



# Penland School of Craft in Penland, NC, Features Works by Puerto Rican Artists

This year’s first exhibition at the Penland Gallery presents work by four Puerto Rican artists working in a variety of media. The exhibition was curated by Mitchell County resident Cristina Córdova, whose work is included. The exhibition will be on view through June 7, 2025.

The show is titled *El Puente*, which means “the bridge.” This title refers to a metaphorical bridge between Puerto Rico and the US mainland and the idea that artists form part of that bridge through what Córdova calls “a continuous loop of communal encounters and mutual influence.” Córdova’s work is joined by the work of ceramic sculptor Jaime Suárez and mixed media sculptors Ada del Pilar Ortiz and Luis Gabriel Sanabria. These artists all make work rooted in Puerto Rico but touched by their experiences on the mainland

Jaime Suárez’s work in this exhibition is a group of pieces from a series called *Lost Cities*. These are heavily textured ceramic panels that are reminiscent of archeological digs seen from above. Ada del Pilar Ortiz has created several pieces by casting - in various materials - architectural elements from abandoned homes in Puerto Rico. These, she says, mirror the experience of many Puerto Ricans whose communities have been displaced by forces beyond their control.

Luis Gabriel Sanabria is represented by three large figures based on Puerto Rican carnival characters. In this installation they have been reimagined as warriors, and they have been costumed using shells and Caribbean craft materials, including handmade rope, pit-fired ceramics, and traditional textiles. Cristina Córdova is showing several large, low-relief wall sculptures that include human forms and environmental elements. Córdova says these pieces explore reams of human experience “where mind seeks myth.”

Also at the Penland Gallery is a small show of work by Japanese-American potters Hitomi Shibata and Takuro Shibata. These artists make functional pottery and sculptural vessels using clay and glaze materials harvested near their home in Seagrove, NC. All of their work is fired in a wood-burning kiln.

The Penland Gallery includes a sales



Cristina Córdova, “Madre”, ceramic, 88 x 66 x 4 inches

gallery with work in many media by artists associated with Penland School of Craft and a room dedicated to the school’s history and programs. It’s the first building on your right as you enter the Penland School campus, which is located on Conley Ridge Road just off Penland Road in Mitchell County, NC.

*El Puente* is funded in part by a grant from South Arts in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts and the North Carolina Arts Council.

Penland School of Craft is a national center for craft education dedicated to the creative life. Located in Western North Carolina, Penland offers workshops in books and paper, clay, drawing and painting, glass, iron, metals, printmaking and letterpress, photography, textiles, and wood. The school also provides artists’ residencies, an outreach program, and a gallery and visitors center. Penland is a nonprofit, tax-exempt institution that receives support from the North Carolina Arts Council, a division of the Department of Natural & Cultural Resource.

For further information check our NC Institutional Gallery listings, call the School at 828/765-6211 or visit ([penland.org/gallery](http://penland.org/gallery)).

# Upstairs Artspace in Tryon, NC, Features Works by Margaret Curtis

The Upstairs Artspace in Tryon, NC, will present *This Is How It Happened*, featuring works by Margaret Curtis, on view from May 18 through June 27, 2025. A reception will be held on May 18, at 2pm.

This is a solo exhibition by admired feminist artist Margaret Curtis. With a title intentionally left open, suggestive, and enigmatic, “This Is How It Happened” invites viewers to draw their own conclusions, sparking curiosity and deeper engagement with the work. This exhibition will feature seven oil paintings, 12 drawings, and a series of six to eight monoprints, several of which were recently shown at the Utah Museum of Contemporary Art.

Margaret Curtis (b.1965, Bermuda) is known for her layered, narrative paintings that examine power structures at both personal and societal levels through a feminist lens. Her work also addresses who has the power to make real change to solve existential societal challenges, and who is excluded from and by those decisions.

A Joan Mitchell Foundation Fellow (2021–2026) and finalist for the Catherine Doctorow Prize for Contemporary Paint-



Work by Margaret Curtis

ing, Curtis’ work continues to resonate across generations. She first gained widespread attention in Marcia Tucker’s landmark 1994 exhibition *Bad Girls* at the New Museum in New York. Since then, Curtis has exhibited at The Brooklyn Museum, The Andy Warhol Museum, and The Mint Museum, among others. Her work is featured in permanent collections nationwide.

A Tryon resident, Curtis lives and works between North Carolina and New Mexico, and is represented by Tracey Morgan Gallery, Asheville, NC.

For further information check our NC Institutional Gallery listings, call 828/859-2828 or visit ([upstairsartspace.org](http://upstairsartspace.org)).

# The River Arts District in Asheville, NC, Will Present RAD Renaissance: A Celebration of Art, Resilience & Renewal - May 10, 2025

The River Arts District (RAD) in Asheville, NC, is rising. On May 10, 2025, from 10am-5pm, Asheville’s iconic arts district will host RAD Renaissance, a powerful celebration of art, resilience, and renewal. As spring breathes new life into the city, this event will showcase the strength of the RAD community and mark a major milestone in its ongoing recovery from Hurricane Helene’s historic flooding.

More than just an art festival, RAD Renaissance is a call to action - inviting locals and visitors alike to support the artists, galleries, and studios that define this creative district.

Throughout the Upper RAD (Roberts Street, Artful Way, Clingman Avenue, and



Depot Street), attendees will experience: Opportunities to meet and support working artists; Live painting, artist demonstrations, and interactive art classes; Music and storytelling performances across multiple locations; Pop-up food trucks + local restaurants, cafés, breweries, and bars; and Community flower stations to help restore the beauty of the RAD.

This event also marks the debut of the

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