

QUEENS MEMORY

NEWS FROM QUEENS MEMORY PROJECT

Queens Memory Introduces Ambassadors Program

Queens Memory is very excited to announce the launch of the Ambassadors Program in 10 Queens Public Library branches. With support and specialized workshops, staff selected to serve as Ambassadors at each branch will conduct their own projects to expand Queens Memory in their neighborhoods between November 2020 and June 2021. QM Community Coordinator Meral Agish is managing the program and will provide training and guidance to the Ambassadors.

The inaugural Ambassadors group spans the borough and plans to address a range of topics focusing on the past and present of their respective communities. In future newsletters, we will feature highlights from these programs and oral history interviews. They are:

- **Cambria Heights** - African-American Histories and Legacies in Cambria Heights and Surrounding Neighborhoods
- **Far Rockaway** - Change and Creativity Through COVID-19
- **Glen Oaks** - Home Away From Home: South Asians in Eastern Queens
- **Hunters Point** - Changing Landscape of Hunters Point / Environmentalism and Industrialization in Hunters Point and Long Island City
- **Jackson Heights** - COVID-19: Diverse Experiences From a Diverse Community
- **Kew Gardens Hills** - Memoir Writing: Reflecting Our Experiences During a Pandemic
- **Langston Hughes** - A History of the Langston Hughes Community Library and Cultural Center
- **Ridgewood** - Artists of Ridgewood
- **Windsor Park** - Family-Owned Businesses in Windsor Park and Oakland Gardens
- **Woodhaven** - Collecting Memories of the Historic Bar and Restaurant, Neir's Tavern

Check our [Facebook page](#) in the coming weeks for announcements of event dates and details!

Jamaica Flux Artist Leads "Time Capsule" Workshops With Queens Memory



In November and December, Queens Memory will offer a three-part workshop series with Sherese Francis of the public art project [Jamaica Flux](#). Sherese is a Queens-based, Afro-Caribbean-American (Barbados and Dominica) poet, editor, interdisciplinary artist, workshop facilitator, and literary curator of the mobile library project, J. Expressions. She has published work in many publications, including Furious Flower, Obsidian Lit, Rootwork Journal, Harlequin Creature, Spoken Black Girl and The Operating System. Additionally, she has published two chapbooks, Lucy's Bone Scrolls and Variations on Settling Seed/ling, and has another on the way: Recycling a Why That Rules Over My Sacred Sight. Her work has also been featured in exhibitions from The Lit Exhibit, NY Live Arts, Queens Public Library and Baxter St Camera Club.

Sherese recently spoke with us about the workshops and what participants can expect to experience.

Q: What inspired these workshops?

Currently, I am working on a project for Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning's Jamaica Flux called Art//Fact, in which I am creating time capsule poetry and image collages inspired by various spaces in Southeast Queens and their histories. I wanted to create a series of workshops to include the community in the project and have members of the community explore their own memories and personal histories of these spaces. These workshops are meant to be a meditative exercise in paying closer attention to the spaces in which we live, especially as development and gentrification change the landscape of Southeast Queens' neighborhoods.

Q: What will participants get to explore in the three different sessions?

The three workshops will be 1) an ekphrastic poetry workshop looking at images of these Southeast Queens spaces and using them to recall past and future memories, 2) an erasure poetry workshop taking historical documents about these spaces and crafting personal poetic stories with them, and 3) learning about collage and assemblage in order to create their own time capsules for remembering spaces in the community. Pieces created in these workshops have the potential to be included in the Jamaica Flux exhibition of my project.

See the Upcoming Virtual Events box below for details on the Time Capsule workshops and how to register for them!

Did you catch our 10th Anniversary celebration? See that and the rest of our growing roster of video compilations, interviews and podcast episodes on [our Aviary page!](#)



Meet Our New Staff Members

Luke Henke is working with Queens Memory this year as a Queens Public Library/Citi Center for Culture Fellow. Originally from Warner Robins, Georgia, Luke earned a BA in History from Georgia Southern University in Savannah and afterwards moved to New York City for graduate school. He is currently pursuing a dual MA in Public History and MS in Library and Information Science at St. John's University. Luke intends to graduate in Fall 2021 and work as an archivist.



Ryan McDonnell has also joined us as a Queens Public Library/Citi Center for Culture Fellow this year. He is from Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and completed his undergraduate program at Temple University's Japan campus. He is also in the dual MA/MS degree program at St. John's and is planning a career in archives administration. Ryan chose to major in Public History because "I am deeply interested in the relationships between people, places and things. Such relationships are significant because they have the potential to gift our lives with greater contextual meaning." In his free time, Ryan enjoys playing the drums, reading fiction novels, and eating his way through Queens!



Upcoming Virtual Events

November 7 – We at Queens Memory are proud to host the 12th Annual Langston Hughes Literary Arts Festival: [Understand the Past, Know the Present](#), in conjunction with the Black Heritage Reference Center at the Langston Hughes Community Library and Cultural Center. This year's festival features panels with authors David Mills, Candacy Taylor and Maisy Card as well as producer/director Michael Green. The program will be broadcast on the [Queens Memory Facebook page](#). (12 - 4 pm EST)

November 17 – Join us for [Power and Oppression in the Archive: Building a Diverse Historical Record](#). The program will focus on two CUNY initiatives that aim to diversify and expand the archival record through oral history: the SEEK History Project at Queens College and Raising Ourselves Up at Bronx Community College. This is the final panel in our three-part series, "How Can We Do Better? Creating a More Just and Inclusive Future," sponsored by the Queens Memory COVID-19 Project of Queens College and Queens Public Library, Percy Ellis Sutton SEEK Program, Queens College Black Latinx Faculty Staff Association, and the Center for Ethnic, Racial, and Religious Understanding. The program will be broadcast on the [Queens Memory Facebook page](#). (4 - 5:30 pm EST)

We are also sponsoring a three-part workshop series with Queens artist and poet Sherese Francis called **Memory as Time Capsules** (see article above). Participants are invited to attend one, two or all three workshops:

November 17 – In this workshop, participants will learn about ekphrastic poetry as a way to engage differently with and meditate on what's important about the spaces in which we live. Then, they will create their own poetic pieces inspired by image-based prompts for various Southeast Queens spaces to access past and future memories of these spaces. Please [register](#) in advance for this Webex event. (7 - 8:30 pm EST)

December 1 – Personal stories are the building blocks of a rich and inclusive historical record of our communities. No one can tell your story like you can! In this workshop, participants will learn to craft their own poetic stories from excerpts of historical documents and research about various Southeast Queens spaces using the practices of found and erasure poetry. Please [register](#) in advance for this Webex event. (7 - 8:30 pm EST)

December 15 – In this workshop, participants will learn about collage and assemblage as meditative extensions of our memories, a kind of external hard drive for our minds. They will look at the works of a few collage and assemblage artists and how their works function in this way. Then, they will develop plans to create their own poetry collage memory altars for their neighborhoods. Please [register](#) in advance for this Webex event. (7 - 8:30 pm EST)

Queens Memory in the Professional Community

QM staff are frequently invited to discuss our innovative programs with our colleagues in the library and archives communities. Recently, as part of New York Archives Week (October 22 - November 3), Queens Memory Community Coordinator **Meral Agish** and Queens Library librarian **Jo-Ann Wong** presented "[Hashtagging Our Stories: Archiving with Social Media in the Queens Memory COVID-19 Project](#)" as part of a panel on creative uses of technology in archiving. Also during Archives Week, QM Outreach Coordinator **Lori Wallach** participated in a panel discussion, "[Documenting the Pandemic Experience in NYC.](#)" sponsored by the Manhattan Borough President's Office.

In addition, Queens Memory Director **Natalie Milbrodt** spoke during the panel discussion "Metadata for the Masses: Introducing the OHA Metadata Task Force's Element List & Online Tool" at the [Oral History Association's Annual Meeting](#) (October 19-24).