

Alma Allen

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Not Yet Titled, 2014

Claro walnut

Allen often used Claro walnut as a medium for his wood sculpture because its root system and grain are irregular, suggesting unusual forms like this pomegranate shape.

Español:

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Alma Allen

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Not Yet Titled, 2018

Oaxacan green Cantera stone

Courtesy of the artist and Blum & Poe,
Los Angeles/New York/Tokyo

Cantera stone is a volcanic rock that is quarried exclusively in various regions of Mexico and Central America. Its color, texture, and relative softness make it an ideal stone for carving.

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Mr. Peanut, 1973–76

Redwood and Bishop pine

Courtesy of the J.B. Blunk Collection and Reform Gallery, Los Angeles

Bishop pine, also called prickly cone pine, is a coniferous tree with a very restricted range and is found mostly in California in areas near the coast. Blunk's house is located in an area of Inverness known as the Bishop Pine Preserve.

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Dreamlock, 1982

Redwood

Courtesy of the J.B. Blunk Collection and
Blum & Poe, New York/Los Angeles/Tokyo

Blunk made this work, which shows how he blurred the line between sculpture and furniture, from two pieces of redwood, with a small wood block to lock them together.

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Untitled Assemblages, date unknown

Wood and stone

Courtesy of Christina Kim

Blunk liked to make compositions from pieces of wood, stone, and bone that he found in the woods or on his own property. For these composite pieces, which range in size from the two seen here to much larger outdoor compositions, he often modified the original found objects. By arranging the elements in relationship to each other, Blunk allows us to see everyday materials with new eyes.

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Selection of untitled works

(displayed on shelves above table)

c. 2003–2015

Marble, turquoise, rosewood,
snowflake obsidian, ironwood, wood,
and Belgian marble

Courtesy of Dan Greaney, the artist and
Blum & Poe, New York/Los Angeles/Tokyo

This selection of small sculptures is representative of Allen's early work and also features two recent pieces in bronze. Many of Allen's stone sculptures look as if they could be soft or squishy and have a grace that belies the hardness of the medium.

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J.B. Blunk

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Penis Stool #1, c. 1975

Redwood

Courtesy of the J.B. Blunk Collection

Many of Blunk's works in wood, and ceramic, are anthropomorphic and unabashedly sexual in nature, including this evocative stool.

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Blunk carved the bathroom sink from a single block of cypress.

Photo by Lisa Eisner

J.B. Blunk

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Untitled, date unknown

Redwood

Private Collection, courtesy of the
J.B. Blunk Collection and Blum & Poe,
New York/Los Angeles/Tokyo

J.B. Blunk

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Mariah's Chair, 1978

Redwood

Courtesy of the J.B. Blunk Collection

Blunk carved this chair in 1978, the year of his daughter Mariah's birth. Its shape was inspired by archetypal forms such as the Mexican *chacmool*, a pre-Colombian Mesoamerican reclining figure.

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Blunk carved the kitchen table in his house in Inverness from a massive slab of redwood.
Photo by Lisa Eisner

Blunk carved the bathroom sink from a single block of cypress.

Photo by Lisa Eisner

J.B. Blunk

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Table with Benches, date unknown

Eucalyptus

Courtesy of the J.B. Blunk Collection and
Blum & Poe, New York/Los Angeles/Tokyo

Living room of Blunk's house with daybeds and
textiles by Christine Nelson.
Photo by Leslie Williamson

J.B. Blunk's house, Inverness, CA
Photo by Leslie Williamson

A selection of objects and utensils, some made by Blunk, is arrayed above the stove.
Photo by Lisa Eisner

J.B. Blunk

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Column #5, c. 1982

Redwood stained with black shoe polish

Courtesy of the J.B. Blunk Collection

Self-Piercing Element, 1976

Redwood

Courtesy of the J.B. Blunk Collection

This work is often referred to as Hummingbird for its long, pointy proboscis. Redwood was Blunk's favorite wood and this piece, which recalls the form of the monumental Entry Arch at Blunk's house, is carved from a single piece of wood.

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Alma Allen

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Not Yet Titled [dining table], 2017

Bronze and marble

Courtesy of the artist and Blum & Poe,
Los Angeles/New York/Tokyo

Allen first made furniture for a shop he had in Venice, CA, and was eventually commissioned to make furniture for clients including Commune design collective and the Ace Hotel Group. He also designed and made almost all the furniture in his Joshua Tree home and studio.

These days his practice focuses primarily on sculpture rather than on functional work.

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Not Yet Titled, 2014

Yule marble, cedar blocks

Palm Springs Art Museum, gift of Ronnie Sassoon

Allen likes to leave his works untitled and let viewers imagine titles based on their own visual associations. He frequently uses cedar blocks as a base rather than traditional museum pedestals, preferring a more direct relationship of the work with the ground.

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The Buckeye Table, c. 1985

California buckeye burl

Palm Springs Art Museum, promised gift
of L.J. Cella

California buckeye, also known as California horse chestnut, is a species of the deciduous buckeye native to California. Blunk carved this table from a burl that he found near Inverness, in Northern California. A burl is a knotty growth of a tree in which the grain has grown in a deformed manner. The imperfection of the burl is what Blunk found inspiring.

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Allen's house is nestled into the rocks in the high
desert near Joshua Tree.
Photo by Leslie Williamson

A selection of small objects by Allen.
Photo by Leslie Williamson

Alma Allen's house in Joshua Tree.
Photo by Lisa Eisner

Alma Allen

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Not Yet Titled, 2017

Bronze

Courtesy of the artist and Blum & Poe,
New York/Los Angeles/Tokyo

This graceful 'snake' is one of the many new works Allen made for this exhibition.

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Not Yet Titled, 2017

Bronze, *recinto* stone pedestal

Courtesy of the artist and Blum & Poe,
New York/Los Angeles/Tokyo

This statuesque bronze sculpture is one of the many new works that Allen made especially for the exhibition.

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Not Yet Titled, 2017

Bronze

Courtesy of the artist and Blum & Poe,
New York/Los Angeles/Tokyo

The forms of many of Allen's works recall vegetation and other natural forms and his compositions often suggest a deliberate imbalance or precariousness.

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Alma Allen

Not Yet Titled, 2017

(in case)

Silver and bronze

Courtesy of the artist and Blum & Poe,
New York/Los Angeles/Tokyo

These diminutive sculptures recall Allen's earliest work in wood and stone. Allen has said that he thinks with his hands and likes to keep them busy. Often, in conversation, he will be forming small works like these as he talks.

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Alma Allen

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Not Yet Titled, 2017

Not Yet Titled, 2017

Bronze

Courtesy of the artist and Blum & Poe,
New York/Los Angeles/Tokyo

Alma Allen

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(on top of table, left)

Not Yet Titled, 2017-2018

Not Yet Titled, 2017-2018

Bronze

Courtesy of the artist and Blum & Poe,
New York/Los Angeles/Tokyo

(on top of table, right)

Not Yet Titled, not dated

Not Yet Titled, not dated

Bronze

Courtesy of Dan Greaney

Sitting room in Allen's Joshua Tree house.
Photo by Leslie Williamson

Every room in Allen's Joshua Tree house has views to the surrounding landscape.
Photo by Leslie Williamson

Untitled (arch), date unknown

Untitled, date unknown

Bronze

Courtesy of the J.B. Blunk Collection

These two small bronzes have forms that Blunk often returned to in his sculpture, including the large wood *Entry Arch* at Blunk House. Similar to maquettes, or models, for larger pieces, these pieces were likely cast in bronze as small-scale sculpture in their own right.

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Selection of ceramic cups, plates, bowls, and candlesticks

c. 1955–1980

Ceramic

Courtesy of the J.B. Blunk Collection

Blunk made ceramics throughout his career, with certain shapes and motifs recurring often, and had several kilns in a building on the Blunk House property. As with some of his sculptural furniture, the clay works are occasionally sexual in nature, including the phallus-shaped candleholders and the design on a heart-shaped plate resembling a woman's voluptuous breasts and belly. Blunk's interest in Japanese ceramics—as well as the influence of masters with whom he studied, including Shoji Hamada, Kitaoji Rosanjin, and Kaneshige Toyo—is evident in all of his own ceramic work from the minimalism of the forms to the simplicity of the designs to the abundance of circular shapes, whether the plate itself or the circle motifs, many of them gold.

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Alma Allen

Not Yet Titled, 2017

Not Yet Titled, 2017

Bronze

Courtesy of the artist and Blum & Poe,
New York/Los Angeles/Tokyo

These two cast bronze works recall Allen's early wood furniture made from sections of tree trunks.

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Alma Allen

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Not Yet Titled, 2017

Bronze

Courtesy of the artist and Blum & Poe,
New York/Los Angeles/Tokyo

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Not Yet Titled, 2017

Bronze

Courtesy of the artist and Blum & Poe,
New York/Los Angeles/Tokyo

Alma Allen

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Not Yet Titled, 2017

Not Yet Titled, 2017

Bronze

Courtesy of the artist and Blum & Poe,
New York/Los Angeles/Tokyo

Alma Allen

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Not Yet Titled, 2017

Bronze

Courtesy of the artist and Blum & Poe,
New York/Los Angeles/Tokyo

Alma Allen

Not Yet Titled, 2017

(displayed on table)

Bronze

Courtesy of Dan Greaney, the artist,
and Blum & Poe, New York/Los Angeles/Tokyo

Interior of Blunk's house with Column #5 on the left.

Photo by Lisa Eisner