

# Press Release



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# Newark Museum Greatly Enhances Its Visibility and Community Engagement

## *Initiative Will Reopen Historic Front Entrance After 20 Years on February 21*

NEWARK – With residential and commercial development booming in Newark, the Newark Museum is adding to the revitalization by reopening its Washington Street doors after two decades on February 21.

The project was timed to take advantage of the significant renewal efforts happening all around the city of Newark. In addition to the new double glass doors that will serve as the main entrance to the Museum, exterior enhancements include a public terrace that will be used for programs and events, and a new ramp that will make the Museum fully accessible. Within the Museum, reopening the main entrance will result in a transformation of the existing space, including state-of-the-art visitor amenities; a high-profile spotlight for and access to its renowned Arts of Global Africa collection; and a new special exhibition space of more than 5,000 square feet with wood floors, new ceilings and walls to accommodate major shows. A lift will be installed in the Engelhard Court, making it accessible to all visitors.

Preparations for the \$5.5 million project began in April 2017, with groundbreaking taking place on May 24, 2017. The project was conceptualized by the Museum's longtime collaborator Michael Graves Architectural and Design. Architect Michael Graves, who was personally involved with the Museum from his first meeting with director Sam Miller in 1967 and most recently designed the Horizon Plaza, died in 2015, just as the project was taking form.

The revitalization effort includes the newly renamed Louis Bamberger Entrance; the Alan Sagner Plaza; the Christine Chambers Gilfillan Welcome Center; The Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey Accessibility Entrance; and the Arts of Global Africa galleries, which opened on November 3, 2017. The new special exhibition space will welcome visitors on March 23, 2018 with *Rockies and the Alps: Bierstadt, Calame, and the Romance of the Mountains*.

“We see all around us how the neighborhood is changing quickly to accommodate its renewed development and growth. With this move, the Newark Museum is poised to reaffirm its role as both cultural and business anchor in the community,” said Interim Director Co-Director Deborah Kasindorf. “With the doors open, the Museum will project neighborhood vitality, stability and security.”

The Museum celebrated the centennial founding of its African Art collection in 2017, highlighted by the relocation and reinstallation of this collection to galleries on the first floor of the Museum’s main building, closest to the Washington Street entrance. One of the most comprehensive collections of African Art in the country, the Museum’s African Art Initiative provides for 1500 square feet of new permanent gallery space. Fully integrated into the museum’s Global collections, the new galleries feature a thematic, cross-cultural display of African art, both historical and contemporary.

In 1997, to ensure stable climate conditions for the safety of the centuries-old artworks in *Crowning Glory: Images of the Virgin in the Arts of Portugal* and other subsequent exhibitions, the Museum closed the main entrance from Washington Street.

In 2015, the Museum launched a plan to reopen the main entrance in order to reconnect with the rapidly growing sidewalk life on Washington Street from the growing populations from Rutgers and the new Hahne’s building as well as corporations such as Prudential and Audible. As a result, the Museum anticipates increased public engagement. The new plaza will connect the Museum to Washington Park and serve as a new public destination, attracting more visitors to the neighborhood with increased outdoor Museum programming.

“The Newark Museum is extremely grateful for the generous support of the MCJ Amelior Foundation, NEH, the Sagner Family Foundation, the Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey and PSEG,” said Kasindorf.

For further information, follow the Museum on Facebook at [facebook.com/newark.museum](https://facebook.com/newark.museum) or Twitter at [twitter.com/newarkmuseum](https://twitter.com/newarkmuseum); or by visiting [www.newarkmuseum.org](https://www.newarkmuseum.org).

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