

SHANE CAMPBELL GALLERY

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Palm Springs Art Museum Spotlights Alma Allen and J.B. Blunk

Though the artists never met, they share a common bond



Sculptures by Alma Allen in front of one his studios in Joshua Tree, California. Photo: Lisa Eisner

Brooke Hodge, the Palm Springs Art Museum’s intrepid director of architecture and design, is playing matchmaker. Like a blind date, her new exhibition, “In Conversation: Alma Allen and J.B. Blunk,” stages an encounter between two artists who never met but share a deep affinity. The work of Alma Allen (b. 1970) and J.B. Blunk (1926–2002) blurs the line between craft, design, and sculpture. Both men drew inspiration from nature’s visceral power and beauty—majestic trees, craggy mountains, rugged boulders—to create profoundly evocative work from materials found on the land.

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J.B. Blunk at work in Inverness in the 1970s.



A 2018 Alma Allen bronze sculpture, Not Yet Titled.

Allen and Blunk were self-taught, and each began making handmade work on a small scale using ceramic, stone, and wood. Working alone in remote locations—Blunk in Inverness, California, and Allen until recently in Joshua Tree, California—gave them the space and freedom to expand the scale and range of their practices to encompass not only tabletop objects furniture, and sculpture but also their own hand-built houses.

In addition to small early pieces, large-scale works, and process models, the exhibition will feature photographs of the homes and studios of both Allen and Blunk by Lisa Eisner and Leslie Williamson, creating a parallel conversation between the work of two contemporary photographers. The exhibition runs from February 3 to June 4 at the Palm Springs Art Museum's Architecture and Design Center, Edward Harris Pavilion.

-Mayer Rus

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