

**CONTACT:** Kristy Kneiding  
760-568-5240

## **PALM DESERT: WHERE THE VISUAL ARTS DELIGHT**

**PALM DESERT, CA** – Palm Desert’s love affair with art is evident virtually everywhere throughout out the City. From the City’s renowned Art in Public Places Program (AIPP) to its collection of more than 30 art galleries and artists’ studios, you’ll find an eclectic array of visual art that enhances the natural beauty of this desert community.

The AIPP Program is a dynamic partnership between the City and private developers that puts art in public places such as parks, street medians, public facilities, and even private business buildings. Palm Desert, in fact, was the first city in Riverside County to create a public art program, and it has become a national prototype of a “museum without walls.”

Since 1986, developers have been required to place art, or pay a fee to the Art in Public Places fund, for each new structure that is built. These funds are used to purchase art for the community. Today, more than 150 unique works of art decorate Palm Desert. The art is grouped into four self-guided “tours.” Maps of these are available at the Palm Desert Visitor Center.

The El Paseo Tour is located on the colorful median that runs the length of El Paseo, Palm Desert’s exclusive shopping district. It is an ideal venue for sculpture and features exhibits that change every two years. Lighted at night, the El Paseo Exhibition features 18 works of art that can be enjoyed 24 hours a day.

The Fred Waring Corridor Tour, found along the street that’s named after the celebrated bandleader and inventor of the Waring blender, offers delightfully diverse works of art including animal sculptures of bighorn sheep, komodo dragons and mountain lions, modern sculpture made from recycled materials, a colorful obelisk, and bas relief murals.

-more-

On the City Tour, Palm Desert's own Desert Willow Golf Resort is ringed by a sculptural fence and massive entry artwork by Allen Root that has become a local landmark. A spectacular blown glass "chandelier" by internationally acclaimed artist Dale Chihuly welcomes guests in the foyer of the clubhouse. Even the City's bus shelters are works of art.

The Civic Center Sculpture Walk is a highlight of Palm Desert's 72-acre Civic Center Park, which also has a ¾-acre water feature, spectacular plantings including 68 varieties of roses, and recreational and sports amenities.

One of the 25 sculptures in Civic Center Park began as a second-grader's dream. Bernice Gonzalez won the City's Student Art and Essay Contest with her response to "If I Could Design Public Art" in which she envisioned a mother and daughter walking, holding hands. The City Council was so moved by her essay that it commissioned artwork to make her vision real. The larger-than-life bronze sculpture depicts a mother and daughter holding hands, walking in a garden setting, surrounded by terrazzo desert animals. A Holocaust Memorial also is located in the park. It features five bronze figures placed on a star of black granite, each representing a different aspect of the Holocaust.

Free docent guided tours of the artwork at the Civic Center Park, Palm Desert Public Library, and El Paseo Exhibition are offered on the second Saturday of each month with the exception of July and August. Free, private tours are available for groups of four or more.

If you are a collector or just enjoy gallery hopping, Palm Desert's galleries offer an outstanding selection of styles and media, from European oil paintings to contemporary acrylics to nature photography. The majority of the city's galleries are located along El Paseo and, on the first Thursday of every month from October through May, open their doors for the El Paseo Art Walk, an evening of fun, refreshments, and viewing from 5 to 9 p.m.

On the first Friday of each month from October through June, The Art Place, an art and interior design complex at 41-801 Corporate Way (off Hovley in north Palm Desert), showcases sculptures, paintings, photography, fabrics, and more from 6 to 9 p.m. The evening also includes live music and refreshments.

The Palm Desert AIPP website, found at [www.palmdesertart.org](http://www.palmdesertart.org), showcases works of art from around the City and highlights the El Paseo Exhibition. To schedule a tour of the artwork contact the AIPP Department at 760-568-5240.

**Information:** For complete visitor information on Palm Desert and a free Vacation Guide, call the Palm Desert Visitor Center at 800-873-2428 or go to [www.palm-desert.org](http://www.palm-desert.org).

# # #