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Seniors Combine Memory With Movement to Create “Moving Stories” at Manny Cantor

By **Traven Rice** | May 11, 2015 | 6 | 0



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Moving Stories, an interactive project for senior citizens, brings some authentic flair to the idea of neighborhood walking tours. Created by local artist and resident, **Laura Nova**, it features personal, location-based story telling from longtime residents while walking through the neighborhood.

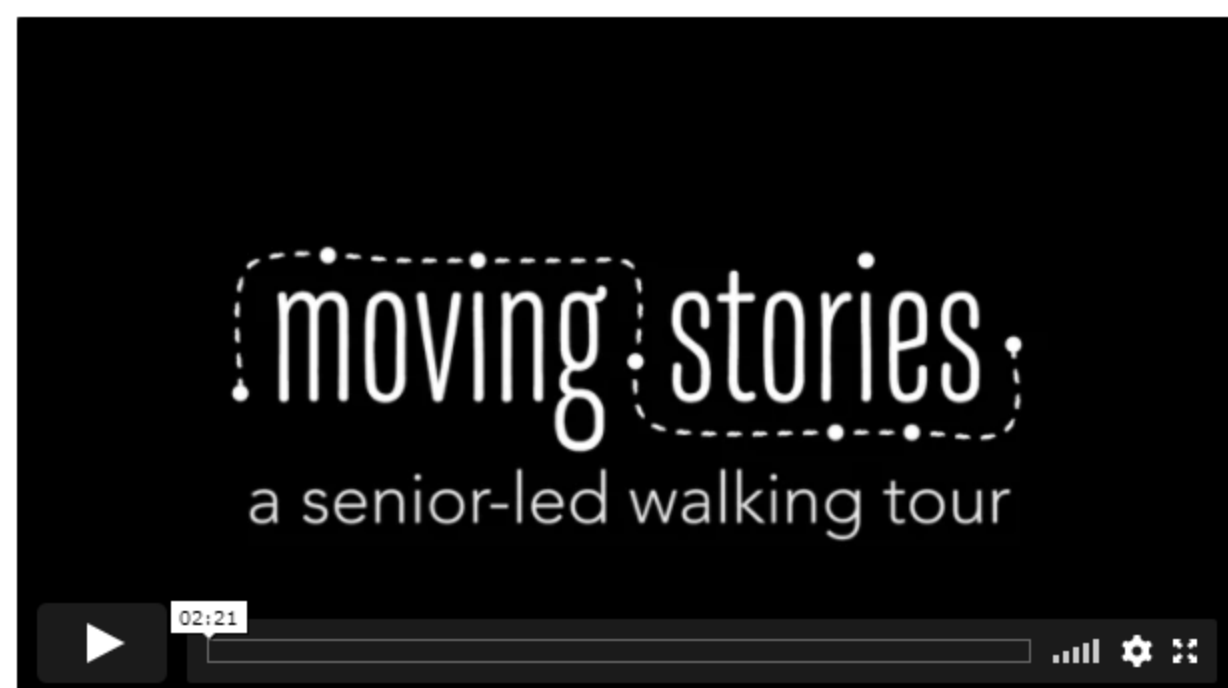
Nova, a long distance runner, came up with the idea after reading studies that connected movement with memory. She became intrigued by the power of movement to draw out people's stories, so she started a weekly walking group for seniors through a collaboration with the Weinberg Center for Balanced Living at the **Manny Cantor Center**. They meet on Mondays and do a big "walk and talk." They also study different types of movement and participate in storytelling workshops given by the popular storytelling series, **The Moth**, in order to learn how to develop their own stories.

"They were excited to be able to have their voices heard," Nova told me, and besides, "wouldn't you want your tour guide to be someone who's lived here their whole life? These seniors are clearly very connected to the neighborhood."

The project is aimed at preserving personal identity, community and creating connections. Some of the stories that have already emerged include a "laundered synagogue" on Madison Street, a first kiss at Seward Park Library, biking hands free on the East River Path and adventures at the Loew's movie theater on Canal. Nova is creating a series of short films as the stories develop.

How do they feel about watching their neighborhood go through so much recent development? "They are okay with the changes they've seen," Nova says, "they are very sweet about it, they all tell me, 'We changed the neighborhood when we moved here and now new people are moving here and they're changing the neighborhood.'"

Here's a preview of the project:



Moving Stories is part of an annual **Older Adults Art Exhibition** in celebration of Older Americans Month and **LES History Month**. The exhibition features a ballet barre storytelling routine in the lobby of the Manny Cantor beginning May 13, 2015 – June 24, 2015.

There will be a performance celebrating their **art opening on Wednesday, May 13 at 2:00 p.m.** in the lobby of the Manny Cantor Center (197 East Broadway at Jefferson).

A series of scheduled walking tours led by selected seniors will be presented at the New Museum's **IDEAS CITY Festival** on May 30, 2015. And a film screening and final performance will take place on the Manny Cantor Center roof top on June 25 at 6pm.

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