

## Artists-in-Residence to Create On-Site Art Installation at Palm Springs Art Museum

*Installation will Feature Large Papier-Mâché Tree and will be open to the Public August 1*



July 6, 2009 (Palm Springs, CA) -- The Palm Springs Art Museum's annual summer Artists-in-Residence program will feature two local artists who will create an on-site art installation at the museum. Artists Cathy Allen and Joan Silver will create *Gardens of Exchange*, an installation that will be centered around a large "tree" made out of papier-mâché (pictured at left) and utilize text from author Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*, a fictional conversation between world traveler Marco Polo and emperor Kublai Kahn. In the text, Polo describes many imaginary cities in the Kahn's realm, which helps the Khan to better understand his empire. The artists will complete the

installation at the museum and work with the museum's Art Camp attendees to help them create their own imagined cities. This is the first time these two local artists have collaborated on a project together and the installation will be on view until September 27.

The installation will feature Calvino's text reproduced on the floor of the museum's Zone 101 in the Hoover Gallery. On top of the text will be the large tree and tufts of paper that will swirl around as the visitors interact with the sculpture, revealing and covering different portions of the text. It is intended to be a playful and creative installation that is a metaphor for the thinking process.

### About the artists



**Cathy Allen** is an art professor for both Copper Mountain College in Joshua Tree, and College of the Desert. She has served on the Public Arts Advisory Committee for the town of Twentynine Palms, and on the Board of Directors for the Morongo Basin Cultural Arts Council, Inc. Her artistic career has spanned more than twenty years, enabling her to explore a variety of traditional and nontraditional media. Though primarily a sculptor, she has also been involved with performance and installation art. Her work has been displayed in San Diego, Los Angeles, San Bernardino and Palm Springs and is privately owned regionally

and internationally. In 2009, her work was shown in the *Reduce, Recycle, and Reuse* show at the High-Desert Nature Museum in Yucca Valley, CA. Her works will also be included in *Desert Diversity*, an upcoming exhibition at the 29 Palms Art Gallery, 29 Palms, CA.



**Joan Silver** is an adjunct faculty member at the College of the Desert and teaches *Life Drawing* and *Art History*. Her teaching experience in the visual arts and art history includes Cal State University/San Bernadino, Columbia College, Interlochen Center for the Arts and The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Silver's historically-based installations explore themes of displacement, memory and time's transformation of absence in the personal and national identity. A rigorous inquiry of diverse source materials that are familiar and richly layered, (bread, salt, steel, felt, camouflage, velvet) are contextualized within the work. Strongly influenced by various writers, Silver investigates relationships between sculpture/objects, images and words. Ms. Silver is the recipient of a Fulbright Grant to Poland. She has been selected for numerous artists residency programs that include Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture and The MacDowell Colony. She received a nomination from the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation and has received the Illinois Arts Council Finalist Award in 2000, the Board of Governors Award, and an award from the Palm Springs Art Museum's Artists Council 37th Annual National Juried Exhibition in 2006. She has exhibited her work in Florida, Atlanta, Boston, Poland, Chicago, Palm Springs and Palm Desert.

### **About Italo Calvino**

Italo Calvino, the source of inspiration for this installation, was one of Italy's finest postwar writers and has delighted readers around the world with his deceptively simple, fable-like stories. The son of traveling botanists, Calvino was born in Cuba in 1923 and raised in San Remo, Italy. His major works include *Cosmicomics* (1968), *Invisible Cities* (1972), and *If On a Winter's Night a Traveler* (1979). During his later years, Calvino became an avid film enthusiast and renowned lecturer, traveling widely to satisfy both pursuits. He died in Sienna on Sept. 19, 1985, of a brain hemorrhage.

*Invisible Cities*, the Calvino novel used as the inspiration of the art installation, is about a conversation that Kublai Khan, at the demise of his empire, has with Marco Polo. Marco Polo attempts to describe the cities in the Khan's realm. The Khan soon begins to realize that Marco's cities are all the same city, all connected, and are all just different outlooks on each. Even though the city may be the same in structure, it makes a different mental impression.

Located downtown in an architecturally-significant building, the Palm Springs Art Museum features compelling exhibitions and a robust permanent collection of modern, contemporary, Native American, Western and Pre-Columbian and glass

art in 28 spacious galleries and in its two outdoor sculpture gardens. The museum offers educational lectures, films and an assortment of programs and art workshops for all ages. The museum's Annenberg Theater features outstanding musical performances. The museum is open six days a week; Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Thursday from 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. with free admission from 4 – 8 p.m. sponsored by the City of Palm Springs. Admission is free to members; \$12.50 for adults; \$10.50 for seniors 62 and over; \$5 for adult students and active-duty military with I.D. and free for youths 12 and under. For more information, call 760.322.4800 or visit [www.psmuseum.org](http://www.psmuseum.org).