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Lauren Craig, Jeremy Johnson, Marco Hall, Tracey Africa, Mayor Ras J. Baraka and Paulette Hall at the Mayor's Welcome to Newark Reception, Newark Museum. Photo credit: Falcone Reale

Newark Arts Celebrates its 16th Annual Open Doors Festival with a Four Day Arts Extravaganza

Newark, NJ, October 19, 2017 – The Open Doors Citywide Arts Festival ("Festival"), which took place Wednesday, October 11th through Sunday, October 15th, was a star-studded affair, filled to the brim with artistic spaces, pop-ups, and galleries that were highlighted in walkable "Clusters" throughout the City of Newark.

"The Open Doors Citywide Festival is an exciting opportunity for all of us to not just showcase art in our city, but also to show the rest of the country how to advance community by using art," said Mayor Ras J. Baraka of the Festival.

On Wednesday, October 11th, the Festival kicked off with a private Media and Buyer's Preview and Welcome to Newark Reception at the Newark Museum. Hosted by Mayor Baraka, the Reception gave leaders of the arts, education and business communities a first look at a fashion exhibit created by renowned Newark-based designer Marco Hall in collaboration with students from the Berkeley College Fashion Club in Newark. The fashion presentation featured such icons as Tracey Africa and Andre J.



Danny Simmons, Jerry Gant and Jeremy Johnson at Fownders Gallery. Photo credit: Stafford Woods

On Thursday, October 12, Open Doors' Opening Night featured disRUPT: Newark, a solo exhibition of work by internationally renowned abstract expressionist, Danny Simmons, and curated by Noah Kane-Small. A capacity crowd added to the vibrance of the artwork that lit up the University Heights Cluster.

Earlier in the evening, Willie Cole: Made in Newark opened at NJIT's coAD Gallery, also in University Heights, to great acclaim.

On Friday, October 13th, the Festival continued in the Market Street Cluster with exciting events and openings at Gallery Aferro, Index Art Center, Art & Artifacts Newark, Newark's City Hall and Gallery 211 among others.



Tour attendees in front of the "Reflective Black Body" mural by Lunar New Year. Photo credit: Stafford Woods

On Saturday, October 14th, the day began with the 2nd Annual M&T Bank Murals and Martinis...and Music! Public Art Tour, which ended with an exciting sneak preview of the GRAMMY Museum Experience Prudential Center. Meanwhile, in the Halsey Street North Cluster, young artists and their families were enjoying the inaugural Open Doors Kids, a mini-festival curated by Newark Mommies, that included cultural crafts and activities in venues such as Express Newark, GlassRoots, the Newark Museum and the Newark Public Library.



Postcard printing at the Newark Print Shop during Open Doors Kids. Photo courtesy of Newark Print Shop.

On Saturday night, Dr. Ntozake Shange greeted visitors at "i found god in myself: a celebration of Dr. Ntozake Shange's for colored girls", at City Without Walls. The exhibit, curated by Peter "Souleo" Wright, is a tribute to the 1976 Broadway play through 10 commissioned artworks. The opening reception was attended by Amina Baraka among other notables.

Finally, on Sunday, the closing day of the Festival, Newark Arts presented "A Conversation With...", a panel discussion on art and social impact, moderated by Sharnita C. Johnson, Arts Program Director at the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation. Noted panelists included award winning playwright, Dr. Ntozake Shange, internationally renowned visual artist, Danny Simmons, audience diversification expert, Donna Walker-Kuhne and and Chief Technology Officer of Fownders, Anthony Delgado. The important discussion was one that attendees won't soon forget.

