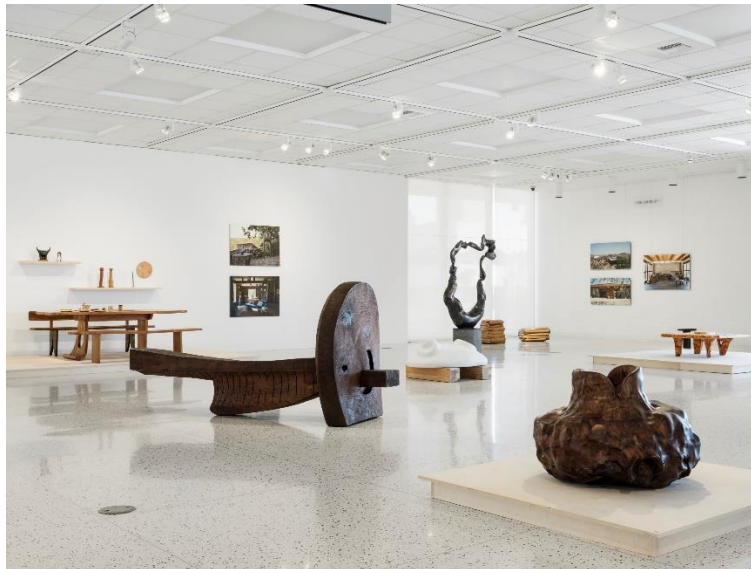


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'IN CONVERSATION: ALMA ALLEN AND J.B. BLUNK' BLURS THE LINES BETWEEN DESIGN, CRAFT, AND SCULPTURE

Traveling from the Palm Springs Art Museum, the newest exhibition at the Nevada Museum of Art stages an encounter between two artists who never met but whose work and lives share a deep affinity. On view February 23 – June 23, 2019.



Reno, Nev. (February 13, 2019) – Blurring the lines between design, craft, and sculpture, *In Conversation: Alma Allen and J.B. Blunk* stages a conversation between two artists that never met but whose work shares a deep affinity. Organized by the Palm Springs Art Museum – an institution with which the Nevada Museum of Art shares friends, exhibitions, artworks, and curatorial and educational resources – *In Conversation* is comprised of nearly 80 works, ranging from monumental furniture and sculpture in wood, stone, and bronze, to delicate ceramic plates. The diversity of creations illustrates how both artists, inspired by nature's visceral power and beauty, create evocative work from materials found on the land. *In Conversation: Alma Allen and J.B. Blunk* will be on view at the Nevada Museum of Art in downtown Reno February 23 through June 23, 2019.

Both Allen and Blunk are self-taught and each began making work on a small hand-made scale, Blunk in ceramic and Allen in wood and stone. Working alone in rather remote locations, Blunk in Inverness, Calif., and Allen until recently in Joshua Tree, Calif., gave them the space and freedom to expand the scale and range of their practices to encompass not only housewares, furniture, and sculpture but also the design and building of their own homes and studios. The exhibition also features photographs by Lisa Eisner and Leslie Williamson that show how each man shaped his own environment, creating a parallel dialogue between these two contemporary photographers.

Prior to *In Conversation: Alma Allen and J.B. Blunk*, the work of these two California artists had never before been shown together. The exhibition was curated by Brooke Hodge, Director of Architecture and Design, Palm Springs Art Museum, who launched the *In Conversation* series to pair the work of a contemporary designer with that of an earlier, inspirational precursor.

"I like to think of *Allen/Blunk* as a blind date: two artists who never met get together and discover that they have a lot in common. By juxtaposing the works of these two artists, we begin to see common influences and themes between these two Californians from different generations," said Hodge.

Born in 1970, Alma Allen currently lives and works in Mexico City. The exhibition features new work in bronze and stone made by Allen especially for the occasion as well as a number of his early pieces in wood, marble, and stone.

J.B. Blunk (1926-2002) was a sculptor who primarily worked with wood and clay. His practice encompassed ceramics, and furniture and sculpture in redwood and cypress. In addition to his monumental pieces in wood, Blunk produced iconic works in diverse media including jewelry, painting, and bronze. His house in Inverness, a total environment designed and built by him, is considered his masterwork. The exhibition includes a number of pieces borrowed from his estate.

Recognizing many similarities between the communities served by PSAM and the Nevada Museum of Art, JoAnne Northrup, Curatorial Director and Curator of Contemporary Art for the Nevada Museum of Art, worked closely with Hodge to bring the exhibition to Reno.

"The Palm Springs Art Museum and the Nevada Museum of Art have collaborated as partners and share many things, including exhibitions (*Unsettled | Art on the New Frontier* – currently on view at the PSAM), artworks, and curatorial and educational resources. Hosting *In Conversation* serves to deepen that relationship," said Northrup.

Public programs planned in connection with the exhibition include:

Gallery Talk: Brooke Hodge, of the PSAM discusses "In Conversation: Alma Allen and J.B. Blunk"

Thursday, February 21 | 6 pm / \$10 / FREE for Members

During this gallery talk by Brooke Hodge, Director of Architecture and Design at the Palm Springs Art Museum and curator of *In Conversation*, learn how the work of artists Alma Allen and J.B. Blunk blurs the line between design and sculpture, with both men creating evocative organic work from natural materials.

Make Your Match: Meet the New Season of Exhibitions

Friday, February 22 | 7 – 9 pm / \$25 / \$10 Members / \$10 Youth (6-12)

Experience soundscapes by local artists in the galleries as you explore the new exhibitions at this party of the season. Witness responsive modern movement performances as Reno's contemporary dance company, Collateral & Co., presents a multimedia experience. Turn it up in the Sky Room with DJ Mojo Jojo, visuals by Rich Moore, s'mores station, table games, and small bites by chez louie.

In Conversation: Alma Allen and J.B. Blunk is organized by Palm Springs Art Museum and curated by Brooke Hodge, Director of Architecture and Design. It will be exhibited February 23 through June 23, 2019, at the Nevada Museum of Art, located at 160 West Liberty Street in downtown Reno. The exhibition is sponsored by Barbara and Tad Danz.

Access high-resolution images and captions: <http://bit.ly/AllenBlunk>.

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The Nevada Museum of Art is the only art museum in Nevada accredited by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM). A private, nonprofit organization founded in 1931, the Reno-based institution is supported by its membership as well as sponsorships, gifts and grants. Through its permanent collections, original exhibitions and programming, and E.L. Cord Museum School, the Nevada Museum of Art provides meaningful opportunities for people to engage with a range of art and education experiences. The Museum's **Center for Art + Environment** is an internationally-recognized research center dedicated to supporting the practice, study, and awareness of creative interactions between people and their environments. The Center houses unique archive materials from more than 1,000 artists working on all seven continents, including Cape Farewell, Michael Heizer, Walter de Maria, Lita Albuquerque, Burning Man, the Center for Land Use Interpretation, Ugo Rondinone's *Seven Magic Mountains*, and Trevor Paglen's *Orbital Reflector*. Learn more at nevadaart.org.

Palm Springs Art Museum is the largest cultural institution in the Coachella Valley and includes three locations in Palm Springs and Palm Desert. The flagship building, located in downtown Palm Springs, features compelling art exhibitions, a vast permanent collection, and the Annenberg Theater, all in a 150,000-square-foot architecturally significant building. Palm Springs Art Museum Architecture and Design Center, Edwards Harris Pavilion, features exhibitions and programming that explore the rich topics of architecture and design. Palm Springs Art Museum in Palm Desert is an 8,400 square foot, Silver LEED-certified building named The Galen featuring rotating exhibitions and special collections. The Galen is surrounded by the four-acre Faye Sarkowsky Sculpture Garden. Admission to the Palm Desert location is free, generously underwritten by Helene V. Galen.

[Installation image, *In Conversation: Alma Allen and J.B. Blunk*, courtesy of Palm Springs Art Museum]