right? Like, if I'm there, I don't feel like I'm no longer in a place that was my childhood home. Yeah, right? I mean that's changing with the 4000 luxury lofts and condos they want to build.

Kristyn Scorsone: You said you have a sister. Do you have other siblings as well?

Marina Carreira: No, I just have one sister. She's younger.

Kristyn Scorsone: Younger.

Marina Carreira: Yeah. It's funny because she lives in Newark. She has a condo in Newark. But Newark for her doesn't really remain a site of childhood, mostly because she was young too. We moved out of Newark when she was 7 and I was 10, so 6/7. She was pretty young. She didn't really form as many, I guess, memories as I did. To her I mean Newark is still this place – I mean it's physically home for her, but it's not really a spiritual home or an artistic home for her in the way it is for me.

Kristyn Scorsone: What did your grandparents do for a living?

Marina Carreira: My grandfather worked as a tailor. It was called, The Gentleman Shop. It was where, what's that business now, it was on the corner of the church street, Our Lady of Fatima. Is it Prospect?

Kristyn Scorsone: I don't know.

Marina Carreira: It's Congress, Jefferson. I think it's Jefferson. On the corner of Jefferson and Ferry, one of the corners. It was a men's suit shop and he was the tailor. He was there for a number of years until he retired from there. My grandmother worked at The Ramada. She also worked at an old coin factory, which I don't remember if there was a coin factory in Newark at some point or maybe it was in some surrounding area. It was usually in those. It was either cleaning services or some kind of factory work that she worked in, but all local in some sense whether it was in Newark or around Newark. You know, she mentioned the coin factory, but I can't for

the life of me - I don't know if there was a coin factory in Newark at some point or maybe a metal – I know she used to come home with bags of minted old coins that were broken or rusty for us to play with. We'd be like, "Where'd you get this?" She'd be like, "Oh, at work." We're like, "She works at a place that makes money? That's amazing! Why do we live here?" That was sort of our thing, but I don't remember if there was a coin factory or not.

Kristyn Scorsone: Did you say, and I'm sorry if I missed it, did you say that you all lived together with your grandparents or no?

Marina Carreira: Me and my sister spent the better part of our lives with our grandparents mostly because my mom worked long hours, my dad worked long hours. So, we were practically raised by my grandparents. They left for Portugal when I was 13. So, I think my formative years they were really the parental figures because they had the time to kind of raise us and give us the things that parents want to give their kids all the time but come home too tired to do, which now as a parent I completely understand why my mother wanted to make dinner, tap out and just relax on the couch when we wanted other things. Yeah. We were raised by our grandparents. Yeah, that's it.

Kristyn Scorsone: That's cool. Do you recall any events that were transitions in your early life? I know you said moving.

Marina Carreira: Yeah, so moving out of Newark was very interesting because being raised here, there was a big Portuguese community obviously, which there still is in some capacity. My first language was Portuguese, even though I was born here obviously, and my parents spoke English, but it was very limited. At home, especially in my grandparents' home, it was all Portuguese and even at home with my parents, it was all Portuguese 'cause they were just at the beginning of acquiring the language.

When I went to kindergarten, I was placed in an ESL class when I was in Wilson Avenue. I remember one of the teachers going, "You know, she's an American citizen, why does she not speak English?" This sort of, not outrage, but disbelief and that was really a testament to the community that was in the Ironbound at the time. I mean it really was Little Portugal where I didn't have to speak English in order to navigate any spaces whether they were business. Even if it wasn't Portuguese, it was Spanish 'cause we had a big Latinx community as well. So, having these sites like the Dairy Queen and the Riverbank Park and even Independence Park and the bar where my dad used to hang out, which is now Seabra's

Marisqueira [00:09:21], the salon that I spent so much time in because going there after school to be with my mom. So, I had this landscape that was very familiar, and I knew the roots and paths.

So when I went to Elizabeth, it was, not that it was a culture shock, but I didn't feel such a sense of community. Even though I spent a large number of years, especially teenage years in Elizabeth, I was in Newark every weekend whether it was just down here shopping with my grandmother or hanging out with friends or being with my mom or family members or whatever the case was. So, even though I was in Elizabeth residentially, Newark has always been my home. Now I think at present time it's an artistic home, which to me is the most important one outside of obviously the physical and family home.

Kristyn Scorsone: You were in Newark until you were 10, so you were 1992 and then you moved to Elizabeth?

Marina Carreira: Yes, we moved to Elizabeth.

Kristyn Scorsone: Okay.

Marina Carreira: I went through schooling there, so I only came back to Newark really to live and to create a life was when I started my MFA here at Rutgers. I was living here too at the time on Jackson. When I came back to Newark in my 20s, I learned a different part of Newark and learned a newer language for Newark where it not only became this childhood home but also this home where I can practice this craft, learn this craft and forge communities, not only writing communities, but LGBTQ communities and even Portuguese and Luso-American communities. I knew something outside of Ferry Street. I learned about University Heights. I learned about downtown. I started learning about different art spaces and writing spaces and groups of people that were not initially part of my Newark experience. It was pretty awesome that it came in full circle where not only Newark is my childhood home but now it still is very much my artistic home. Any work I'm doing, it's really Newark-based or for a Newark audience really.

Kristyn Scorsone: That's awesome. Were there any other adults in your life who shaped you as a child besides the folks who raised you?

Marina Carreira: I spent a lot of time in−I spent every summer of my life until the age of about 18 or 19 years old in Portugal because school let out and my parents being immigrants they didn't know what camp was. My grandparents would always go back to Portugal in the

summer, so they took us with them. So, I would say not so much people but that experience having the idea of this motherland somewhere else and having almost two and a half months every year in this space was really formative as well. It helped me really understand, what does it look like to be a woman or a young woman, a teenage girl and then essentially a young woman in an American space and what does it look in a Portuguese space. Even in the Portuguese spaces, it varied from the city to the 40-population village my dad was from to the beach towns. It sort of complicated my understanding of womanhood and femininity, and then obviously as time went on and I came out, that complicated it even further.

But, if there's one thing I can say, it's Newark, obviously more Newark than I think Portugal really, Newark as a space I've always felt pretty safe in terms of any identity I revealed whether it was as an artist or as a queer woman, as a mother, as a Portuguese person, especially since I have such strong ties still to this community. That's a complicated relationship as well, right? But Newark remains this place that's for me on so many different levels. But this other person probably would be Portugal in comparison to the family that's raised me.

Kristyn Scorsone: That's really interesting. How did you make sense of the differences between there and here? I guess, especially when you first went over there.

Marina Carreira: Well, essentially, I think because I was allowed more freedom there, there was the sense that girls couldn't get into as much trouble I think because they didn't have the crime. It's not that they didn't have the crime or the predators or the problems that America had, it's that I think there's not this fear mongering that we grew up with about stranger danger. Yes, we were taught that boys can be dangerous, and men can be dangerous, but really it's about what are you doing, how are you performing in order to either repel or to walk away from that stuff. Where in Portugal I think it was very naïve growing up and I really didn't think there was bad people there because my parents lauded it as this safe haven and a safe space, but really I don't think they understood what that meant to me as a person growing up.

I found relationships with men to be just as complicated there as they are here. I found that any problems that you acquire in adolescence whether it be developing problematic relationships or developing addictions or all the struggles of youth, over there they were just as complicated and amplified as they would've been

here. So, you know, a whore in America is a whore in Portugal. I found that to be shocking 'cause I expected different from Portuguese society. I thought that they were more open, and I thought they were more accepting and that wasn't very true. In fact, the sexism there is just as tangible as it is here. I think the misogyny is not as out in the open, but it's definitely – So, being a woman essentially in the world it might look different, but the struggles are the same in both spaces.

Kristyn Scorsone: That's really interesting.

Marina Carreira: Yeah.

Kristyn Scorsone: Did religion play a role in your life at all growing up?

Marina Carreira: Oh, Lord, yeah. Yeah, to this day growing up Catholic, I don't even know how to say it. I think it's, if you look at all our layers of identity, it's one I don't really talk about because I don't really claim Catholicism as my religion. I think of myself as a spiritual person. I don't really attach myself. But, with that said, in Portugal my mom is from a town near Fatima. Fatima is considered a holy site and Portugal is a super Catholic country and my grandmother was super Catholic and so is my mom. So, that was always a very interesting relationship to have because I was raised to really embrace Catholicism and believe that there was this higher power that was going to help me no matter what.

I remember it was when I was maybe 13 or 14 I told my mom, I'm like, "You know, I think I want to be a priest." She's like, "Well, you can't be a priest because you're a woman." I'm like, "Well what? That makes no sense." I'm like, "What's the difference?" Then I was like, "Okay, cool. Then I want to be a nun." She's like, "Oh, why would you want to be a nun, that's what a waste." Nuns don't have lives and that's not really a path for you." And at 15, 16, 17, you start understanding the complexities of religion and how it can be more of a harm to people than a healing thing. Then I kind of just threw−I trashed it. I was like, "I don't want to associate myself with this at all."

It was really through sort of working with visual art and even through writing that I started embracing it again. Again, it's not that I've embraced Catholicism as my own religion, but it definitely colors everything I do. My partner is atheist. It's always a very interesting dynamic when I tell her, "Well, I really think this happened. The universe is showing us a sign." If there's ever a

time of crisis or trouble, I do default to God or I do default to the saint that I was raised to pray to.

A lot of my work that I can't seem to write about that talks about religion and reclaiming religion in a way that's feminist and queer – art has been my vehicle. The first series of work I actually showed was a series of work was "Our Ladies", so I had like an Our Lady of Consent, I had Our Lady of Pride, where I positioned this female deity - this Our Lady that I was raised to pray to and to have as a Protectoress. I sort of reimagine her as okay, this person who has always been a part of my life, but now I really do believe that if this is a source of power for me, than she is going – she or whatever – is going to embrace the person I am and all the people. So, now to me it's like I think about God and I think about a God figure as a queer person or as a trans person or as a person of color, sort of trying to reconsider the way God has looked and really who God is serving. That's where the Catholicism butts in, but that's not a fight I'm trying to have. To me it's okay. I tell my mother all the time, "It's great, you believe in what you believe in and I'm glad it helps you get through, but that's not a God I would pray to and that's not something I subscribe to." So, it's fun.

I'm saying all this while my daughter is in a Catholic school. Yeah, it's hard living with these contradictions because I did have a great−I went to a Catholic high school and I had a great experience in a Catholic high school with teachers who were really open and really smart and really "woke" as we like to say nowadays. Friday night, I just had dinner with my old high school teacher and two friends from high school. We were just talking about how much our high school experience shaped us as people and have brought us to this place. As problematic as the Catholic church is and even Catholic schools that support this church, this place did allow me to kind of figure out who I was, and it made me this angry feminist that I became years later. I never thought that that'd be something I'd find in a Catholic school. So, I really think my relationship with religion is not as contentious as it used to be because I think I found a way to reclaim it that works for me. That was a very long answer to that question, but – I did not bring it back around.

Kristyn Scorsone: Yeah. No, that's awesome.

Marina Carreira: Okay.

Kristyn Scorsone: I love Our Lady of Consent, that's pretty cool. Let me see. You mentioned queer in reference to yourself. Is that how you describe your sexual orientation? How do you describe yourself?

Marina Carreira: Yeah. I consider myself a queer woman or a queer cis woman. Even getting to that identification, not that it was tricky, but when I came out or when I understood queerness, I was like, "Okay, well I'm bisexual." I like men and I like women. Then even when I was exclusively dating women as a younger person−

Kristyn Scorsone: How old were you when you realized you were bi?

Marina Carreira: - I would say my early 20s. I had feelings for women in high school. I just didn't really know what to name them. I was aware that there were queer, well gay people. I just didn't really question if those were things that I could have. I think that's the funny part about being first generation and being the daughter of immigrants and being from this super Catholic, super cis-het country or a country that has formed their identity around this. It's compulsory heterosexuality at work. It's this thing of−well, this is the life you're supposed to lead and anything outside of that is not really permissible because that's not our culture. Culturally that's not who we are. We're not gay. So, I never really thought, "Oh, maybe this could be a thing," because I wasn't given, not the permission, really because I'm hard pressed to find anybody my age that was given permission by family members to be themselves like that. I wasn't given this alternate that this could be a path. Then I came out as bi.

Kristyn Scorsone: To who?

Marina Carreira: To my mother at an airport, five minutes before she went to Portugal. That was a very fun five minutes.

Kristyn Scorsone: How did she take it?

Marina Carreira: She didn't take it. She was very upset. She didn't talk to me for a long time. Mostly I think because she felt deceived, because I had introduced her to my partner at the time. I mean−

Kristyn Scorsone: So you tell, and was your partner a guy or a gal?

Marina Carreira: - No, no. It was a girl at the time, one of my first girlfriends. My mom said, "I thought you were just friends. You lied to me," so there was whole level of deception that I think hurt her. Also, she was raised to believe that homosexuality was deviant and it was

sinful, so I understand that part of it. The journey has been long to get them to understand. I don't think they understand. I think they accept. I think they now at this level and they really like my partner and we're out. It's been a rocky journey, but they know this is what makes my daughter happy and we're going to respect that. So, it's not don't ask, don't tell because there's nothing to not ask about, but there's this sort of, you know, okay, we know this is who you are. This is who you've chosen to be with. Just be a decent human being. We don't care about anything else. And I think the fact that I have daughters as well from a previous relationship helps shift the attention away from the queerness, but just to bring it back -

So, for a while I thought I was like, "Oh, so I'm bisexual", and I claimed bisexual because at that point I hadn't really understood this idea of gender in the way that I understand it now, as performative, as a social construct. I mean more than 10 years, nope, even 10 years ago, non-binary to me was really weird. Like, what does that mean? Where do you exist then? And it's not that I didn't have those thoughts or those ideas about gender. I knew gender was performance. I knew that there were people who were trans. I just didn't understand it in terms of identifying myself sexually until I think I heard queer for the first time.

I did my BA in English and my minor in Womens' Studies at Montclair State and I had phenomenal instructors. I took a course called The Sexual Outlaw in Literature. We read Kate Bornstein and just all these queer writers, Leslie Feinberg, and they use the term queer to just not only identify themselves sexually but sort of even in terms of gender that they were gender queer, or they were non-binary, they were trans or whatever. So, once I started understanding the complexities about queerness and LGBTQ, I guess life and culture ,was when I was like, "Oh, bisexuality means that there's this binary that I believe and I don't," so then queer became this term that felt very normal to me. Even though now, if I had− and there's people that are like, "Well isn't that a bad word?" Especially to cis-het people, they're like, "Well, isn't that a bad word, and really who do you prefer more, or where do you see yourself now in the spectrum." If I have to clarify it for people who really can't grapple with this understanding of queer, I would say, "I'm lesbian," or, "I'm a gay woman." But, I think queer is the label that fits me most perfectly.

Kristyn Scorsone: You said you were bi first and then did−so, when you were at Montclair and you were reading all these authors, that's when you decided to claim queer? Is that correct?

Marina Carreira: Yeah.

Kristyn Scorsone: Okay.

Marina Carreira: No, at Montclair I was sort of given this language−

Kristyn Scorsone: Right.

Marina Carreira: - for queerness through classes and through women and gender studies. It was a little bit later on after, even when I started dating at some point when I was single again and I was dating cis men, I still claimed queer and I was very forthcoming with that because I wanted there to be a lot of transparency with whoever I dated that this was who I was. And even for a long time, even when I was in a long-term relationship with who is now the father of my children, I felt this pressure to−not that it wasn't to talk about queerness as much, but I didn't really know−I'm like, "How do I talk about my queerness in a way that I'm not just throwing it out there," like, yes, I was in this relationship that is straight presenting, and most of my friends at the time were straight, so it was pretty hard navigating that as well being a queer woman in a straight presenting relationship and then having children.

Kristyn Scorsone: How did your friends and partners react to that?

Marina Carreira: My friends kind of understood queerness, they're like, "Okay, whatever. Queerness you told us you date both and you like both or whatever the case is," so to them it wasn't really a shock. It was more shock that I'm going to have children than anything else 'cause that was never on my agenda. But, once that relationship ended, because it took me I think to be back into this−okay, so let me give a little background -

- After I came out, I was in a relationship for two years with my first girlfriend, my first live-in partner, the whole thing. We ended up breaking up and my parents at the time were like, "Okay." I had to move out of the apartment we shared, and I was going to move back home. My parents essentially were like, "Okay, you can come back, but leave your lifestyle at the door." So, I really felt compromised and being disowned from them for so long during that time period, it brought me back to this place where I felt like I had to suppress my queerness in order to be part of this family again. I know a lot of my decisions at the time were made to pacify my parents and maybe bring me− You know, I really thought, "Oh, I can live as a straight woman and still validate the parts of myself

that are queer." But, that's not true. You can't. I really don't believe you can because then you're not a straight woman. You're queer but you're in a straight relationship.

All this to just say where now it's beautiful where I don't ever feel like I have to compromise any of my identity as a queer woman, even though yes, I am with my long-term partner. She's a woman. She identifies as Cis. Even if I was single, I don't feel like my queerness is something that I have to worry about or negotiate anymore. I think that's the beautiful thing about being older. It's not a confidence. It's just, I think it's just being fucking tired of trying to work at not fixing, but yeah, fitting in into like all these different roles. I'm like, "Oh, no, I can't do this anymore. I'm too fucking tired and old." Who I am is across the board. I don't have to be these different people in different places. So, that's a relief. Again, I think just to bring it back to Newark, Newark is a place where I feel like I am all these things in this one city, which is really beautiful. I think not a lot of people can be themselves in their hometowns. I mean I know a lot of people can be themselves in their hometowns, so to sort of say that I think is a really great thing.

Kristyn Scorsone: That's cool. Just to reiterate, when you said that you had to move back into your parent's house, I'm assuming then that was the girlfriend that you had when you talked to our mom at the airport?

Marina Carreira: Yes.

Kristyn Scorsone: Then you guys didn't talk for a while?

Marina Carreira: Yeah, yeah.

Kristyn Scorsone: Okay. Then when you were younger, how did you become aware of LGBTQ people?

Marina Carreira: That's so interesting. I was trying to think about what was my first understanding−oh, you know really, I think, and it just goes to show, how when thinking about appropriation and I talk about this all the time. I think my first queer maybe awakening was pretty young. I would say maybe age like 10 or 11. My dad was obsessed with Madonna at the time and she was doing The Girlie Show I think it was called or The Girlie Tour or something. I remember I think HBO streamed it or showed it, whatever. We watched it and I remember watching her simulate masturbation on this bed and I'm just like, "Oh." She made me feel certain things. Again, at this age I'm not going to be like, "Oh, that's it, I'm queer."

Kristyn Scorsone: Right.

Marina Carreira: It's kind of like this woman is making me excited in a way that I don't really know how to feel about this. I knew she was sexy, and I knew I liked her, but again it was oh, I must really like her music. It's not that I want to be with her. It's that I want to *be* her. I feel like that was always my thing. Oh, it wasn't like, "Oh, I like this girl." It's oh, she's really cool, or either really good friends, or I want to be like her, that's why I have this attraction or connection or whatever the case is. So, seeing that, seeing the dancers and then I'm trying to – Will and Grace was a thing. I'm trying to think. That was like my first, the real – Even before that – My So Called Life I remember. So, maybe through TV because it definitely wasn't music. I mean I knew Elton John, who I love with all my heart, was gay. I knew Freddie Mercury was gay because my dad loved their music, and he sort of fostered that love too. That wasn't talked about.

I think I always wonder what that was like for my father too to sort of admire these pretty out gay men for their music, but what that meant for him who was raised as very homophobic and very masculine and macho. So, I think it was definitely Madonna that sort of gave me an understanding of queerness at a young age. And then from there it was just whatever I was watching on television, any sort of gay showing of something. But most of it was really men. I never really saw women being gay on television. I still can't think of –besides the L Word, but that was really like−and that was my first introduction.

I feel like I came into queerness so late, which when I look back now, I'm like that's not really late. You're really sort of a kid until you're like 22, 23, right? You're still sort of transitioning from teenagehood to this now, so maybe it wasn't late. But for me, it felt late, especially when I see young girls now and young men in high school. They're 14 and they're like, "I'm gay or I'm queer," and I'm like, "That's amazing." I feel like that has a lot to do also with this generation having access and having language and having communities and resources and social media. I'm pretty sure that if I had that much exposure to queerness, I think I would've understood my queerness a lot earlier on in life.

Kristyn Scorsone: Totally. What places in Newark do you associate with LGBTQ people?

Marina Carreira: Really any art spaces to me are queer friendly. I mean not every art space. But for example, I just showed in Art Front Galleries on Broadway. They're a wonderful, wonderful gallery. I really like working with them. They had an exhibition that's like pre-Pride. It was called Out Loud and they had a reception and there was so much young queer youth there, mostly like young men of color. That's really sort of the bulk of the LGBTQ community here. It was really wonderful for them to be in this space and the curator at the time - he's part of the Board of Trustees of Art Front – he said, "This is really great that so many queer people can be in," many for them it's their first time in an art space at an art reception. I feel like art spaces have been made into safe havens for a lot of queer youth. I know the Newark LGBTQ center, me and my partner we joined and then some life stuff happened, so then we had to not join or not be a part of them anymore. But, I'm so excited for them to have a home finally in the library but they're a wonderful resource. The library, the Newark Public Library, not that's it a queer space, but I definitely feel like it's a queer friendly space. Rutgers as a university I think is and, again, I only did my masters here, so I wasn't here during the day. I didn't really have the, I guess, the Rutgers experience really full hand because I was working full-time and I was a part-time grad student. So, I really just came, did my work and went home. I didn't have the really cool Rutgers experience that most queer kids in Newark have.

But, I work at Kane. I work at Kane, and we just started like our first legit LGBTQ organization called Prism. And I tell them all the time when we're looking at events to do and sort of how to get this organization up off the ground and make partnerships, I always tell them look at what Rutgers-Newark is doing, look at RU Pride, look at all the different things that Rutgers is doing and model it after them.

Kristyn Scorsone: Do you teach there?

Marina Carreira: No, I don't. I teach at Essex County College. I'm an adjunct there. I work at Kane in the College of Education. Yeah, so I'm very excited for them to now have this organization, but even then I mean it's 2019. How does a university that's been around in New Jersey and urban communities 20 minutes away from the city, how do they not have a LGBTQ organization? It's ridiculous. I mean I'm glad that it's a thing happening now, but it's like why are our students, why don't our students feel safe and I'm like, "Well first of all, who are our students?" Because I only know queer faculty and those are the ones that obviously self-identify and are out. But, I look on campus and it's not that I'm looking for queer students,

but it's not like you know where the LGBTQ kids hang out at Kane. There's not really a resource center for them. There's still a lot of areas that Kane, as a university, needs to fix, which is just to say that RU Newark I think is probably the biggest safe site for LGBTQ people in Newark. But that's just my experience again. Outside of art spaces, I don't really know where the queer community in Newark gather unless it's pride then we go there at Lincoln Park. Is that it?

Kristyn Scorsone: Right, yeah. You said that you have two daughters. How did you−so you had a relationship with this guy and then he's the father of your…

Marina Carreira: Yeah. I was in a relationship with my kids' dad, and essentially I think it was six months when the three-year-old, the one who is three now, Simone, when she was about six months is when officially he moved out. We separated. The relationship was just essentially a - I like to call it a universal accident. I think we were there for each other at the time when I guess we needed to, and the product of that relationship is these two kids.

Kristyn Scorsone: What year around? What years around was this?

Marina Carreira: This was I mean so fairly recent. I've been with my current partner for three years, so yeah, for almost three years. The little one, yeah, about a little shortly after the little one was born. Now we're good at co-parenting and my kids know that their family is different, which is also a fun conversation to have with a Catholic school principal about how this is what our family looks like. This is what we acknowledge. We don't pretend that she doesn't have two mommies 'cause we do.

Kristyn Scorsone: Did they respect that?

Marina Carreira: Yes, they said that, "We respect all families of all kinds." They have to give you the spiel, but they follow the dogma of the church. They're not going to talk about family in terms of two moms or two dads, which I was never expecting anyway. I just don't want my kid to ever feel unsafe or to feel less than.

Kristyn Scorsone: How do they deal with it or are they just whatever we're raised this way?

Marina Carreira: Yeah, I think we've talked enough where the seven-year-old, the three-year-old and I think that's one of the most beautiful maybe parts about growing up now when she is. I think for her she grew

up understanding that this is dad and dad has a girlfriend and this is mom and mom has a partner. This is what my family looks like and on Mondays and Wednesdays I'm with my dad and every other time I'm with my mom and stepmom. It's worked out fortunately for me really beautifully where we've learned to navigate and co-parent together the best we can.

I tell the kids that they're so lucky. They do feel lucky too because my partner's family is humongous. She has so many cousins and they have kids. My kids feel very lucky to have all these cousins and I'm very lucky to have a partner whose family is so wonderful to me and really embraced my kids and embraced me as part of their family. I feel really fortunate in that as well. Yeah, it's really, I feel like I always say, "I'm doing the Lord's work when we're raising kids in America under this administration as a queer household." But it goes beyond that. I tell my kids, and it's funny because even when they do see a queer household, social conditioning is so strong it still infiltrates. Even though my seven-year-old understands this idea of trans, understands that yes, this child was born a boy, but they might not be later. They might change their mind. They need to find themselves. They still very much think in binary.

The little one, the three-year-old, came the other day and was like, "Girls can't play basketball." I'm like, "You're three, what are you talking about?" It's just redirecting and really sort of, you know I think queer parenting is certainly not something I've read about as much unless it's on the blogs. I think even queer parents parent differently. I think we have conversations with kids that cis-het families don't. I think that they should, but they don't because they don't think. There's nothing that forces them to have these conversations. I feel very fortunate that my kids are being raised to understand that, and it is cliché, but that love is love. They can love whoever they want and that can look like anything. Yeah, that's the family. That's our family.

Kristyn Scorsone: Are you married to your partner or no?

Marina Carreira: No, no. We're working towards that step.

Kristyn Scorsone: Does she have children?

Marina Carreira: Huh-uh.

Kristyn Scorsone: Let's see. You said you got your MFA at Rutgers and now you're working, and you do all kinds of art. Visual art you said, poetry and…

Marina Carreira: Yeah. I do mostly collage and paint. In terms of writing, it's mostly poetry, some prose. My MFA was in creative writing. It wasn't specifically in poetry. It was sort of being introduced to the Newark art scene, which is super queer, that I gave myself permission to dabble in visual arts. It's always something I practiced not in secret. I've always painted but it was never, again, I never was taught.

First generation mentality is very funny in the way that it trains you to think that you're supposed to be one thing for the rest of your life. That's the way most people are raised. You go to college. You pick a job. You do that job forever. You pick a partner. You're with that person and you have kids and then you go through all of the natural steps of life, which is something we're trying to not teach our kids.

No one is one thing. People are multidimensional. There are nurses that are burlesque performers. There are doctors who are writers. There are lawyers who are poets. No one is one thing. I tell my kids all the time and my kids, her answer changes. One day, yesterday, she said she wanted to be a gymnast. She's never done gymnastics really in her life, but okay. Here we are. So me saying, "Okay, yeah. If I can claim a writer now that I have this degree, do I need another degree now to tell me that I can work in this medium too." Then I'm like, "No." That's sort of the beauty of having a community of writers and artists tell you, "No, you're not this one thing." Just like you're not this one person when it comes to your ideas and beliefs or whatever. I'm not just this one performer as in writer. I work in visual arts too.

It's been really fulfilling for me in terms of being able to explore queerness in a way that I don't really necessarily, or haven't done as much with writing. I mean, like I said, I have a manuscript that's all about sort of this queer love and queer relationship. But the art, the queerness in the art, has really been more present than the writing or at least it started out first than the writing has at least for me.

Kristyn Scorsone: How so?

Marina Carreira: I was trying to, so with writing, with at least poetry, you're writing to create this book or this collection. That's pretty hard. I knew

with “Save the Bathwater” essentially was my thesis, was my Rutgers’ thesis. I had this body of work ready to go.

Kristyn Scorsone: That’s awesome.

Marina Carreira: With my current project, yeah, with my current project I’m putting it together and I’m looking at stuff where I don’t want this manuscript just to be like, “Oh, this is just a bunch of love poems,” about two women, which is okay. That’s okay for it to be a thing. But, I feel queerness especially for something American or first generation American or undocumented women or women of color or working class, queer women, there’s so many layers to our existence than to just sit there and just talk about love. I feel like I don’t want it to be one dimensional, so I’m trying to pull from all aspects of life that say this is what happens and this is what informs queer love and these are the things that make it hard and these are the things that make it joyful and these are the experiences that shape this relationship, whether it’s kids or whether it’s family obligations or whether it’s culture or whether it’s a fucking crazy administration. I’m trying to pull from all those.

Whereas in art, I feel like I’ll have this idea of how I want something to look and even if my statement is just queer love is a really beautiful thing, I feel like I can accomplish it with visual art as opposed to writing. Writing I feel like it’s just a project where you’d have to sit for a while. Where art I feel like I can produce piece by piece and sort of tell the story slowly. Whereas the manuscript has to be together and it has to be this one thing. I shift back and forth depending on what I’m talking about. But I just feel like art as a medium has been easier for me to talk about, sort of the day-to-day that I don’t necessarily get with poetry.

Poetry is more of a whole thing. It’s a whole. It’s like writing a dissertation or thesis or a book. I love fiction, but I don’t know how people can commit to writing a book, a whole book. It blows my mind.

Kristyn Scorsone: Did you do−were you artistic as a child too?

Marina Carreira: I was. I used to draw all the time and I really loved tattoos as a kid, which, man, I always have the strikes working against me. I hated cooking. I wasn’t domestic. I liked tattoos. I wanted to stay out late and hang out with the boys. I was always the girl my mom didn’t want to raise. It was always art was considered a luxury. It was considered sort of flaky. Not that my parents don’t appreciate art.

It's just coming from working class backgrounds, rural backgrounds. Art was considered elitist.

For a long time – I think my parents still don't take me seriously as anything really besides a mom, and I guess a homeowner now, to them this is like, "Oh, well we're really excited that you're doing this thing you like, but don't forget about your real priorities," which is being this mom and having this home and having this 9:00 to 5:00 which is all immigrant mentality. It's all about you have to do what it takes to take care of your family and all these things are just extras. For most immigrant communities and it doesn't matter I think what country. I think it's that immigrant mentality of all these things are luxuries. They never had time to dabble or explore.

As a kid I drew and I loved art, but I just didn't think, like what was I going to do with it? My parents were like, "Well you can't be an artist because you're not going to make money." I told them I want, and I always wanted to be a writer, and they knew that, but I had to tell them that I was getting a degree in teaching in order to become an English major 'cause I didn't know what I wanted to do with my life. I still don't know what I want to do with my life. So that was an interesting sell. So when I graduated with my BA in English, my parents were like, "So, you're going to teach?" and I'm like, "No, not necessarily," and they're like, "I thought you were going to school for teaching?" I'm like, "Not so much." Because my plan originally was to teach high school, but I don't –

Then I worked in HR for a packaging company and then I finally made my way into higher ed working on the administrative side, which I'm still at today outside of adjuncting. Really, like I said, Newark, and by Newark I mean the queer and the artistic communities in Newark and even Rutgers and the MFA program, are the ones that gave me permission to find these parts of myself and honor them and say no, yeah, this is the work you want to produce and it's valid. I don't think I would've gotten that if I hadn't pursued an MFA. I was going to do a Masters in Higher Ed.

Kristyn Scorsone: Oh, yeah?

Marina Carreira: Yeah, so I'm really glad I didn't do that 'cause I really don't think I would've been taking the journeys I've been taking if I had steered away from the arts. I feel like I just tricked my parents into letting me be an artist, but I think it's worked out pretty well at least for me. I mean I don't know what they think. I mean I know they're proud, but again it's not this tangible thing to them. It's like what's

tangible is these children and this home and me as just their daughter. I feel like they very much separate Marina the artist or Marina the queer artist from Marina the daughter or Marina this person.

Kristyn Scorsone: Have you ever experienced any discrimination as an artist or even in your other jobs that you currently have or have had in the past?

Marina Carreira: No. Fortunately for me, and I think again, this all comes with privilege as well, I'm a white woman essentially, I'm a cis white woman. I never really talked about my romantic life at work. Even the job I had, the first real job I had working in HR, I was out with the relationship I was in at the time and even now I'm out to everyone on campus. There's nobody that doesn't know. I've never felt unsafe because of it fortunately. Again, I think it's because I'm in these privileged spaces like higher ed and maybe in companies that kind of just are whatever. So no, I've never felt threatened really. Not to say that I've always felt safe with the people around me, but no, I've never felt unsafe as a queer woman I think.

Kristyn Scorsone: Yeah. Your book, "Save the Bathwater" when did you publish it?

Marina Carreira: It came out in 2018, last year. It was a labor of love really. It was hard for me to put out honestly only because it tells the story of my childhood in a way that really sort of is very honest and brutal in talking about the hardships my parents went through as a couple, as the parents of these two kids, being raised by grandparents who as immigrants really just operated on survival and so taught us that. Taught us that if you go to work everyday and you stay healthy and you put food on the table and there's food in the fridge, that's your measure of success, right? And if you buy a home and if you have a car. Really the American dream was sort of twisted in this way for me where it became really about how do I become like my parents but not become like my parents.

There's a lot of talk in there about feelings were neglected as a child and sort of being witness to all these adult problems that as a kid you don't understand, sort of existing between these two spaces whether it's as a Portuguese kid, an American kid. It plays with landscape too, so sometimes I'm talking about Portugal, experiences growing up in Portugal and experiences growing up here and just telling a lot of family secrets that I know maybe my parents were kind of nervous about in the beginning. But, I think ultimately the collection really works to, at the end, show this forgiveness and sort of this appreciation for this experience, for

this childhood because they've allowed me to be this person who I am now and to be appreciative.

I think if I was raised at a different time, I wouldn't have the perspectives I have when it comes to the idea of what does it mean to be illegal. What does it mean to be a woman? What does it mean to be first generation? What does it mean to be working class? What does it mean to be white passing, a white woman, but also have this ethnicity that very much separates you from white America as we understand it. So, I love it. I'm sick to death of reading it and talking about it, but I really love it because it was my first baby. I like that it sort of talks about growing up in the city from this little kid's perspective. And it's such a different shift from the stuff that I'm writing now. Yeah, it's like my pride because it came- Like Rutgers, this building, this book was written in this building. It's super exciting and it really is. I've gotten a lot of feedback especially from Newark-based writers and people that lived in Newark that were like, "Oh, my goodness, I remember the way this looked and I remember the park this way too and that person reminds me of my grandmother too," so it was really interesting to see the connection that the readers sort of forged and were able to see themselves in it too.

To me Newark poems and Newark poetry is everything. I just curated a folio of Brick City poetry for the Journal of New Jersey Poets. They're a publication based out of County College of Morris. It was so amazing calling on all my writer friends that are Newark-based or from Newark and telling them like, "Here's the super higher eddy, mostly white poetry journal, and now let's put our voices there. Let's sort of show what Newark sounds like and what it looks like." I'm really excited about that. That was super fun for me to do.

If I had a choice to go see whoever in the city or in Washington, DC, or in LA or somebody said there's reading in Newark, to me the reading in Newark is probably my priority 'cause I think Newark artists and Newark writers and Newark creators and the Newark queer community, they're characters. It's wild, especially now since I think I see things a lot through the lens of what is our life and – because we have thinking about who's in power and thinking about how we communicate with people. I always look at life and the things that are happening to me under the gauge of if this was like a Netflix show, what would it look like? And literally even at the reception for the art exhibit I was watching people dance and I'm just like –even the way people dance in Newark young queer, people of youth dance a certain way. People of color

dance a certain way. Our art is very queer. I just look and I feel like all these people, all these artists that I know and these writers and these queer creators, they're all such big personalities. I'm really fortunate to have the network that I have here. They inspire me every day.

I'm also a part of a Collective. Did I mention Brick City Collective?

Kristyn Scorsone: Yeah. I wanted to ask you about that. What was it?

Marina Carreira: Brick City Collective is the child of this thing I started. When I finished my MFA in 2014, I wanted to stay connected to the writing community, to my Rutgers colleagues and poets in the area, so I started an open mic called Brick City Speaks.

Kristyn Scorsone: Where at?

Marina Carreira: Based out of Hell's Kitchen, the bar. So I did that for a while. I had people helping me along the way and one of them, she's my partner now.

Kristyn Scorsone: Where's Hell's Kitchen?

Marina Carreira: Hell's Kitchen is on Lafayette and Bruin, down in the Ironbound. It was wonderful 'cause I got to meet the majority of the people that are in the Collective today.

Kristyn Scorsone: When did you start that?

Marina Carreira: In 2014.

Kristyn Scorsone: 2014.

Marina Carreira: But then with work and pregnancy, I kind of had to do a hiatus and then by that point me and my partner were already together. I told her, I was like, "Oh, I don't know what I'm going to do with Brick City Speaks," like, "I can't keep doing this by myself. This is a huge undertaking." So, we talked about forming a Collective. Now there's eight of us and we're multidisciplinary artists that are Newark based working for social change through the arts.

Last year, we did a bunch of readings at the Newark Library. This year, we're trying to get back on track, but everybody has their own project. It's super hard. They're amazing and they're all

Newark-based artists. Even if they don't live here anymore, they're from Newark.

Kristyn Scorsone: It's a mixed group, it's not all queer people?

Kristyn Scorsone: Oh, no, it's not all. There's one, two, three, four. Four queer people and they're Latinx American, African American. Yeah, we're pretty diverse. It's not that when I look at the Collective – I didn't want a full quota, but I wanted to make sure that we all looked like Newark and we all sounded like Newark because we all are Newark. I wanted to make sure we had this group of voices.

I feel like the Collective will eventually grow to become this thing that's really just Newark writers that kind of want to just do things together. But Brick City Collective is still one of the things that keeps me grounded to Newark – is organizing readings in Newark for the queer community, the artistic community, the writer community, really for anybody. I want people to just come off the street and just kind of hear us read. One of the beautiful things is that, because all of us are really, I don't want to say we're socially conscious, but we all have our causes and the things we work towards. A lot of us do work that talks about LGBTQ activism, social change to help immigrants, to help residents. Last year, we had a big platform that talked about gentrification and how is it looking in Newark and who are the people being affected and who are people that are losing their homes. It's not just oh, we really like to write poetry and want to share it. It's really how do we get the art that we're producing, so that we're opening up conversations in these communities that kind of need to be had. We try to approach that with poetry. I think we're doing a lot of good work or at least we're trying to do a lot of good work, but that's them.

We have a reading coming up June 14 at Art Front Gallery. We're working on the theme. It's not really a theme, but sort of this idea. Amiri Baraka said that the job of the artist is to raise the consciousness of the people. We're working with the idea about poetry is resistance and revival being a platform to talk about queerness, to talk about Latinx culture, to talk about African American culture and to talk about working class culture. All of us have our thing that we're sort of interested in and when it comes together it's really sort of beautiful. That's just another really awesome thing that I think Newark gave to me or allowed me to form in the city.

There are so many other amazing open mics and readings series. Sean Battle, who graduated with me from the program, he's a really good friend. He does Evolution Open Mic out of the Cryout Cave; Mia X – she runs People's Open Mic in Gallery Aferro; and there's so much cool shit happening all the time in Newark.

Kristyn Scorsone: Is Mia X in your Brick City Collective?

Marina Carreira: Yes. Oh, no, no. She's not in my Collective. I'd love to have her. She was in the folio we did for the Journal of New Jersey Poets. She's just a fucking rock star. She's probably one of my favorite Newark poets. I met her while I was doing Brick City Speaks. I met her through Sean Battle, so I really forged friendships with so many amazing people and that's what I love because they're all Newark-based. They either work in Newark or they live in Newark or they're from Newark in some capacity. That's what I think sets Newark-ians apart from a lot of places. I see artists doing work in Jersey City, even in West Orange. I see local artists doing work in their communities and neighborhoods but there's just something about Newark artists where I feel like everything we do is really intentional and for the city. Collectively, we give a shit about what this place is going to look like. I think the city has a good chance to remain Newark, the way we understand and the way we respect it and hopefully not another fucking Hoboken by the way it's looking.

Kristyn Scorsone: How do you see the changes happening since you were younger until now?

Marina Carreira: It's scary. I'm not going to lie. It's really scary only because I've seen the landscape change so much. If you ask a lot of Portuguese Americans, their answer automatically is going to be "well Ironbound's not really Portuguese anymore. Things look so different." Honestly, that's just racist jargon because there's whole different communities and there's big South American and Central American community there now which I love because that really is what Newark was. Before the Ironbound was Little Portugal, it was Little Italy or Little, I think, German. They had German populations and Polish populations and African American populations.

So, I love to see that Newark is still a hub for multi-ethnic society. It's terrifying to see what's happening in terms of gentrification, in terms of people being forced out of their homes because of these absolutely ridiculous complexes that they want to build. I just feel

like the city or the higher powers are trying to cater to an outside population that's not from Newark. We're not building Newark for the Newark people. We're building Newark to attract Brooklynites and people from the city. I think that's very dangerous. I think we have a cultural inheritance that we need to protect and preserve, and that's across the board for anybody who has lived in Newark. I think Newark needs to serve its residents and its natives instead of trying to become just another place that people eat and shop at and leave.

I see a lot of these businesses and I'm like, "But are you hiring Newark people, are you catering to the communities in the neighborhood?" And I hate when people are like "Oh, it's another fucking 99¢ store. It's another one of these places to wire money." I'm like, "Yeah, but these businesses not only are independently owned, but they cater to the communities that are there." So that's not what I shit on. To me, the problem is that we didn't need a McDonald's on Ferry Street. Not that I have a–I think it's fine that it gives people access to food that is affordable especially for communities that need it, but I think that we need to just make sure that we don't eventually become a place like Hoboken where the residents are driven out -

Kristyn Scorsone: Right.

Marina Carreira: -and it just becomes just another touristy place. I feel especially with the Ironbound. That's the way it's sold. There's so many campaigns that are very pro-Ironbound or go Ironbound or that's what they want to paint Newark as, right? Like, oh Newark is this great city and here's the Prudential and here's all these great bars and cultural and ethnic dining. And I'm like, "Yeah, but these are very much neighborhoods that sustain all different types of communities and people." We need to pay attention to them and make sure that they're getting their needs to live their lives in the communities that they're contributing to. So, it looks so different, but at the same time it's still home. It's still the place that I see, and it doesn't look that much different to the point where it's unrecognizable.

Kristyn Scorsone: Right.

Marina Carreira: I don't know how I'm going to feel once it becomes that. I don't know what that would have to look like in order for me to feel that way. I hope I don't. I don't know.

Kristyn Scorsone: Right, yeah. You said your writing has shifted since "Save the Bathwater"?

Marina Carreira: Yeah. I've written mostly after "Save the Bathwater," I'm writing mostly along the lines of kind of looking at what does it look like to be a queer woman? What does it look like to be a queer woman under Donald Trump's administration? What does it look to be a mother nowadays? What does it look to be a human being? Even if you want to just cut those layers out and just say what does it mean to exist in this time and kind of look at that. That's really where my writing has gone. Not that I don't look back to childhood as a source for content. I mean that's always going to creep up. I'm really trying to look at what is happening now. Whereas before it was so much looking back. I need to look forward now.

Kristyn Scorsone: Yeah. Are you nervous now under this administration with being a parent?

Marina Carreira: I mean I think any queer person should be nervous period, mostly because I mean there's whole erasure happening in terms of LGBTQ rights, not to mention the military ban and what's happening with Georgia and reproductive rights. I mean just to live as a woman nowadays. Then there's different subcategories, white woman, Asian, African American, Native, Indigenous. Our existences are so different depending on that. Not that I don't see a light at the end of the tunnel. I just, I don't know what the work is going to look like or what it's going to take to bring us back to a place of sanity, to undo all these terrible Handmaid's Tale-esque things that are happening.

I just didn't think, you know, and maybe sometimes I think and I'm like, "Maybe being queer in the early 2000s was easier than being queer now." Not that it wasn't—maybe it wasn't easier. It felt easier in terms of—I mean there were different concerns. I wasn't worried about getting married. I wasn't worried about having children back then. I was worried about partying and being part of this community that I was new to. But, I didn't have to think about abortion being illegal or just fucking anything. I don't want to say that I'm shocked because this is what America has always been.

I'm just kind of unsettled by the level or sort of like how far it's gone. Although, I'm not saying that we've never faced adversity and there's never been challenges, but I just feel like we've gone so far. All pun intended. It's hard times and depending right on where you are in the community, especially for trans people of color, like just existing is dangerous for them in 2019 America.

And maybe because I'm really sensitive and I internalize all these things, but it worries me, what I'm going to look at and to read about a 10-year-old queer kid killing himself because he's being bullied, what the fuck is that? It's 2019! I don't know.

A lot of my writing has been trying to explore that and what does that look like. And what can we really do to make these things different? I feel that's why I've tapped into visual arts to talk about these things because I feel like I don't even know what language to use anymore, besides a whole bunch of expletives to talk about it.

Kristyn Scorsone: Yeah, I feel ya. I guess just to be respectful of your time, is there anything that I didn't ask you about that you wish I had?

Marina Carreira: Not really, I guess maybe if you want to just talk a little bit about your understanding of Newark 'cause I feel like I don't talk enough to Newark people about anything outside of art or writing. As far as the queer community here because I know now that there are like Newark LGBT center has a space and from other people I've talked to Pride is looking really bigger this year or at least Rafael who works, I forgot who he works for, Rafael Cuello, I think his last name is. He works for NJCIT. Does that make sense?

Kristyn Scorsone: Oh, NJCRI?

Marina Carreira: CRI, yeah. He works there and he's also an artist. He works with Art Front Gallery and he was talking about Pride and the participation in Pride and how they're going to really try to make it bigger this year. How do you feel the queer community is in Newark right now in terms of, I guess ,visibility or acceptance? Do you feel like there is a bigger queer visibility and acceptance in Newark?

Kristyn Scorsone: It's hard to say because I didn't grow up here and I'm from Kearny.

Marina Carreira: Oh, but you're—yeah. It's kind of like…

Kristyn Scorsone: Being from Kearny we were, I'm about your age, I was born in 1980 and growing up we were always taught you don't go to Newark for anything.

Marina Carreira: Right.

Kristyn Scorsone: It was just sort of I always say it was just like a blank map. There's nothing in my mind that had – and so when I came to Rutgers it

was sort of like when you have bad wi-fi and then the map starts downloading. You can start to see everything.

Marina Carreira: Yeah, that's a great visual.

Kristyn Scorsone: Then I realized that as a queer person growing up in Kearny, all of the culture and community that I wished was there was happening here. But I don't know if I could say if it's more visible or not because there's a lot of queer history here that, every time I learn more it just blows my mind. Like, how much queer clubs were here and queer artists over the years and entertainers and AIDS activists, and up until now with the Newark Pride – and I've gone I guess three years in a row now. I think it's been three years, maybe four, and it does get bigger every year. Every year I'm like, "Wow, this is," but even the first year I was like, "Wow, this is huge. This is amazing." I think with the center being where it was, was awesome, but I'm so glad because I feel like the loss of that center would've been so detrimental to the community.

Marina Carreira: Absolutely.

Kristyn Scorsone: I'm like so happy that the Newark Public Library opened their doors and that's I think a big credit to the director, Jeffrey Trzeciak. He's really done so much to make the library so cool and of the community.

Marina Carreira: Yes, and to offer community programming the way they have been. They've been great. The library is just such a great site.

Kristyn Scorsone: I just see it growing from here I guess. I hope. I don't want to just say that there's some sort of progress narrative or whatever, but I do think I don't know, I hope being in the library too it's just such a nexus around here that I think that's going to be amazing. Yeah. I feel like the way the visibility is has just shifted and changed so much throughout the years, but there's so many, just delving in for a minute on any decade, at least for me, since like the 1920s it's so interesting to see what was visible and when and how and who existed.

Marina Carreira: I imagine doing this work must be exhausting, but also the stuff you're mining, it's like incredible. I feel like especially Newark kids ,they don't know any Newark history. Forget queer Newark history. Newark history period. You know what they're taught? The riots. That's it. That's their footnote, and I feel like there's so−a lot of people, and by a lot of people I mean like my sister, she's like, "Oh, you romanticize Newark so much." And I'm just

like, “I really”, and I don’t mean to do in the corny way, but “I really do.” I have, and I’ve always had a connection, and it’s not because I was born here.

It’s just there’s something about the city. The city itself is resistance. It’s like a symbol of resistance. It’s been a site for so much change, whether it’s on a very small level between immigrant families that came here and learned what life was like in America, and this was essentially their training ground, to the communities that were here before and between the race riots and owning businesses and the landscape changing and who’s move in and who’s moved out. I mean the city remains this resisting force where no matter, and there’s been a lot of change and a lot of gentrification, but I feel like it’s not lost yet. I feel like Newark is still Newark and continues to be Newark, and I think that’s all because of scholars and writers and artists and academics.

I think Rutgers-Newark is doing amazing stuff for the city as well. I think the city is lucky to have a Rutgers here. The city is just blessed to have the artists and the writers that they do because I think the writers and the artists, and the activists are the ones that are keeping the city the way it is. I think we’re the gatekeepers. Things haven’t—not all is lost because of us. I mean I know I feel like we’re congratulating ourselves a lot, but it’s true. I mean it really is true. I think if you go to the town halls or the city halls it’s mostly artists and activists that are up there speaking out against these MX-13 and all of these projects and all this—

Kristyn Scorsone: What’s MX-13?

Marina Carreira: It was this development plan to put I think it was 15-story luxury loft in the Ironbound. I think it was between McWhorter and Market Street where it would cause all these problems, infrastructure problems, and force people out, rent increases and whatever the case is. That’s just an example. When I went to that meeting, it was just all Newark artists standing up and Newark residents standing up and saying, “No, this is our city. This needs to cater to us. This is not supposed to be a blight.” Essentially saying, “Don’t sell our city to these developers. Let’s keep some of our city for us.”

Yeah, I think it really is due to the activists and the artists and the queer communities that keep the city the way it is. So, I’m very grateful to be part of that. I think that journey and part of this history essentially, and I hope the future students and people that do look through these archives just see how really amazing some

of the Newark residents are and some of the queer people in Newark are because Newark will eventually I think be looked at as a huge queer city eventually, eventually. Hopefully sooner than later.

Kristyn Scorsone: That's awesome. Thank you so much for doing this.

Marina Carreira: Oh, thank you.

Kristyn Scorsone: I don't mean to put you on the spot, but if you have a favorite poem, if you want to read something for people.

Marina Carreira: Yeah, sure.

Kristyn Scorsone: If you don't…

Marina Carreira: No, that's fine. I'm trying to think. I'm like, "What's the gayest poem?" I don't fucking−I'm sorry for the cursing.

Kristyn Scorsone: It doesn't have to be...

Marina Carreira: *[Crosstalk 1:23:05]* That's a really fun point of contention as I think a writer and artist and it's when you're like, "Well none of these poems talk about queerness," but it's−

Kristyn Scorsone: Who you are.

Marina Carreira: - right. That's what I'm saying. That's one thing I think, and a lot of queer persons struggle with this, especially artists or writers or whoever is doing work writing. It's kind of how do I stop feeling like I have to prove my queerness or show my queerness? The work itself is queer. It's normalizing this queer experience. I'm trying to think. It's so funny 'cause you said ephemera. And I have a poem that is all about ephemera, but I don't know if I want to. Yeah. I'll just read that.

Kristyn Scorsone: No, it's fine.

Marina Carreira: It's called "Luso-American Ephemera in Avó's Armoire."

Page from a passport stamped one-way 1973, USA. Old coins, the teal of a lizard's tongue. Thimble and thread from Avó's first American sewing kit. Ace of spades curled at the corners, reeking of Winston cigarettes. Polaroid, my father's youth league soccer team. My baby tooth charm dangling off a broken bracelet. Christmas card, the black of Boas Festas *[1:24:23]* fading. New

Jersey transit ticket stub, Broad Street stop. Funeral card for Alberto Silva, village baker. Flyer, Amalia at Carnegie Hall. Penny candy wrappers crinkled, smelling of coat pocket. Postcard of Nazaré, a fisherman's wife in seven skirts, beijinhos, Tia, *[1:24:44],* Gold medal of Santo Antonio, restorer of lost objects, never brought back anything worth saving.

Kristyn Scorsone: I love that.

Marina Carreira: Thank you. Yeah, I remember they had some wacky shit in her armoires let me tell you.

Kristyn Scorsone: Thank you so much.

Marina Carreira: Thank you. This was super, super fun.

[End of Audio]