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[Rutgers University-Camden](https://www.rutgers.edu/camden)

Rutgers University-Camden Exhibit Will Highlight Local Students and Camden-Based Artists

Advised by world-renowned artist Mickalene Thomas, *Reframing the Narrative* will showcase the city's cultural wealth.

Camden, NJ – May 12, 2025: Rutgers University-Camden, as part of its Year of the Arts celebration, will host *Reframing the Narrative*, an exhibition of works by students and Camden-based artists. The exhibition is advised by world-renowned artist and Camden native Mickalene Thomas.

On display from May 16 to June 27 at the Campus Gallery, the show will feature works intended to promote a more inclusive and accurate representation of Black artists in Camden. Diverse in form and content, the exhibition will serve as a platform to amplify artistic expression and celebrate the diversity and talent of Camden's creative community.

"Each work on view testifies not only to personal vision but to a collective assertion: Camden is not a blank slate nor a symbol of urban despair, but a site of cultural wealth, intergenerational resiliance, and aesthetic innovation," said Lavett Ballard, a local artist and alumna of Rutgers-Camden.

"At the heart of *Reframing the Narrative* is Mickalene Thomas' return to her roots," said Ballard. "Her presence as an advisor to this exhibition is deeply symbolic: she stands not only as a globally celebrated artist but as a hometown visionary helping to nurture the next generation of cultural producers."

Born in Camden in 1971, Thomas explores identity, race, and gender and has garnered international acclaim. Recently recognized as one of *Time's* 100 Most Influential People of 2025, Thomas will serve as the keynote speaker for the Rutgers University-Camden and Graduate School commencement on Tuesday, May 20, at Freedom Mortgage Pavilion, where she will also receive an honorary doctorate of fine arts.

Throughout 2025, Year of the Arts will elevate creative expression on the Rutgers-Camden campus and throughout South Jersey, providing a platform for homegrown talent and bringing internationally known artists to the region. Additional information and a complete schedule of events can be found on the [Year of the Arts website](#).

LINK TO PHOTOS

About Rutgers University–Camden

Rutgers University–Camden is a hub of academic excellence and innovation, consistently ranked among the nation’s top public colleges and universities. Proudly recognized as one of the safest campuses in the region, the university is located in the “eds and meds” district of Camden, NJ—a city known for its cultural and historic attractions, vibrant arts community, renowned healthcare institutions, and headquarters of internationally recognized corporations. The campus offers a welcoming and engaging learning environment for undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students. Just minutes from Center City Philadelphia—home to a thriving business district and a dynamic cultural scene—the campus also benefits from an array of transportation options for easy access in and around the city.

Home to approximately 6,000 students and more than 1,500 faculty and staff, Rutgers–Camden fosters a close-knit academic community where students enjoy the resources of a world-class research institution. Motivated scholars collaborate with world-renowned faculty, creating an environment defined by discovery and support.

As one of four chancellor-led units in the Rutgers University system, Rutgers–Camden is celebrated as a national model for civically engaged urban universities, earning the prestigious Community Engagement status from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. With its classification as an R2 research university, the campus contributes groundbreaking scholarship and creative output on a global scale.

Ranked among *Washington Monthly’s* “Best Bang for the Buck” universities, Rutgers University–Camden offers an exceptional environment for intellectual growth, community engagement, and personal achievement, empowering students to reach their highest potential.