

Riding a Renaissance

The Palm Springs Art Museum presents the work of graphic and landscape designer Barbara Stauffacher Solomon to a new generation of design lovers.

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Barbara Stauffacher Solomon with “Exit” sign mock-up at Demonstration House, The Sea Ranch, California.

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The Palm Springs Art Museum will present the work of renowned San Francisco-based graphic and landscape designer Barbara Stauffacher Solomon, best known for her groundbreaking 1966 supergraphics at The Sea Ranch in Northern California. The exhibition, Barbara Stauffacher Solomon.

Breaking all the Rules will be shown at the museum’s Architecture and Design Center from Oct. 5, through Jan. 20, 2020.

Solomon mixed Swiss Modernism with West Coast Pop to create a fresh, new look that came to be called California Cool and is recognized as a seminal moment in the history of graphic design. In 1990, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art mounted an exhibition of Solomon’s Ping Pong paintings, which are the same size as the actual tables used in the sport, together with actual ping pong tables for use by visitors. The ping pong tables were removed within a few days, leaving only the paintings.

The Palm Springs Art Museum Architecture and Design Center will recreate Solomon’s Ping Pong Parlor, which will be complemented by a new site-specific supergraphic designed by Solomon. Visitors will have the opportunity to watch the painting of the supergraphic before the exhibition officially opens.

In addition to the Ping Pong Parlor, the exhibition also includes a large selection of Solomon’s beautiful hand drawings from the 1970s to the present. In the 1980s, Solomon investigated the idea of the green rectangle as a symbol of parks, gardens, public squares and parking lots, a theme she explored in her 1988 book, *Green Architecture and the Agrarian Garden*. For Solomon, “green architecture” is where architecture and landscape architecture overlap. A selection of process drawings from her 1990 *Good Mourning California* series will be included along with sketches and drawings for the design of the exhibition.



Installation view of Barbara Stauffacher Solomon's Ping Pong paintings in Visionary San Francisco, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1990.

“Bobbie Solomon is enjoying something of a renaissance right now and it is an absolute thrill to have her create a special installation just for Palm Springs,” says Louis Grachos, JoAnn McGrath executive director/chief executive officer.

“It has been amazing to work closely with Bobbie over the past year to bring this exhibition to life and I am excited to introduce the work of this inspiring woman to a new generation of design lovers. Not only did Bobbie break the rules by blowing up her designs to an architectural scale at The Sea Ranch, she also broke the rules by encouraging museum visitors to play ping pong in the exhibition gallery. At SFMOMA, the ping pong playing was short-lived but in Palm Springs we hope it will echo throughout the space for the entire run of the show,” says Brooke Hodge, director of the A+D Center.

Solomon will join fellow artist Jim Isermann and Hodge for a conversation about pattern and design at the Annenberg Theater on Dec. 12.

Barbara Stauffacher Solomon, *Breaking all the Rules*, is organized by Brooke Hodge, director of Palm Springs Art Museum Architecture and Design Center, with generous support from L.J. Cella. For more information about Palm Springs Art Museum exhibitions, programs, and events, visit psmuseum.org (<http://psmuseum.org>) or call 760-322-4800.

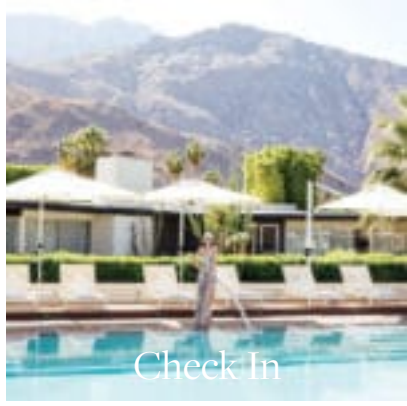


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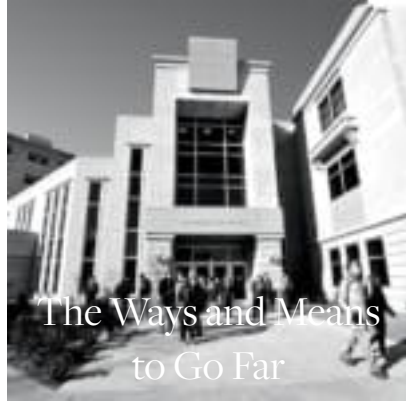
Barbara Stauffacher Solomon, *Blue Wave #1*, 2018, colored pencil and graphite on paper.

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