



**Palm Springs
Art Museum**

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Contact: Amber Amaya
Palm Springs Art Museum
aamaya@psmuseum.org

**PALM SPRINGS ART MUSEUM PRESENTS FIRST HOWARD SMITH
RETROSPECTIVE IN THE UNITED STATES**

Exhibition marks a homecoming for Howard Smith, a pioneering Black artist whose work was largely unrecognized in his home country during his lifetime.

[April 8, 2025] — Palm Springs Art Museum, in collaboration with the Espoo Museum of Modern Art (EMMA), is proud to announce the opening of [*The Art and Design of Howard Smith*](#), the first U.S. retrospective of the artist since the 1980s and his first major exhibition in his home country. The show will run from May 10, 2025, through March 2, 2026.

Howard Smith (1928–2021), a New Jersey-born artist, made his mark internationally after moving to Finland in 1962. Known for his fusion of abstract and African forms, Smith was one of the few Black artists of his generation to collaborate successfully with major European design firms. His textiles and ceramics brought vibrancy and narrative to Scandinavian modernism, while his independent practice ranged from painting and collage to sculptural assemblages using everyday objects.

“Howard Smith’s art was bold, inventive, and wholly original,” said Steven Wolf, Guest Curator at Palm Springs Art Museum. “He broke down boundaries between fine art and design, between the deeply personal and the industrial. This exhibition is a long-overdue homecoming for an artist who contributed so much to post-war aesthetics but remained largely unknown in the United States.”

In partnership with EMMA, this exhibition features more than 100 works including paintings, textiles, ceramics, and mixed media assemblages, many of which have never been shown outside of Finland. It is a rare opportunity to explore the layered legacy of an artist who navigated modernism, the African diaspora, and the Cold War.

“This retrospective brings Howard Smith’s expansive vision to U.S. audiences in a way that’s never been done before,” said Christine Vendredi, Chief Curator at Palm Springs Art Museum. “His work asks us to think differently about cultural exchange and design history.”

A bilingual exhibition catalogue co-published with Radius Books accompanies the show, featuring essays and conversations in both English and Finnish. Contributors include Allison Blakely, Erna Aaltonen, Ervin Latimer, Ken Erwin, Steven Wolf, and Tuomas Laulainen. The book is available now at Palm Springs Art Museum's museum store.

The Art and Design of Howard Smith is curated by Steven Wolf, Guest Curator.

Major support for this exhibition has been generously provided by Mimi & Steve Fisher, Jim Gaudineer & Tony Padilla, and Bonnie Serkin & Will Emery. Learn more at psmuseum.org.

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About Palm Springs Art Museum

Palm Springs Art Museum is the largest cultural institution in the Coachella Valley. 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. Five blocks away, the Palm Springs Art Museum Architecture and Design Center, Edwards Harris Pavilion, features exhibitions and programming that explore the rich topics of architecture and design. The museum's collection also contains two icons of modernist design: Frey House II on the mountainside behind the main building and Aluminaire House™ on museum grounds.