

# Gallery Aferro announces plans for major expansion in downtown Newark



Artist Jerry Gant sits in front of his exhibit "Unusual Suspects: An Artistic Meditation of the Black Male Image in America" at Gallery Aferro. (Courtesy of Gallery Aferro)



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Gallery Aferro will more than quadruple in size as part of an expansion that's expected to bring dozens of artists to downtown Newark.

The gallery will take over three buildings next to its current location at 73 Market St., increasing in size from 20,000 square feet to about 90,000 square feet. The bigger facility will allow the gallery to support up to 70 artists-in-residence, in comparison to the 12 it has now. The new space will also have classrooms, a multipurpose area for community programs and rooms designed to showcase visual arts, cinema and music.



Gallery director Emma Wilcox said Aferro had begun to reach capacity at its current location during the last two years. The gallery will be able to keep its current location when it expands, Wilcox said, which is vital to making its presence felt in the city.

"We're at a really crucial junction in Newark right now," Wilcox said. "I think it's pretty obvious that we need to keep the arts in focus going forward."

The buildings the gallery will take over are currently owned by RBH Group, a real estate company that specializes in urban redevelopment. RBH Group, which owns the gallery's current building, will continue to own the buildings, Wilcox said.

Gallery Aferro is in the process of acquiring permits to start construction. The new area will open in phases, Wilcox said, with artists-in-residence among the first to move in. The gallery plans to complete the renovations and have a "truly epic launch" in 2015, she added.

To raise money for the expansion, the gallery will hold its sixth annual benefit art auction and party on June 14. The night will include an auction, live jazz, performance art, cocktails and prizes. After the benefit there will be an afterparty at 77 Market St., one of the buildings the gallery will move into. (For information, visit [aferro.org](http://aferro.org).)

The Printmaking Center of New Jersey will partner with Gallery Aferro as part of the expansion. The center will occupy two floors of the new space, where it will open a printmaking facility and gallery. It will also offer classes, artist residencies and 24-hour access to artists who want to use the facility.

This influx of artists will provide opportunities for mentorships and partnerships among artists as well as strengthen the arts community in Newark, Wilcox said.

"There's something that happens with a critical mass of artists," she said. "It becomes a really powerful resource for the public."