L+M Lecture Series to Launch at Express Newark

When Express Newark: A University-Community Collaboratory opens next spring, it will help transform the newly redeveloped Hahne & Company building into an intellectual and commercial hub for Rutgers, the city, and the Greater Newark area. The building’s plans, created by L+M Development Partners, include several arts-and-humanities-related features, including a photo studio, print shop, and new exhibition spaces. The programming that will set the building abuzz with creativity and critical thinking will serve as a bridge further connecting Rutgers University-Newark and its host city.

Soon after Express Newark opens, the Price Institute will launch the inaugural entry in the L+M Development Partners Lecture Series on Public History and Civic Spaces, to be held in the historic grandeur of the Hahne’s Building. The Series will bring to Newark prominent thinkers in the world of public history and the humanities and create an opportunity for those working in those areas in Newark to connect with people and projects in other places and to reflect on the foundations and aims of their practice. Deeply rooted in our city and looking out to the nation and the world, firmly grounded in notions of place and social justice, its goal is to bring history and the humanities to bear on contemporary life in Newark and beyond.
Long Time Here: Prisons and Policing in African-American History, the 36th Annual Marion Thompson Wright Lecture Series, invited a wide-rang- ing discussion of the historical developments that have shaped our contemporary criminal justice system and the inequalities it fosters. The topic is especially timely as current events across the nation appear at once novel and timely as current events across our contemporary criminal justice system and the inequalities it fosters. Keynote speaker Ruth Wilson Gilmore of the CUNY Graduate Center issued a stirring call for activism and coalition-building in the dismantling of the carceral system. Historian Heather Ann Thompson of the University of Michigan explored the postwar roots of that system, while Khalil Gibran Muhammad, director of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, drew on his landmark research on black criminalization to stretch that history back to the late nineteenth century. The day concluded with a panel discussion of police reform in Newark featuring Larry Hamon of the People’s Organization for Progress; Deborah Jacobs, former director of the New Jersey ACLU; Victor Monterroso of Newark’s Civilian Complaint Review Board; and Junius Williams of the Abbott Leadership Institute and Newark Celebration 350.

It’s one of my favorite things to do in Newark, I go every year.

-Audience Member

I’ve learned to think critically about the role criminalization plays in mass incarceration.

-Audience Member

Being able to present as a Marion Thompson Wright speaker was truly the highlight of my fall. Rarely does one get to share one’s work with an audience of community members so deeply engaged in discussing matters of such pressing national concern. Not only was I awed by the sheer numbers of people who came to discuss the current crisis of mass incarceration, but I learned so much from them and from my fellow speakers. What an extraordinary event this is.

-Dr. Heather Anne Thompson

There’s an inexplicable freedom associated with simply being allowed to MOVE!

-Class Participant

Since 2005, the Price Institute has mounted the Dance Symposium Series with the mission of bringing exceptional dance artists directly to an urban audience, including diverse groups of students, families, and lifelong learners. As the only regularly produced dance program at Rutgers University-Newark, the Series has, over the years, brought a variety of dance styles and traditions to campus and the larger Newark community. In addition to an evening performance, each entry in the Series includes a public engagement activity, such as a workshop or lecture/demo, with one of the Institute’s community partners. Last year’s tenth anniversary season was supported by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, the Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation, the New England Foundation for the Arts, the Essex County Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs, and the Cultural Programming Fund at Rutgers University-Newark.

Axis often uses the powerful tag line, ‘if you have a body, you can dance’ and it’s quite true! Having the opportunity to participate in their integrated dance workshop was fantastic!

-Class Participant

AXIS DANCE COMPANY: A SYMPOSIUM ON DANCE & DISABILITY

The Price Institute’s three-day engagement with the AXIS Dance Company – a physically integrated dance company that features dancers with and without disabilities – took place in November. It included a full performance and three residency activities. For the second time, the Price Institute collaborated with NJPAC, to present a performance by AXIS at The Victoria Theater on Tuesday, November 17, to an audience of 265 people. Thanks to special outreach to the disability community by our symposium partner, the Alliance Center for Independence, the audience included many wheelchair users who would otherwise not have attended a dance performance. The residency activities with AXIS included a community class at the Robeson Campus Center on the Rutgers University-Newark campus. Participants included a group of students and their teachers from St. Joseph’s School for the Blind in Jersey City, Rutgers students, and wheelchair users from the community. AXIS also conducted a class for 32 children in wheelchairs at the Lakeview School in Edison, which provides one of the largest day programs for children with disabilities in the nation. Finally, AXIS taught a second community class at the Minnie B. Veal Recreation Center in Edison to participants of all abilities. All classes/workshops were open to the public and presented free of charge.
The Atlantic City Ballet’s Dracula

On October 28, 2015, the Price Institute presented highlights from the Atlantic City Ballet Company’s acclaimed production of Dracula at the Jim Wise Theater, located on the NJIT campus in Newark. A co-presentation with the Rutgers-NJIT Theater Arts Program, this marked the first time the Price Institute had partnered with NJIT to present a dance company on the larger stage of the 400-seat proscenium theater. Both Rutgers University-Newark and NJIT promoted the ballet performance to their campus constituents, resulting in an audience of 225 people to a ballet performance at an engineering school in the pouring rain. Several audience members said that this was their very first ballet. As part of the dance symposium, two principal dancers from the company taught a master class for approximately 35 dance students at Columbia High School in Maplewood.

The juxtaposition of the speakers was excellent. Considering the work from both perspectives was crucial.

-Audience Member

VOLOSHKY UKRAINIAN DANCE ENSEMBLE

On March 31, 2016, for the spring entry in its Dance Symposium Series, the Price Institute presented the Voloshky Ukrainian Dance Ensemble. Taras Lewyckyj, artistic director of Voloshky, and several dancers presented a lecture/demo in the Paul Robeson Campus Center’s third floor dance theater to a mix of students and community members. The Price Institute partnered once again with NJIT for the evening performance by Voloshky at the Jim Wise Theater on the NJIT campus, which drew close to 300 patrons, many from Ukrainian communities in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The performance included a pre-concert lecture on the political situation in Ukraine and the struggle for cultural survival.

Music is the way to communicate regardless of our ethnic background.

-Audience Member

Twentieth Anniversary of Camilo José Vergara’s New American Ghetto

Camilo José Vergara’s landmark 1995 book, New American Ghetto, combined his writing and photography in a wide-ranging exploration of urban development over roughly two decades in Newark, Detroit, New York, Chicago, Gary, Camden, and other American cities. In its sweep, it gave readers an unflinching vision of how urban development had tolerated increasing inequality, while taking a deeply humanistic look at the lives lived amid such development. In years that many consider urban America’s darkest time, the book offered a complicated portrait of what was going on in the cities and why.

In November at Rutgers’ Dana Library, Vergara presented a slideshow-lecture of his Newark photography over several decades and engaged in a conversation with Newark native and longtime community activist Richard Cammarieri, whose intimate personal knowledge of Newark’s built environment and neighborhoods complemented Vergara’s photos.

I learned about how much Newark has transformed. I also recognized how many people want to restore its history.

-Audience Member

H’Sao: A Celebration of Music from Chad

On October 8, 2015, the Price Institute expanded its performing arts programming to world music when it presented H’Sao in a free concert at the Bradley Hall Theater. H’Sao is a Montréal-based band from Chad, the word “h’sao” meaning the “Swallow of the Sao,” who were the ancestors of present-day Chadians. The band performed a unique blend of modern and traditional African music, drawing from gospel, jazz, pop, soul, R&B, reggae, and Chadian music, including a cappella singing in several different languages. The H’Sao performance, co-sponsored by the Department of History and African American and African Studies at RU-N, was followed by a post-concert audience discussion with H’Sao on Chadian music, culture, and history.

My son is in love with foreign cultures especially all things African.

-Audience Member

This has made me, a Newark resident, more aware of the city’s history.

-Audience Member
100th Anniversary Screening of The Birth of a Nation

We at the Price Institute always try to be cognizant of important historic anniversaries. So when we began thinking about 2015 programming, the release of D. W. Griffith’s landmark film in 1915 jumped out as something we could not ignore for a number of reasons: its representation of and role in the construction of modern American regimes of racial hierarchy; its role in shaping American memory of the Civil War and Reconstruction; its importance as a film that helped drive the modern American civil rights movement when it was still relatively young; and its role as a landmark in the development of the cinematic arts.

On December 10, the Price Institute screened The Birth of a Nation in its entirety to a lively crowd—including a large delegation of students from Newark’s American History High School—in the Newark Museum’s Billy Johnson Auditorium. In a moving communal response to the film, audience members laughed and jeered at appropriate moments. At the film’s conclusion, they discussed the film with Northwestern University film historian and former Geraldine R. Dodge Postdoctoral Fellow at the Price Institute Miriam Petty, who detailed its production history and its status as a major milestone not only in the history of the American cinema, but also in the history of modern American racism and the modern civil rights movement.

"I feel this movie really forces you to face up to the country’s deep-seated racism. Makes you feel like you have to stand up to today’s racism." - Audience Member

“I learned about the early use of fear as a social conditioning tool.” - Audience Member

“Ideas were developed in movies and shared throughout the nation. It is outrageous and disturbing how wildly accepted this was.” - Audience Member

WHOSE CITY IS IT

A Newark Forum on Historic Preservation

On April 29, 2016, the Price Institute hosted a day long public forum on historic preservation in Newark. Whose City Is It? built on the example of the Brick City Conversations series coordinated by the Joseph A. Cornell Center for Metropolitan Studies to organize a robust conversation on preserving the history and sense of place embodied in Newark’s built environment, while simultaneously pursuing new opportunities for prosperity and innovation.

"The Forum brought together national leaders in historic preservation and urban planning and those doing preservation, development, and planning work right here in Newark. The day opened with a plenary conversation between Melissa Jest, manager of the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Historic Properties Redevelopment Program, and Larry Curtis, president and managing partner of Winn Development in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Attendees then broke off for morning panel sessions entitled “Historic Preservation at Work in Downtown Newark” and “Preserving Neighborhood Character.” A keynote lunch conversation between Marc Norman, director of UPSTATE: A Center for Design, Research, and Real Estate, and Bayé Adele Wilson, the City of Newark’s Deputy Mayor for Economic and Housing Development, brought the forum back together in one room before the afternoon panels: “At the Grassroots: Preserving Neighborhood Parks and Schools” and “Rethinking the Legal Framework: Development Case Studies in Newark & Beyond.”"
Introducing Professor Mary Rizzo

When Price Institute interim director Mark Krasovic went on sabbatical this past spring, Professor Mary Rizzo graciously stepped in to lead us through another busy semester. The Associate Director of Public and Digital Humanities Initiatives in the Graduate Program in American Studies and History Department, Mary not only managed the Price Institute’s existing projects, but brought into our orbit a new program: the annual New Jersey unConference which in its second year this spring was hosted at Rutgers University-Newark.

SECOND ANNUAL NEW JERSEY unCONFERENCE

On May 13, 2016, more than 120 people—librarians, archivists, museum staff, artists, independent historians, teachers, and students—came together for New Jersey’s annual public history unconference, Telling Untold Histories (untoldhistories.wordpress.com). Sponsored by a number of public humanities organizations, including the Price Institute, the unconference focused on how to make the history we tell in public more inclusive of the diversity of our communities in the past and present. Unlike a traditional history conference, sessions were not chosen ahead of time. Attendees kicked off the day by proposing and voting on session topics (below). Successful proposers facilitated discussions in their sessions, while the fleet-fingered tweeted and took notes on discussions about issues from “Access and Exploitation in Archives” to representations of Muslim youth to how historians and librarians can work together. These thought-provoking conversations fed into afternoon workshops. The workshops—which included a Historypin How-to For Beginners, Jumpstarting Community Documentation Projects, and Facilitating Great Conversations—gave attendees specific skills useful for inclusive public history work.

"I’VE ALREADY TALKED WITH SEVERAL PEOPLE ABOUT PLANNING FUTURE EVENTS TO CONTINUE EXPLORING THESE IDEAS. I GREATLY APPRECIATED HAVING A COMMUNITY COMPRISED OF A WIDE RANGE OF ETHNICITIES, AGES, PROFESSIONS (INCLUDING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS!!!)."

– Audience Member

Longtime Senior Program Coordinator Marisa Pierson Retires after 27 Years at Rutgers

After twelve years at the Price Institute, and a total of twenty-seven years at Rutgers University, senior program coordinator Marisa Pierson officially retired this spring. On April 21, 2016, Price Institute staff past and present, along with family, friends, and colleagues from across Rutgers gathered in the backyard of 49 Bleeker Street to celebrate and congratulate Marisa. And celebrate we did! The tent was up, the music played, and the food and drink were plentiful. It was a reflection of Marisa’s time at Rutgers: a party full of fellowship and love.

A graduate of the School of Visual Arts in New York City, Marisa began her Rutgers career in the Department of University Relations on the Livingston Campus, as part of the former Office of Television and Radio. There, she wrote and produced The Rutgers Forum, a weekly TV show that showcased Rutgers experts and was broadcast on WNET-13. She was also the series producer and writer/narrator for the five-year award-winning radio series, New Jerseytimes, a series devoted to telling New Jersey history and folklore and to discussing the public affairs issues of the day. In her time at the Price Institute, Marisa founded our second-longest-running program: the semi-annual Dance Symposium. The Symposium, whose popularity and reach has grown over its eleven years, brings both ethnic and modern dancers from around the country to teach workshops and perform for the community.

Even in retirement, however, Marisa is not slowing down. She continues to choreograph, teach, and perform Middle Eastern Dance and works to bring performing artists to the city of Newark. She will be sorely missed, but never far away.
Kathleen Galop has also participated in a Newark Celebration 350 discussion on the topic of “Whose City Is It? A Newark Forum on US history and continue his research on the Weequahic section of Newark.

John Johnson, Jr.

It has been a busy year for Price Institute Fellow John Johnson, Jr. In June 2015, he began his tenure as the Executive Director of Newark Celebration 350. The brainchild of Dr. Price, NC350 was created to commemorate Newark’s founding in 1666. It has since grown into a yearlong celebration featuring over 200 events. John worked closely with the NC350 trustees and its chairman to engage both the grassroots and grass-tops as celebration programmers. Unlike previous commemorative celebrations, NC350’s leadership was interested in hearing the voices of Newark residents and engaging them as event producers.

Newark Celebration 350 has created a platform to showcase the diversity and richness of Newark’s five wards and ensure that their narratives are included in the commemoration effort. To date, NC350 produced the October 2015 Family Fun Festival, the Founders Weekend Festival in May 2015, and the three-day Founder’s Weekend Festival in May 2016. In addition, over 120 ward-based events have included tours of Newark’s West Ward, an East Ward community history day, a concert in the South Ward celebrating Newark’s jazz traditions, and a reflection on the preservation of Branch Brook Park in the North Ward.

The celebration of Newark will continue until the end of the year. John, however, will be moving on to the history department at St. Peter’s University in Jersey City, where he will be an assistant professor of twentieth-century urban history.
Price Institute Staff

Mark Krasovic  
Interim Director  
(973) 353-1051  
krasovic@rutgers.edu

Mary Rizzo  
Interim Director (spring 2016)  
(973) 353-1166  
mary.rizzo@rutgers.edu

Marisa Pierson  
Senior Program Coordinator (retired)  
(973) 353-3896  
mpierson@rutgers.edu

Laura Troiano  
Acting Senior Program Coordinator  
(973) 353-3905  
ltroiano@rutgers.edu

Melissa Geddis  
Administrative Assistant  
(973) 353-3891  
mag431@scarletmail.rutgers.edu

Join the Conversation

IECME  49bleeker  IECME