Newark's 13th annual Open Doors studio tour celebrates arts scene

By Daniel Blechoff
for The Star-Ledger

The Newark Arts Council kicks off the 13th annual Open Doors celebration of art in the city, Newark's biggest acknowledgement to date of its burgeoning downtown art scene, on Thursday — with the festivities continuing right through the weekend. Open Doors this year begins at 6 p.m. with a collaborative party co-hosted by the Gateway Project at 2 Gateway Center for its six-week exhibition, "Prologue-Epilogue."

"Prologue-Epilogue" was co-curated by Rebecca Jampol of Solo's Project House and Jasmine Wahl of the Project for Empty Space. It occupies both the Gateway 2 gallery space and the rest of the public concourse in the building, where sculpture and installation art have been placed. Thursday's three-hour party will frame the event as a narrative of Newark's arts.

But the core of every Open Doors celebration is the gallery crawl, which this year is from 6 to 9 p.m. Friday. The larger celebration will continue through Oct. 18. More than 50 separate events are planned, including at least one at every major gallery or arts institution in the city, ranging from Gallery Aferro and Aljira, A Center for Contemporary Art, to the Prospect Street Fire Station and the Paul Robeson Gallery at Rutgers University Newark.

Among the highlights this year are a number of unusual venues and events:

- From 7-11 p.m. Saturday there will be a tribute to Maya Angelou, the poet, collective metadata, and Amiri Baraka, father of Newark's new mayor, Ras Baraka, called "Brick City Speaks: Open Doors Edition." The event at 1237 Halsey St. will feature 11 poets reading their own work or selected pieces by the honorees.

- "Crafting a Narrative: Successful Grant Writing for Artists," from 4-6 p.m. October 15 in 2 Gateway Center features a program officer from ArtsWire, New York Fine Arts' Fiscal Sponsorship program, who will help artists and art groups learn how to obtain grants and define a project's public benefit. Space will be limited (register at craftyournarrative.eventbrite.com) but the event is free.

- Open Doors will conclude with "Sanctuary," a closing party that is a collaboration between Yendor Productions, Rutgers Queen Newark, and the LGBT community in the city that attempts to document the city's club scene, on Oct. 18. From 3-9 p.m. a special film screening, panel discussion and day party with a live DJ will fill the 7th floor of 765 Broad St.

For more events and details about Friday's gallery crawl, visit www.newarkarts.org/opendoors-2014.