

**PALM SPRINGS ART MUSEUM**  
**VISION 20/20**  
**STRATEGIC PLAN**  
**2016 - 2020**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

PALM SPRINGS  
ART MUSEUM



## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Today, people define art and cultural experiences more broadly than ever before. From coffee bars to living deserts to museums, they are drawn to places for connection with their peers, reflection, and renewal. Every space and service offers the opportunity to create new perspectives and meaningful cultural experiences. This is particularly true in the Coachella Valley, for the City of Palm Springs, and for Palm Springs Art Museum.

Founded in 1938, the Palm Springs Desert Museum envisioned itself to be the prime cultural center of the desert. It inhabited several locations in the center of town before engaging renowned architect E. Stewart Williams to design a significant modernist edifice at 101 Museum Drive. Opening in 1976, its early displays of art and natural science were visionary but, over the years, went out of style. In 2004, the museum's Board of Trustees shifted its focus exclusively to art and, a year later, changed its name to Palm Springs Art Museum.

Also incorporated in 1938 and following a similar history and growth trajectory, the City of Palm Springs became known as a place for healing and renewal; a pleasurable and stylish community for the entertainment industry; and a center for modernist architecture and design. Since its early days, it has experienced recessions, rebirths, and a cultural renaissance. Today, Palm Springs and its desert environs have been rediscovered by new generations—young and old—with a creative spirit that is audacious, inventive, and forward-looking. From Old Las Palmas to Joshua Tree, from Palm Desert to Coachella, there is an extraordinary cultural emergence and resurgence in the arts, architecture, design, music, food, film, and entertainment.

Palm Springs Art Museum has played an exciting role in this recent transformation and strives to be an integral part of its continued growth and evolution. In 1996, the museum added a new wing to Museum Drive, and between 2012 - 14 it expanded to include a gallery and sculpture garden in Palm Desert as well as a new center for architecture and design in Palm Springs. Known for its exhibitions of world-class art, the museum re-envisioned itself today with this new Strategic Plan: Vision 20/20 as a compelling and welcoming center and cultural hub for art, architecture, design, fashion, music, performance, and film. As a visionary museum model, it offers visitors and residents alike a place for unexpected and transformative experiences of art and culture from the past, present and future.

At its best, strategic planning renews an institution's commitments, values, and vitality while also ensuring its long-term success. I am indebted to the Board of Trustees of Palm Springs Art Museum for supporting and participating in such a thorough strategic planning process during my first year as its executive director. Guided by the talented consultants at brightspot strategy, with the input of our dedicated staff and volunteers, we reviewed and reimagined our purpose and mission, prioritized our objectives and goals, and articulated strategies for our new vision. As you will see in the following pages, we have many ambitions for the coming years that we consider both integral to the community and vital to our continued success.

I hope you find the ideas and plans set out in these pages as inspiring as we do. An exciting future is ahead, and I encourage you to join us.

Elizabeth Armstrong

The JoAnn McGrath Executive Director

## FROM THE CHAIRS

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We invite you to explore this continuation of our metamorphosis from a desert museum to an art museum and cultural hub. Many thoughtful and dedicated individuals collaborated to create this vision and this plan. They looked realistically at the Museum's challenges and opportunities, discarding worn ideas and embracing new models of success, always with hope that we will be ever more meaningful in the lives of our communities, the community of visitors and the community of residents.

We believe in the power of art to connect people to each other, themselves, and the world around them. We know that our region, with its illustrious history as a place of reflection and renewal, offers a unique perspective on globally significant issues of our time. As an art museum and cultural hub, we will strive to create transformative experiences that connect our world, our history, our people, and our time.

The relationship between people and art is changing rapidly. No longer seen as cathedrals to art, museums and their relevance to people's lives are changing them into places for connection, reflection, and renewal. Palm Springs Art Museum will utilize this new strategy and 5-year plan to continue its evolution into a meaningful place of connection, reflection, and renewal.

Donna MacMillan  
Chair of the Board of Trustees

L.J. Cella  
Chair of the Strategic  
Planning Steering Committee

Susan Goodman  
Co-chair, Planning Steering Committee

# INTRODUCTION

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With new leadership, we embarked on a strategic planning process to better understand the needs of our current and potential communities, redefine our purpose, and develop a plan to improve operations and services for a 21st-century audience.

We looked internally and externally at the state of our museum, our community, and the industry today to frame the questions posed and solutions presented in this strategic plan. We believe our strategies for the next five years uniquely position the museum to respond to the key drivers listed below.

**The definition of ‘cultural experience’ is expanding.**

Audiences are defining ‘cultural experience’ more broadly than ever before. Today cultural experiences are not specific to art or cultural institutions; they are places and activities that are engaging, meaningful, entertaining, and can be shared with friends and family. This means that every space and service the museum offers has the opportunity to create a meaningful cultural experience.

**We need to create a dialogue with our local community.**

The Coachella Valley is home to a growing population with diverse backgrounds, interests, and needs. From 2000 – 2014, the residential population grew by 43.2% to 443,401 residents, and it continues to grow. As of 2014, our residents are 51% Latino and 41% White, and have a median income that ranges between \$34,548 and \$100,742 (dependent on city). Yet, our current members represent a subset of this community that is primarily white, educated, and wealthy. Successful museums today are broadening perspectives while responding and relating to audience interests and values. At Palm Springs Art Museum, we will do this by offering programs, exhibitions, and experiences that attract and respond to the growing interests and backgrounds of our residents and visitors.

**Palm Springs is going through a revitalization.** Coachella Valley is a growing tourist destination, with 12.2 million people visiting in 2013 and spending \$4.5 billion, a 6.1% increase over 2011. Our visitors come from all over the country and world to have a unique California and Desert experience. In addition to recreational vacationers, many of our visitors are coming for the significant music, film, sports, design, and fashion events taking place throughout the year. Our focus over the next few years is to become one of the known cultural destinations in Palm Springs for experiences that connect people to the art and culture of our community and time. This will be achieved through an updated brand and enhanced communication and marketing strategy that highlights our offerings and creates a dialogue with our audience.

**Palm Springs Art Museum has seen significant growth.**

Our organizational structure evolved over time to fit institutional needs and individual capabilities. While we have functioned reasonably well within this structure, it no longer supports the kind of internal operations we need as a progressive 21st-century cultural institution. Moving forward, we will develop an organizational structure that effectively supports the operations of each site, responds elegantly to seasonal demands of our region, and supports staff success and wellbeing.

**The community for art and culture is growing.** In many ways, the uniqueness of Palm Springs Art Museum is a result of our location in the Coachella Valley: the rich history of art, design, and architecture, the communities that settled and built this region, and the organizations that are reviving the definition of art and culture today. We will strengthen and expand our partnerships with local and national institutions to connect art to broader perspectives and highlight this rich history.



SITES

PALM SPRINGS ART MUSEUM  
 101 MUSEUM DRIVE  
 PALM SPRINGS, CA 92262

PALM SPRINGS ART MUSEUM  
 IN PALM DESERT, THE GALEN  
 AND THE FAYE SARKOWSKY  
 SCULPTURE GARDEN

72-567 HIGHWAY 111  
 PALM DESERT, CA 92260

PALM SPRINGS ART MUSEUM  
 ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN  
 CENTER, EDWARDS HARRIS  
 PAVILION

300 S. CANYON DRIVE  
 PALM SPRINGS, CA 92262



Clockwise from top: Palm Springs Art Museum; Palm Springs Art Museum in Palm Desert, The Faye Sarkowsky Sculpture Garden (detail); Palm Springs Art Museum Architecture and Design Center, Edwards Harris Pavilion; Palm Springs Art Museum in Palm Desert, The Galen

# MISSION

**Palm Springs Art Museum creates transformative experiences that expand our understanding of ourselves and the world.**

**Our collections, exhibitions, and programs connect people to the art and culture of our community and time.**

**We foster and inspire reflection and renewal for local, national, and global audiences.**



GOAL:

**VISITOR  
EXPERIENCE**

- ACTIONS
- STRATEGIES
- SCHEDULES
- BUDGETS
- TEAM

GOAL:

**IDENTITY +  
COMMUNICATIONS**

- ACTIONS
- STRATEGIES
- SCHEDULES
- BUDGETS
- TEAM

GOAL:

**COLLECTIONS +  
EXHIBITIONS**

- ACTIONS
- STRATEGIES
- SCHEDULES
- BUDGETS
- TEAM

GOAL:

**EDUCATION +  
PROGRAMMING**

- ACTIONS
- STRATEGIES
- SCHEDULES
- BUDGETS
- TEAM

GOAL:

**OPERATIONS +  
ORGANIZATION**

- ACTIONS
- STRATEGIES
- SCHEDULES
- BUDGETS
- TEAM

GOAL:

**FINANCIAL  
SUSTAINABILITY**

- ACTIONS
- STRATEGIES
- SCHEDULES
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- TEAM

# UPDATE THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

*Position the visitor at the center of the museum experience.*

STRATEGIC  
INITIATIVE

**Update the  
Visitor  
Experience**

## GOAL 1: INTEGRATED VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Develop a holistic visitor experience that connects our sites and engages audiences before, during, and after their interactions with the Museum.

## GOAL 2: IDENTITY AND COMMUNICATIONS

Update the brand and identity to reflect our purpose and our mission. Implement new communication strategies to connect with our target audiences.



Stephen H. Willard, *Willard's Palm Springs Studio (Late 1930s)* (detail), n.d., digital from original, gift of Dr. Beatrice Willard

## UPDATE THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE



### GOAL 1: INTEGRATED VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Develop a holistic visitor experience that connects our sites and engages audiences before, during, and after their interactions with the Museum.

Above: Engaged in a painting by Victor Rodriguez, a family blends into the work.

### ACTIONS

#### 1.1 Audience Research:

Gain a more robust understanding of our current and potential audiences.

#### 1.2 Visitors Experience Team:

Create a Visitor Experience team that oversees all visitor services, needs, and functions and creates a welcoming visitor relationship.

#### 1.3 Space:

Create a welcoming, compelling entry experience. Incorporate comfortable social spaces in and around the Museum Drive site that invite visitors to meet and connect.

#### 1.4 Retail:

Create an integrated retail experience across all physical and digital sites and increase accessibility of our retail offerings.

#### 1.5 Food and Beverage:

Assess the opportunity to create café-like social amenity spaces that attract visitors, encourage them to stay longer, and entice their return.

#### 1.6 Tours:

Offer unique, informative, and fun learning experiences for visitors through targeted access to our collection, staff expertise, and special interests.

#### 1.7 “My Museum/Mi Museo” :

Make the Museum a valued resource to local communities.

## UPDATE THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE



### GOAL 2: IDENTITY AND COMMUNICATIONS

Update the brand and identity to reflect our purpose and our mission. Implement new communication strategies to connect with our target audiences.

### ACTIONS

#### 2.1 Brand + Identity:

Develop a brand and identity that celebrates the history and character of Palm Springs and the broader community; supports the mission of the Museum; and focuses on attracting target audiences through a consistent and inclusive tone.

#### 2.2 Marketing + Communications:

Develop and implement a new Marketing and Communications program to support the objectives in this plan. Strengthen the current organization and structure of the Marketing and Communications team.

#### 2.3 Digital:

Define and implement digital strategies (website, social media, museum app, etc.) that drive attendance with an emphasis on the redesign of a user-friendly website that reflects our mission, clarifies offerings, entices visits, and enriches experiences before, during and after their visit, within and outside the Museum.

#### 2.4 Way-finding/Collateral:

Create well-designed collateral and coherent way-finding systems that help visitors navigate throughout the various sites, and within and among the buildings.

Above: Members view the exhibition *Killer Heels: The Art of the High-Heeled Shoe* in Palm Springs.

# CONNECT AUDIENCE TO ART AND CULTURE

*Create art and cultural experiences that provide connection, transformation, reflection, and renewal for all audiences.*



## GOAL 3: COLLECTIONS AND EXHIBITIONS

Connect people to art and culture in ways that change perceptions and offer new experiences. Implement innovative, interpretive strategies in presenting art; reimagine “exhibition space” beyond traditional galleries, walls and hours; and align our collection with our mission. We will make this possible by ensuring sufficient resources for the care, preservation and access of the collection, working in new ways internally, while building our partnerships locally, nationally, and internationally.

## GOAL 4: EDUCATION AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Introduce our audiences to the transformative power of art through education and public programs. Broaden and diversify our public offerings to create a sense of community and place in the region. Prioritize programming around specific strategic targets and partners. Organize and integrate all programming under a coordinated strategy.

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### ACTIONS

#### 3.1 Collection Strategy:

Build on the strengths of the current collection to strategically focus our collection development plans.

#### 3.2 Collection Maintenance, Preservation, Access, and Storage:

Ensure sufficient resources for the care and preservation of the collection. Secure additional resources to provide access—digital and physical—to the collection.

#### 3.3 Exhibition Planning:

Extend the exhibition calendar to allow for long-term forecasting, budgeting, planning, and fundraising; unify exhibition planning with program planning.

#### 3.4 Reimagining Exhibitions:

Explore and execute innovative, interpretive strategies in presenting art. Focus on the conceptual and aesthetic presentation of the collection. Refresh the galleries to reflect our region and our time through relevant exhibitions.

#### 3.5 Collaborations and Partnerships:

Work with diverse community and cultural partners to connect art with broader perspectives and audiences.

#### 3.6 Expanded Campus:

Expand “exhibition space” beyond traditional galleries, walls, and hours.

Above: Evan Holloway’s sculpture *Dark and Light*, 2012, in the exhibition *Still Life: Capturing the Moment* at Palm Desert.

## CONNECT AUDIENCE TO ART AND CULTURE



### GOAL 4: EDUCATION AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS

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Above: A child enjoying *Day of the Dead/Día de los muertos* maskmaking at Palm Desert.

### ACTIONS

#### 4.1 Cross-functional Program Planning:

Develop a cross-functional programming team to implement a coordinated strategy for all programming. Maintain and evolve exhibition related programming to create relevant art and culture experiences for visitors.

#### 4.2 Lifelong Learning:

Diversify public programming opportunities that incorporate art and culture in their variety of forms to attract diverse age groups and interests.

#### 4.3 Youth and Schools Programs:

Develop youth-based programs focused on three distinct age groups: 3rd Grade, Middle School, and Teens

#### 4.4 In-Gallery Museum Programs:

Create in-gallery museum programs that offer hands-on learning opportunities, foster conversations about art, and connect visitors with each other and the work that they see.

#### 4.5 Event-Based Programs:

Initiate event-based programs that appeal to 25- to 50-year-old audiences, activate interior and exterior spaces, and create new and ongoing partnerships with organizations across the Coachella Valley and the region to leverage expertise, develop diverse programs, share costs, and reach new audiences.

# STRENGTHEN INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

*Build a 21st-century institution that supports our mission financially and operationally.*



## GOAL 5: OPERATIONS AND ORGANIZATION

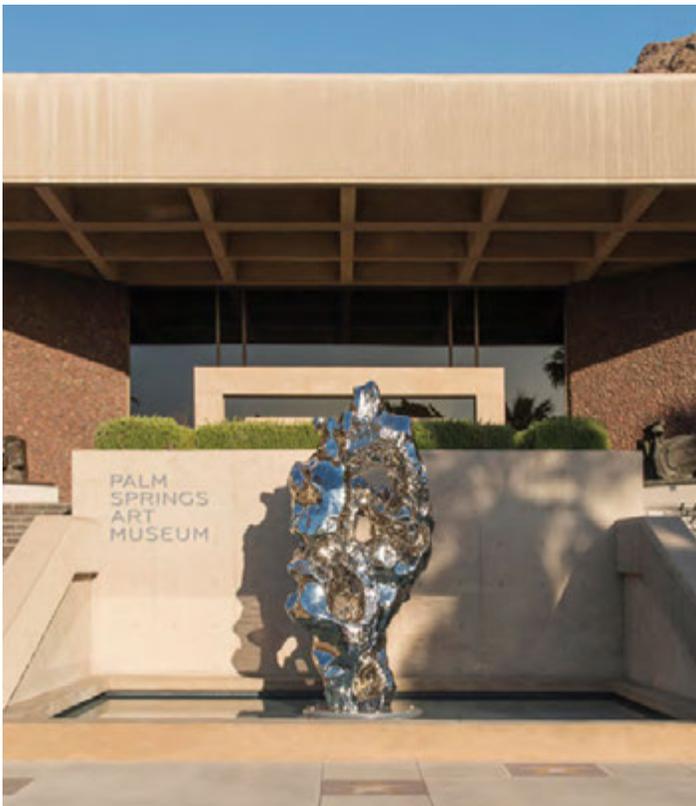
Create and implement best practices for a 21st-century cultural institution. Beginning with the end in mind, clarify, simplify, and assess our current operational processes and organizational structure. Attract and retain high quality professionals. Provide the necessary infrastructure to support staff and museum activities.

## GOAL 6: FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Build a sustainable financial model that supports transparency, efficiency, effectiveness, and agility. Conduct deep assessment of operations, components, and programming of each site to support the institution as a whole. Assess and strengthen existing revenue streams and assess and implement new revenue streams. Provide a platform for future growth.

## STRENGTHEN INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

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Above: A work acquired for the celebration of the museum's 75th Anniversary, Zhan Wang, *Artificial Rock #131*, 2007, a museum purchase with funds provided by Donna MacMillan in memory of Cargill MacMillan Jr., stands at the entrance to the Museum.

### ACTIONS

#### 5.1 Organizational Chart:

Review and revise the current organizational structure, roles, and responsibilities for staff, Trustees, council boards, and volunteers to increase efficiency, effectiveness, and agility.

#### 5.2 Infrastructure:

Define and provide the infrastructure that supports museum activities, including necessary improvements to information technology and facilities.

#### 5.3 Best Practices:

Develop and share institutional “best practices” and values at every level of operations and in all encounters with the public.

#### 5.4 Professional Development:

Attract, retain, and support high quality staff by instituting professional development opportunities, training, and career tracking for staff across all locations and levels.

#### 5.5 Work-Life Balance:

Support a healthy balance between work and life. Model the behavior we expect.

## STRENGTHEN INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

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### GOAL 6: FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

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### ACTIONS

**6.1 Endowment + Contributed Revenue:**  
Bring percentage of institutional support from endowment and contributed revenue into alignment with “best practices” for healthy institutions.

**6.2 Earned Revenue:**  
Develop a business case for earned income across sources (fee for service, retail, admissions, membership, etc.) to support the institutional and fundraising mission.

**6.3 Alternative Revenue Sources:**  
Monetize assets and grow external funding percentage (through public / private partnerships, grants, and corporate partnerships) to diversify income sources for existing and new services.

**6.4 Board:**  
Assess Board structure and committees to synchronize with the new Strategic Plan.

**6.5 Councils:**  
Align councils with Museum’s mission.

**6.6 Budgeting:**  
Establish accountability and encourage a data driven decision-making process.

*Frey House II (north side), photograph by Dan Chavkin.*



The San Geronio Wind Farm greets visitors approaching Palm Springs from the west.