

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Art Queen Enters New Era as Must-Stop Destination in the High Desert**

*A place to roam, explore, and experience Joshua Tree's creative soul*



**Joshua Tree, CA (February 2, 2026)** - Art Queen remains one of Downtown Joshua Tree's most compelling cultural destinations and a must-stop for anyone visiting the high desert. Entering a new era of stewardship and programming, the artist compound continues to offer a rare mix of discovery, creativity, and community, welcoming art lovers, curious travelers, families, collectors, and passersby alike. Built in the early 1940s and shaped over decades by artists and makers, Art Queen has long functioned as a living arts campus rather than a conventional retail complex.

Set against the vast desert landscape, Art Queen carries a sense of discovery that feels inseparable from Joshua Tree itself. Visitors are encouraged to wander freely between studios,

shops, performances, and informal gatherings, encountering creativity in many forms and at many scales. Some come to browse artist-made goods or rare books, others to attend a performance or workshop, and others simply to experience the atmosphere. The openness of the space makes Art Queen approachable, whether one is deeply engaged with the arts or encountering it casually for the first time.

Artist Shari Elf, founder of the Crochet Museum, played a formative role in shaping Art Queen's artist-run, craft-driven spirit. That ethos continues today alongside longtime creative anchors such as Space Cowboy Books, which marks its tenth year at the property in 2026 and has been central to the site's literary and cultural life.

Beyond studios and shops, Art Queen has long served as a platform for creative exchange. Performance areas, informal stages, and shared spaces have hosted readings, music, theater, film screenings, workshops, and community events, creating opportunities for both local artists and visiting creatives to present work, collaborate, and engage with audiences.

"In my decade at Art Queen, it has remained a hub of culture and community, hosting Pride events, plays, film screenings, readings, gallery exhibitions, art workshops, and more. It is a place where art can thrive surrounded by the natural beauty of the desert."

Jean-Paul L. Garnier, owner of Space Cowboy Books and Editor in Chief of *Electronic Brain Magazine*

Now stewarded by AHA Projects, Art Queen is being preserved with a light touch. AHA Projects acquired the property in 2024 to preserve it for arts and culture, safeguarding it from overdevelopment while maintaining its artist-centered character. Thoughtful improvements are allowing the campus to evolve while continuing to offer affordable creative space, performance opportunities, and welcoming experiences for a wide range of visitors.

Current artist vendors at Art Queen include Beauty Bubble, Space Cowboy Books, the Shari Elf Store, the Crochet Museum, Joshua Tree Blanket Company, Simon Says, Nomadic Ceramic, Studio Alvarez, Gitana Gold, Lorenzo, Strictly Retro Vinyl + Vintage, Sun Spot, Robert Warner Leather, and a rotating mix of artist studios and independent creative shops. On-site art galleries include La Matadora, Coyote Little Gallery + Learning Center, and the Alien Robot Museum.

With new artist experiences, performances, and seasonal programming unfolding throughout 2026, Art Queen continues to solidify its place as a destination where art, community, and desert culture meet, making it an essential stop for anyone exploring Joshua Tree and the greater high desert.

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## About Art Queen

Art Queen is an artist-centered creative campus in Downtown Joshua Tree, California. Home to a longstanding community of independent artists, makers, and small creative businesses, Art Queen provides space for studios, galleries, retail, performances, workshops, and artist-led initiatives. Rooted in the desert's DIY spirit, Art Queen remains committed to affordability, experimentation, and sustaining creative life in the Morongo Basin. <https://artqueen.org/> [@artqueen\\_jt](#)

## About AHA Projects

AHA Projects is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting and sustaining arts and cultural spaces. Through stewardship, advocacy, and operational support, the organization works to ensure that artists and creative communities have long-term access to space, resources, and stability. Affordable Housing for Artists brings more than two decades of nonprofit leadership experience to projects across California. <https://aha-projects.org/>

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