



MEDIA ADVISORY

Desert X becomes a vital arts educational resource in the Coachella Valley through its Desert X Art Club

Second Desert X Art Club student exhibition will open to public May 31, 2024 at College of the Desert in Palm Desert, CA



**Members of the media are invited to Desert X Art Club exhibition Opening Reception
Friday, May 31, 2024 from 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Walter N. Marks Center for the Arts, College of the Desert, 43-500 Monterey Ave, Palm
Desert, CA 92260**

**Exhibition on view Friday, May 31 – Friday, June 7, 2024, Tuesdays – Fridays, 11:00 a.m. –
4:00 p.m., free admission**

Palm Springs, Calif. – Desert X has become a major arts educational resource in the Coachella Valley through its Desert X Art Club. The dynamic, cross-disciplinary after school program provides K-8 students with the opportunity to explore public artworks in their communities, meet local artists, and create visual, mixed-media, and digital arts to amplify their artistic voices.

Opening on Friday, May 31, 2024 at Walter N. Marks Center for the Arts at College of the Desert, the second Desert X Art Club student exhibition will present artworks and videos created as part of a robust Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELOP) with elementary and middle school students in **Desert Sands Unified School District**. The free exhibition will remain on view until June 7, 2024.

During the 2023-24 school year, Desert X ran 14 after school Desert X Arts Clubs, including at **Benjamin Franklin Elementary School, Desert Ridge Academy, Indio Middle School, John Glenn Middle School** and **Ronald Reagan Elementary School**, engaging students in hands-on studio art and video projects as they investigated and responded to art in the built and natural landscapes. Students had the opportunity to meet Desert X artists **Gerald Clarke, Armando Lerma** and **Phillip K. Smith III** during after school field trips, explore public, site-specific art, collaborate with local artists, learn from the organization's cultural partners – **Palm Springs Art Museum** and **Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival**, and explore the landscapes of the Coachella Valley. Students then made personal and collaborative 3D artworks responding to their discoveries, as they delved into the many themes behind the Desert X artworks.

“Education has been central to Desert X’s mission since its inception in 2017, and this past school year our Desert X Art Club took place for the first time outside of an exhibition year, setting a blueprint for what will continue as an ongoing arts resource for both students and arts educators,” said Executive Director Jenny Gil. “To date, Desert X has provided 1050 cumulative instruction hours to 2140 students and 50 teachers in the three Coachella Valley Title 1 school districts, With our fifth edition of Desert X opening in March 2025, we will be presenting new site-specific artworks by artists from around the world, which we hope will continue to inspire and empower young, future artists in the Coachella Valley.”

The Desert X Art Club will continue for its third year with schools already signed up to participate. Ten-week sessions are available for the Fall, Winter, and Spring of the 2024-2025 academic year. If you are interested in bringing the Desert X Art Club to your school, contact Desert X Education Producer Max Finneran at max@desertx.org.

Image credit: Desert X Art Club students from Indio Middle School, Desert Ridge Academy (DSUSD) on field trip at 2024 Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival, photo by Angel Espiridion, courtesy Desert X

Acknowledgement of Native Land

We acknowledge the Cahuilla People as the original stewards of the land on which Desert X takes place. We are grateful to have the opportunity to work with the indigenous people in this place. We pay our respect to the Cahuilla People, past, present and emerging, who have been here since time immemorial.

Desert X Education Video

This 3-minute video illustrates Desert X Education’s impact since 2017:
<https://vimeo.com/781307193/3a60c54257>

Desert X education programs are made possible with the support of Jordan Schnitzer and the Harold & Arlene Schnitzer CARE Foundation, Desert Sands Unified School District, California Arts Council, National Endowment for the Arts, Western Wind Foundation, H.N. and Frances C. Berger Foundation, Christine & James Scott, The Sheffer/Scheffler Advised Fund at The Inland Empire Community Foundation, Blick Art Supplies, Palm Springs Art Museum, and Sunnylands Center & Gardens, as well as teachers and friends in education and community partners.

Desert X is produced by The Desert Biennial, a 501(c)3 charitable organization, conceived to produce recurring international contemporary art exhibitions that activate desert locations through site-specific installations by acclaimed international artists. Its guiding principles include presenting public exhibitions of art that are free to the public and respond meaningfully to the conditions of desert locations, the environment, indigenous communities, and promote cultural exchange. Desert X is committed to education and public programming with a robust series of initiatives that expand the breadth and depth of the organization's engagement with the surrounding community. The exhibitions provide a platform for artists from around the world to address ecological, cultural, spiritual and other existential themes. From its inception in 2017, Desert X has presented four exhibitions in the Coachella Valley. In 2020, the organization began to engage with exhibitions outside the United States and helped establish Desert X AIUla in the desert of Saudi Arabia. The exhibitions to date have explored new configurations of site-responsive work by more than 80 artists from North America, South America, South Asia, Europe, the Middle East and Africa creating a new paradigm for the presentation and experience of art and welcoming an audience of over 1.7 million. Desert X is funded by its board of directors and an international group of individual donors, foundations, and sponsors.

The next edition of the [Desert X exhibition](#), curated by Desert X Artistic Director Neville Wakefield and Co-curator Kaitlin Garcia-Maestas, will open at sites across the Coachella Valley on March 8–May 11, 2025.

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Communications and media relations

Lyn Winter, Inc.

desertx@lynwinter.com

+1 (213) 446-0788

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