Day trip Newark

STARTS WEDNESDAY

The Newark Museum celebrates its 100th birthday with a 100-hour party. Head west, young man. By Grace Smith

In E.L. Konigsburg's From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler, protagonists Claudia and Jamie run away from home to live in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. They bathe in the Fountain of the Muses, sleep in an antique bed and hide their belongings in a sarcophagus. But if you really wanted to see what the Temple of Dendur looks like at two in the morning, you'd have to get a job as a night watchman. Not so in Newark, New Jersey—where, starting Wednesday 22, the Newark Museum will commemorate its 100th birthday with a 100-Hour Centennial Celebration Marathon, featuring afternoon teas, laser light shows and other mayhem. Highlights include the kickoff signing of a gigantic birthday card (Wednesday 22 at 10am); a curator-led tour of the new "100 Amazing Objects" exhibit (Wednesday 22 at noon); a flashlight exploration through the darkened Ballantine House wing, currently featuring an insect-heavy installation by Jennifer Angus (April 23, 25 at 12:30am); actors turning portraits in the museum's collection into a live-action painting (April 25 at 1am); and Dr. K's Motown Reunion dance party/concert (April 26 at 3 and 5pm). Attendees can come and go as they please, so check out these other hangouts while rocking the Jerz.

WHERE TO DOWN SOME GRUB

When those fruit-filled still life sets your stomach a-growlin', head to the Ironbound district: Ferry Street is packed with Brazilian, Portuguese, Spanish and Mexican restaurants. Whet your palate with spicy chorizo ($13) and a pitcher of sangria ($22.60) at tapas and wine bar Mompoua (77 Ferry St at Prospect St, 973-578-8114), or chow down on skewers of Brazilian rodizio ($20.95) at Iberia Peninsula (65–69 Ferry St between Prospect and Union Sts, 973-344-5611). For less pomp and better value, sample the mole poblano ($8) at the cozy Mi Pequeño Mexico (81 Ferry St between Congress and Prospect Sts, 973-344-7600). Should your museum visit last until dawn, fortify yourself with a diner breakfast from Central Restaurant (30 Central Ave between Halsey and Broad Sts, 973-623-8137); $6.40 buys you no-frills pancakes or French toast, with eggs, turkey or beef sausage, and your choice of coffee or tea.

WHERE TO HANG OUT AND SHOP

Locals refer to the gallery-and-café-saturated Halsey Street as Newark's East Village; if there was ever a place for Jersey scenesters, this is it. Grab a latte at The Coffee Cave (45 Halsey St between Bleecker and New Sts; 973-368-4554, thecoffeecafe.com), and be sure to return for its Motown-themed Centennial after-party on April 26 at 6pm. Or swing by the space-sharing Newark Art Supply and Framing (61 Halsey St at New St; 973-230-2828, newarkartsupply.com) and Art Kitchen (973-242-2278, newarkartkitchen.com), where you can load up on red velvet cupcakes, art supplies and custom frames—the latter two at a 10 to 20 percent Centennial discount, Wednesday 22 through April 25. If you want to test your own talents behind the easel, we suggest springing for a Golden acrylic paint set.

WHERE TO SEE MORE ART

The three-floor, 30,000-square-foot Rupert Ravens Contemporary (85 Market St between University Ave and Washington St, 973-353-0660) is the largest commercial art space under one roof in North America. The gallery is packed with neon eye candy, but we're especially loving AK Airways' 22-by-22 inflatable bracelet sparkling with LEDs, on display as part of the "Next Post-18 Solo Projects" exhibition (through May 2). Down the street is Gallery Aferro (73 Market St between University Ave and Washington St, 646-220-3772; don't miss Andrew Demijian and Zachary Seldess's Nitrogen Cycles, sound installation, a symphony composed from the movements of yellow tang and Red Sea fuscus triggerfish (through May 16). End your art walk with "Metro 26 Show," an exhibition of works by metro area artists at City Without Walls (6 Crawford St between Halsey and Washington Sts, 973-622-1188), the city's longest-running nonprofit alternative art space. Executive director Ben Goldman says the gallery's mission is "an exercise in perpetual reinvention." Leave it to Newark to put Madonna's personal philosophy into practice.

HOW TO GET THERE

Catch the PATH to Newark Penn Station at 33rd St, 23rd St, 14th St, 9th St, Christopher St (changing at Journal Square) or the WTC. Trains run every 15 to 30 minutes. Tickets are $1.75 each way (panyrail.gov).

Stay up for four days! 100-Hour Centennial Celebration Marathon: The Newark Museum, 49 Washington St between Central Ave and James St (973-596-6550, newarkmuseum.com). Wed 22—April 26, 24 hours starting Wed 22 at 10:30am; free.