

The details:

-The launch of a new Artist in Residence Program and a preview of Wendy Mike's art installation before it goes to its final home at St. Francis Hospital Interquest

-P.E.A.R. Gallery (Packaging Express Artist in Residence Program)

-Friday, April 14th, 5-7 pm

-Packaging Express, 618 W. Garden of the Gods Road

Mark your calendar for a very special event on Friday, April 14th, from 5-7 pm— it's an art opening at a box factory! You'll have the chance to view Wendy Mike's latest beautiful art installation before it goes to its final home at St. Francis Hospital Interquest. This reception will be held at Packaging Express, one of the last independent custom corrugated box manufacturers in Colorado, where Wendy has been creating this piece. The event also serves as the kickoff for a new artist in residence program, P.E.A.R., devised by Packaging Express owner Matt Davis and his wife Maggie.

The intent of the program is to provide a space for an artist to work for free on a project that requires more space than they would normally have access to, and one with a finite deadline of 4-8 months. Interested artists will submit an initial form to determine their eligibility. Each residency will then end with a closing reception so that the public may honor the artist and experience their work.

Life long artist Wendy Mike is the first to enjoy the Packaging Express artist in residence program. In 2022, she was commissioned by Nancy Noyes Art Design for Centura's new orthopedic hospital, St. Francis Interquest (SFI), to create a unique piece of art for the fourth floor lobby/waiting room of their surgical suites. The piece, which is comprised of five life sized figures in various rock climbing postures, is made of packing tape and takes up roughly 18.5 X 14 feet. Mike's downtown art studio wasn't nearly big enough to execute the work, and so a collaboration was born. The studio at Packaging Express became the perfect landing place for her to stage and create this large-scale project. The piece will move to its permanent home at the hospital at the beginning of May.

More about Packaging Express:

Founded in 1998, Packaging Express, Inc. is a family-owned business and one of the last independent custom corrugated box companies in Colorado. Packaging Express, Inc. designs, manufactures, prints and delivers custom corrugated boxes and point of purchase displays to accommodate products perfectly at competitive prices. Just this past fall, Packaging Express has added the state of the art EMBA 175 QS Ultima box making machine to its facility in Colorado Springs. Made in Sweden, the EMBA 175 combines outstanding productivity, print quality, sustainability and is "the fastest box machine in Colorado, making 500 boxes a minute." Maggie and Matt share a passion for the arts and are excited to launch this program to grow and nurture the artists in our community.

More about Wendy Mike:

A life-long artist, Wendy also studied and worked as a dancer, vocalist, actor and writer. Now yoga has replaced dance, she still sings in choirs and as a soloist, and she writes grant proposals as the president of the board of a non-profit vocal arts choir. While all of these disciplines inform everything she does, visual art has emerged as her field, the place that commands the majority of her time and energy.

Wendy received her BFA degree in studio art Summa Cum Laude from Hunter College, City University of New York, and spent several years studying at the Art Students League in NYC. Bringing all of this to Colorado, she founded FutureSelf: Youth Discovering Success Through Art, serving youth at-risk with transformative arts-based workshops. She was the organization's executive director for eight years. While there, she developed creativity training for adults, eventually leaving the non-profit to lead such programs for organizations nationwide, which she enjoys doing to this day.

After years of providing opportunities for others to make art, Wendy came back to her own art-making practice full time in 2014. Since then she has exhibited her work regularly, creating award-winning monolithic installations and intimate gallery shows featuring figurative sculpture made with unconventional materials.

Wendy believes that art gets us in touch with ourselves and others, and her purpose is to create and share work that inspires the human spirit, awakening humanity to the rapture of being alive.

Maggie and Matt would also like to give a special thanks to Lauren Ciborowski of The Modbo for helping launch this program.