Clockwise from above, Phoenix Lindsey-Hall works on an element of her piece, “Flame Tempered,” at the Market Street Convergence gallery at 85 Market St. in Newark; a passer-by on Market Street looks at Patricia Dahman’s art installation “Hanging Up Support for a Public Option”; an untitled painting by Piotr Czerwinski also will be displayed at Market Street Convergence; members of the Malcolm X Shabazz High School Junior ROTC push a colorful Animodule sculpture during the fourth annual Newark Arts Parade in 2011. Animodules will also be featured in the Open Doors 2013 Creation Nation Art and Peace Parade, taking place Oct. 20.
Left Bank of the Passaic

NEWARK CELEBRATES ITS VIBRANT ARTS SCENE WITH OPEN DOORS 2013

By Peggy McGlone
STAR-LEDGER STAFF

A n exploration of pain as muse ... a showcase of 10 solo shows in a converted retail space ... the release of a new typeface sparked by a designer's love-hate relationship with technology ... a "GhostFood Truck" that focuses on climate change and biodiversity ... an interactive poetry-art installation.

Get ready for Open Doors 2013, a citywide celebration of art opening Friday and continuing through Oct. 20 at dozens of art galleries and temporary spaces around Newark.

In its 12th year, the festival — sponsored by the Newark Arts Council — is bigger than ever, with new partners and spaces and a calendar of performances, screenings and exhibitions that extends through two weekends.

Still, Open Doors remains committed to its grassroots mission of discovery. Visitors have the chance to witness art as it's being made and meet the artists who contribute to the city's flourishing arts scene.

That sense of being able to see under the hood. I think that's particularly strong," Gallery Aferro co-director Emma Wilcox said. "You can come here, talk with the artists directly, see them wrestle with exhibitions in these old buildings. There's this density of experience."

The festival kicks off Friday with a gallery crawl from 6 to 9:30 p.m. Four shuttle buses will run all night, taking guests from galleries at Rutgers-Newark to the Firestation Arts Center in the Ironbound, from Newark School of the Arts near Lincoln Park to the Jewish Museum on Broadway. There are pop-up galleries in the Gateway Center and on Broad and Market streets, too.

"There's a huge focus this year on Market Street," Newark Arts Council executive director Linwood Oglesby said. "You'll get an idea of what an animated arts corridor can do for the city."

Saturday's highlight is "The World's Largest Monotype Mile Print," an effort led by former Newark Museum artist Stephen McKenzie to break the Guinness World Record for largest print. The free project will be held in Washington Park from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The festival's signature event, the open studio tour, gets underway Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. Dozens of independent artists will welcome visitors into their work spaces to witness their creative processes. There will also be tours of Newark's murals program in the afternoon.

"It's important for all of us to open our doors at one time, to make a connection to the outside, greater metropolitan area," Solo(s) Project House director Rebecca Jampol said.

"This promotes what we work hard for all year round. It's a vibrant, welcoming arts scene."

The festival's final stretch, from Thursday to Oct. 20, includes the Creation Nation Art and Peace Parade, in which the Barat Foundation's large, colorful Animodule sculptures will be on display. There also will be a screening of the film "You Are Not Alone," a party for HyCide Magazine's second anniversary and an opening reception for the LUDD Project, when Rutgers-Newark design professor Ned Drew unveils his new typeface.

One of this year's highlights is Market Street Convergence, a combination of curated group shows, pop-up spaces, and performance art. Here is where guests can find the "GhostFood Truck," a performance installation disguised as a food truck that makes guests think about the natural world.

The Market Street Convergence is the result of dozens of collaborations between Gallery Aferro and its many partners. Four group shows, installations in vacant storefronts, film screenings and performances make this block of Market Street the hub of the festival.

"You, essentially, can't be bored on this block," Wilcox said.

Another highlight is the interactive "Before I Die ... Newark." Candy Chang's piece comes to Newark for the first time. Guests write their thoughts on the chalkboards set up at three spots on Market, and poets Vincent Toro..."
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“Talk about discovery,” Wilcox said about this piece. “I don’t know what that’s going to look like, sound like, feel like, and I find that very exciting.”

“Before I Die ... Newark” is a collaboration with the Dodge Poetry Festival, a biennial event that was hosted by Newark last October.

“It’s exciting to be a part of Newark’s rich history as a center for art and literature, and to have a chance to stay connected to the local community in an ‘off-festival’ year,” Dodge Poetry director Martin Farawell said. “We hope folks will take advantage of the chance to experience some wonderful art and poetry right in their own neighborhoods, or travel into Newark to discover its downtown arts scene.”

The New Jersey Performing Arts Center is another addition to the Open Doors Festival. NJPAC will showcase student artwork selected by Art Educators of New Jersey in its Victoria Theater lobby, and give visitors tours of its collection of African art and artifacts, and its backstage area.

“It’s a great community experience, a great way to introduce people to Newark,” NJPAC president and CEO John Schreiber said. “One of our major goals is community engagement and this is a way for us to share some special aspects of the arts center that many people aren’t aware of.”

Jade Lien of the Newark Arts Council said the new partners and new events will invigorate this year’s Open Doors.

“It’s bigger than the visual arts, it’s spoken word, theater, music, film,” she said. “And collaboration seems to be a major theme for this year.”

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