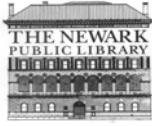


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P R E S S R E L E A S E

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For Immediate Release

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**Newark Public Library Celebrates Latina Artists, Writers and Playwrights**

The Newark Public Library will showcase the contributions of contemporary Latina writers, filmmakers and artists as part of its 2010 Hispanic Heritage Celebration. An exhibit, *Latina Voices and Visions*, featuring artwork from selected local Latina artists, prints, posters and artists' books from the Library's Special Collections, photographs and other materials will be on display from September 15 through December 31.

An opening program is scheduled for Wednesday, September 15 at 6 p.m. in the Main Library's Centennial Hall. Bestselling author Esmeralda Santiago will be the keynote speaker. There will be musical performances and previews of upcoming programs. The Newark Library partners once again with the Puerto Rican Statewide Parade of New Jersey to honor the finalists of their annual youth essay contest –this year focusing on Latina pioneers in government, business, law, politics, literature and arts. The three student winners will receive their awards during the ceremony.

Best known for her first novel *América's Dream*, and her memoirs *When I was Puerto Rican* and *Almost a Woman*, Santiago is an accomplished writer of documentary and educational films, memoirs, novels, an illustrated children's book, magazine and newspaper articles and editorial essays. She adapted her second memoir, *Almost a Woman*, into a film for PBS Masterpiece Theatre, which won critical acclaim and a George Foster Peabody Award for excellence in broadcasting.

This year's salute to Hispanic Heritage is co-sponsored by the Support Network of the NJ Hispanic Research and Information Center at the Newark Public Library and Latinas United for Political Empowerment (LUPE)

The diversity of the Latino community in America and New Jersey is reflected in the broad range of artistic fields in which so many Latinas have distinguished themselves," said Library Director Wilma Grey. "From such popular singers as Celia Cruz to Jennifer Lopez, actresses from Rita Moreno to Zoe Saldana, writers such as Isabel Allende and Sandra Cisneros and artists such as Frida Kahlo and grammy award nominated classical conductor Maria Guinard; Latinas have distinguished themselves in every aspect of art, music and literature," she noted.

The exhibit, curated by Ingrid Betancourt, Project Director of the NJ Hispanic Research and Information Center / Newark Public Library, will showcase the work of Latina artists in diverse art forms and explore how Latinas are represented in American contemporary culture. Related programs throughout the four-month celebration will include film screenings and discussions with Latina filmmakers, author panels, theatrical performances and art workshops for children and families.

During this year's Hispanic Heritage Celebration the Library is also launching a monthly series of free, educational workshops on mental health in Spanish, presented in partnership with NAMI NJ en Español (NAMI-National Alliance on Mental Illness). The first workshop in the series will take place in September and the series will continue through June 2011.

Other programs include:

- Saturday, September 18: Mental Health and the Latino Community: Educational Workshop Series. A discussion on mental health disorders will take place at 3 p.m. in Sala Hispanoamericana.
- Saturday, September 25: Latina Filmmaker Series: *New Muslim Cool*, a documentary directed by Jennifer Maytorena Taylor.
- Saturday, October 2: Latina Filmmaker Series: Narrative and Documentary Shorts Program, a selection of short films by Latina filmmakers. The films will be shown at 2 p.m. in the 4<sup>th</sup> floor auditorium.
- Wednesday, October 13: Mental Health and the Latino Community: Educational Workshop Series. A discussion about depression will take place at 6 p.m. in Sala Hispanoamericana.
- Saturday, October 16: *Latinas Out Loud: Epistles*, a show featuring performers who will read aloud letters that explore personal, social or political issues. The performance will take place at 2 p.m. at Centennial Hall.
- Saturday, November 6: *Coloring Outside of the Identity Lines: Upside & Downside of Being a "Latina" Author*. Women writers, editors and playwrights will debate the pitfalls of being known as a "Latina author." The author panel begins at 2 p.m. in Centennial Hall.

*Latina Voices and Visions* and its related programs are made possible in part by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts and administered by the Essex County Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs.

Visitors to the *Latina Voices and Visions* programs will have an opportunity to view an exhibition in the Library's 4<sup>th</sup> floor gallery, **The Mission: Gilberto Concepción de Gracia and His New York Years, 1936-1939**, which has been extended until October 31. The exhibit is presented in partnership with The Center for Puerto Rican Studies at Hunter College, CUNY. Dr. Gilberto Concepción de Gracia (1909-1968) was a lawyer, journalist, author, politician and founder of the Puerto Rican Independence Party. Through photographs, personal correspondence and other historical documents, this exhibit illustrates his life during the years he spent in New York City defending Nationalist Party President Pedro Albizu Campos, and other nationalists accused of sedition, against the United States government in Puerto Rico.

All programs are free and open to the public. The Main Library is located at 5 Washington Street in Newark. For more information, please call (973) 733-7772 or email [ibetancourt@npl.org](mailto:ibetancourt@npl.org).