Express Newark: A University–Community Collaboratory will open in 2017 in the iconic, former Hahne & Company department store. Conceived by Rutgers University – Newark arts faculty and staff in partnership with artists from the Newark community, Express Newark will be a “third space” for arts collaboration where people from the community and university meet on equal terms and co-create, experiment and innovate, engage in creative practice, foster democratic dialogue, and promote positive transformation.

Designed to support cross-unit, cross-sector, cross-institutional social practice, Express Newark will contribute to the local economy and provide diverse opportunities for individuals to experience and participate in the arts and generate publically engaged scholarship.

- Faculty and students will work with community artists and local schools and institutions to cultivate new talent.
- A design consortium partnering the university and community arts and cultural organizations will immerse students in a real-world consulting company that takes on the challenge of communicating about urgent issues facing metropolitan America.
- At community portrait studio, will invite people who live in, work in, or pass through Newark—including student and youth groups—to have complimentary portraits made and practice photography while learning about Newark’s historic role in American portraiture.
- A community media center will leverage expertise on and off campus to help Newarkers of all generations develop tools to tell stories in multimedia that will weave the counter-narrative of this diverse community, told by, rather than merely about, its members.
- Spaces designed for exhibitions and performances will increase the visibility of artists and provide a new stage to elevate Newark’s grand legacy in Jazz.
- Express Newark will become a home for Writers @ Newark, a series of readings and other spoken-word programs mounted by Rutgers University – Newark’s renowned MFA Program in Creative Writing that engages the community, including local high school students.
- Express Newark will be a venue showcasing a multidisciplinary research project—Newest Americans—documenting the stories of the state’s newest Americans, particularly Rutgers University – Newark’s own students, renowned as one of the nation’s most ethnically, racially, and religiously diverse student bodies.

Express Newark will become a vital element in Newark’s burgeoning Arts District, linking the Newark Museum, the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, newly renovated Military Park, WBGO, Halsey Street studio art spaces, the great hall at 15 Washington Street, and the Newark Public Library. It directly addresses one of the chief goals of Rutgers University – Newark’s strategic plan: to create third spaces in which to engage collaboratively with community partners as a way of further fulfilling our proud tradition of anchor institution investment in the city of Newark.

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1Third spaces are “where established and often unequal relationships of power and expertise can be shifted to acknowledge what each member of the partnership brings to the table.” For a discussion and examples of third spaces, see Nancy Cantor, Peter Englot and Marilyn Higgins, “Making the Work of Anchor Institutions Stick: Building Coalitions and Collective Expertise,” Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement, Volume 17, Number 3, p. 17 (2013).