

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Call Me the Breeze
Commissioner: Jenni Parido
Curator: Jeffrey Uslip
Exhibitor: Alma Allen
Venue: Giardini



La Biennale di Venezia

61. Esposizione
Internazionale
d'Arte

Partecipazioni Nazionali

The United States Pavilion

Call Me The Breeze

MediaKit



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UNITED STATES PAVILION TO OPEN AT THE 61ST INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITION OF LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA WITH LANDMARK SOLO PRESENTATION BY ALMA ALLEN: CALL ME THE BREEZE

*The U.S. Pavilion will host an opening event on
Wednesday, May 6 at 11 a.m., during the Biennale's
official opening week in Venice, inaugurating the 2026*

exhibition curated by Jeffrey Uslip .

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VENICE, Italy (May 4, 2026) — The United States Pavilion at the 61st International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia presents “Call Me the Breeze,” an expansive solo presentation by acclaimed American artist **Alma Allen**, curated by **Jeffrey Uslip**, and commissioned by the **American Arts Conservancy** in cooperation with the **U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA)**, with support from the **Guggenheim Foundation**. Widely regarded as one of the most influential recurring exhibitions in the world, La Biennale di Venezia convenes leading artists, curators, scholars, institutions, collectors, and international audiences from across the globe. The United States Pavilion remains among its most prominent and closely watched national presentations.



In Venice this year, Allen will transform the historic pavilion through a sweeping corpus of sculpture made of cast bronze, shaped American walnut burl, and a variety of carved stone including of Mexican onyx, Guatemalan green quartzite, Mexican black marble, and Persian travertine, as well as Colorado Yule marble, a luminous white stone that has been used to construct several of our nation's historic monuments, including the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Celebrated for a practice that merges natural form with architectural precision, Allen's work feels at once ancient, contemporary, elemental, and deeply human.

The exhibition will position the Pavilion as a contemplative environment, championing art that favors deep time and eschews finite positions. Conceived specifically for Venice, the presentation invites audiences into a dialogue between permanence and transformation, intimacy and monumentality, trauma and rehabilitation, landscape and memory. Taken as a whole, "Call Me the Breeze" is a proposal to be our future selves in the present and explores the concept of elevation, both as a physical manifestation of form and as a symbol of self-realization.

Reflecting on the honor of being selected to represent the United States at the Biennale, Allen said the works invite viewers to participate in the act of communication and making meaning: "I see communication as one individual at a time engaging with the work while simultaneously experiencing their own moment of creation," he reflected. "I feel like this combination happens each time a person offers their attention – and is willing to feel and decide for themselves what the work means."

"Alma Allen's biomorphic sculptures evoke the visceral realities of contemporary life and reveal the fragility and resilience of the human condition," added **Jeffrey Uslip**, Curator of the 2026 U.S. Pavilion. "The expansive environments and landscapes in which Allen has lived and worked have shaped his points of view, developed his sculptural vocabulary, and informed how he moves through the world. This exhibition will offer an immersive encounter with an artist whose practice speaks to timeless questions of beauty, space, memory, and our relationship to the natural world."

When asked how he hopes visitors might respond to his work at the Pavilion, Alma noted that he does not see the works as individual objects, but in relationship to one another and to other worlds and universes. "I work with my hands over and over and over again until I find the thing that I'm making *in* the thing. I'm often surprised by it, and I hope the visitors to the U.S. Pavilion can approach them with the same openness. I want them to have a shift where something new happens in the encounter itself."

"Alma is one of the most singular artistic voices working today," said **Jenni Parido**, Commissioner of the U.S. Pavilion and President of the American Arts Conservancy. "His work reflects extraordinary discipline, imagination, and sensitivity to material. We are proud to support this ambitious presentation and honored to bring an artist of this caliber to represent the United States in Venice."

The exhibition will open to the public on May 9, 2026 and remain on view through November 22, 2026.

ABOUT ALMA ALLEN

Alma Allen is an American artist internationally recognized for sculptural works that unite gestural immediacy, refined craftsmanship, and material innovation. Working across bronze, marble, wood, stone, and cast materials, Allen's practice has been exhibited widely in museums, institutions, and major collections worldwide. Allen is the first self-taught artist to represent the U.S. Pavilion at the Venice Biennale.

ABOUT JEFFREY USLIP

Jeffrey Uslip, the U.S. Pavilion curator, has organized solo exhibitions with some of the most innovative and challenging artists of our time. Uslip is a curator and museum leader known for organizing courageous and critically acclaimed exhibitions and advancing artist-centered programming across contemporary art institutions in the United States for more than three decades. Uslip's landmark exhibition Hurvin Anderson: Backdrop traveled to the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, where it was shortlisted for the prestigious 2017 Turner Prize.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN ARTS CONSERVANCY

The American Arts Conservancy is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving, promoting, and advancing the visual arts of the United States. Through cultural diplomacy, educational outreach, and stewardship, it supports the legacy of American artists at home and abroad while fostering dialogue across communities and generations.

ABOUT THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE'S BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL & CULTURAL AFFAIRS

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) builds relationships between the people of the United States and other countries through academic, cultural, professional, and artistic exchange. Through international partnerships and public diplomacy initiatives, ECA advances mutual understanding and global collaboration.

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The United States Pavilion - *Call Me The Breeze*

Opening Ceremony - 6 May 2026 (all times local Venice time)

10:30AM - Guests begin arriving to the US Pavillion

11:00AM - Opening Ceremony Begins, Guests are called to attention

11:05AM - Remarks:

- Representative from the Peggy Guggenheim Collection - Mariët Westermann
- Jeffrey Uslip, Curator of the US Pavilion, gives remarks
- Jenni Parido, Commissioner of the U.S. Pavilion
- Tilman J. Fertitta, U.S. Ambassador to Italy

11:22AM - Ribbon cutting

11:25AM - Formal event concludes and US Pavilion opens to press and guests

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United States Pavilion

61st International Art Exhibition—La Biennale di Venezia

Alma Allen: Call Me the Breeze

Alma Allen's biomorphic sculptures evoke the visceral realities of contemporary life and reveal the fragility and resilience of the human condition. The expansive environments and landscapes in which Allen has lived and worked have shaped his points of view, developed his sculptural vocabulary, and informed how he moves through the world. Inspired by the natural geological formations of the Americas, Allen has created a corpus of work that highlights the alchemical transformation of matter: the strata of rough rock appear smoothed through the passage of time, and solid bronze occurs as liquid. *Call Me the Breeze*, the official United States Pavilion for the 61st International Art Exhibition, explores the concept of elevation, both as a physical manifestation of form and as a symbol of self-realization.

For over three decades, Allen has developed a hybrid process that combines preindustrial methods of carving and hand-shaping with advanced technology, such as robotic sculpting. With a commitment to material authenticity, Allen consistently and methodically works in matter often local to the Americas, including American walnut burl and Oaxacan verde marble. *Call Me the Breeze* features six stone sculptures that incorporate varieties of Mexican onyx, Guatemalan green quartzite, Mexican black marble, and Persian travertine, as well as Colorado Yule marble, a luminous white stone that has been used to construct several of our nation's historic monuments, including the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC.

Allen's sculptures function as "actants" that generate meaning, rather than artifacts that illustrate a fixed idea. As actants, Allen's works are not passive objects to interpret; instead, they open dialogues and foster discourse. The artist's "Not Yet Titled" forms operate, rather than represent. Each work in *Call Me the Breeze* is both sphinx and chimera; the sculptures' material lightness of being offers poignant clues to multiple meanings; beneath their disarming buoyancy lies profound conceptual, artistic, and philosophical depth.



For example, the exhibition presents an asterism of sculptures in the pavilion's forecourt that suggest the perils faced by an unshared sheep when courageous enough to stray from the flock, and a polished bronze wall relief – an Eye of Providence – whose meaning oscillates between divine protection and surveillance. The Pavilions iconic Rotunda gallery features a monumental totemic figure whose form, evocative of both Our Lady of Guadalupe and a saguaro, welds the worldly with the divine. Elsewhere in the galleries, beholders are faced with an allegorical choice between an open portal and a closed door; viewers will encounter a bronze figure of a young person witnessing “the terror of war” and will experience a sculpture made of walnut burl, which is, in essence, a tree's response to trauma, manifested as arboreal scar tissue. Taken as a whole, the exhibition is an opportunity to be our future selves in the present.

For Allen, “the sculptures are often in the act of doing something. They are going away, or leaving, or interacting with something invisible. Even though they seem static as objects, they are not static in my mind. In my mind, they are part of a much larger universe.” It is precisely this “counter-temporal” quality that prevents Allen's work from being paraphrased as a monument or message. *Call Me the Breeze* is a proposal for self-reflection, renewal, and unity. The landscape has a way of slowing things down, recalibrating scale, expanding perception, and offering perspective.

We are at a critical moment in culture: as the nation approaches its semiquincentennial, celebrating the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the United States Pavilion champions art that favors deep time, eschews finite positions, and encourages artistic autonomy and curatorial independence. Allen's sculpture, like all allocentric art, is decidedly present *and* a cipher for the future. The artist's signature visual vocabulary provides the ground for “the Allocene” – a proposal for art that embodies a state of alterity, weightlessness, and freedom of thought: Matter, time, and landscape are co-authors of meaning.

– Jeffrey Uslip, Curator, United States Pavilion

Artist Statement

Su Wu : Alma, what is it?

Alma : My work is as stubborn as I am, I cannot tell you.

Su Wu : But don't you worry you will be misunderstood, with every work "Not Yet Titled"?

Alma : Perhaps, but then you might look, and move beyond the legible into the recesses of your body, and the feelings you hold there. Here is the deflated moment after cruelty expended, and here is power, in truths and truths withheld. Here is cancellation deployed as a physical act and in moral justification, and here is a repair. There are those who watch you and those who refuse to see you. Yet still are the moons rising over ruins, and the breeze that curves around edges, the backs of knees and approval, and here: here is the biggest risk of my life except for all the other ones, which is not timed calculation but necessity when you don't have other options for survival, and I do not think I am the only one who understands this. These are spaces of violence and wonder, intimate notations of vulnerability, and containing within the same span as precarity the possibilities of transcendence, in these still moving, tensile works of becoming. Here is harm, you pieces of stone, here is your courage. I do not think I will be misunderstood by anyone who has ever been alive, or ever wanted to be.

Exhibition Sponsors

Alma Allen : *Call Me the Breeze* is made possible through the support of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), Peggy Guggenheim Foundation, The American Arts Conservancy, Nicola Verses, The Honorable John C. Phelan and Amy Phelan, The Kathleen and Andrew McKenna Family Foundation, Nancy C. and Ricahrd R. Rogers, Charles Wickser Banta, The Honorable David Fischer and Jennifer Fischer, Skye and Rufus Hankey, Dee & Tommy Hilfiger, Gene and Jerry Jones Family, Virginia A. Beckett, Marilyn J. Scripps, John A. Mocker Jr., Ryan P. Coyne, The Bardonaro Family Foundation, Janet Steinger, Harbor Fund, Sherie Marek, Carlos A. Rivera, and Akash Shah.

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ALMA ALLEN - BIO

Alma Allen (b. 1970, Salt Lake City, Utah) works in a wide range of materials, including bronze, parota wood, various types of marble, obsidian, and stalagmite. His sculptures retain a strikingly unique energy and original aesthetic. From sinuously thin bronze shapes to magmatic and smooth marble outpourings, Allen's biomorphic forms seem to rise up effortlessly from the artist's chosen material. Allen's artistic trajectory has seen him progress from humble origins, selling hand-carved miniatures on the streets of SoHo in New York City, to his breakthrough moment of recognition after his acclaimed presentation at the 2014 Whitney Biennial.

Reflecting a largely self-taught background, the spontaneity and energy of Allen's work seem to bear little connection to the artistic movements of his time. In fact, they have more in common, formally and perhaps spiritually, with the vast expanses of territory and the monolithic natural formations that have informed his life: Utah, where he grew up; Joshua Tree, California, where he lived for several years; and Tepoztlán, Mexico, where his studio is located. Rocks, branches, and unspecified biomorphic entities exude an almost prehistoric energy, their size and mass undermined by their apparent levity and effortless presence.



Allen's work has been exhibited in numerous international museums, including the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, Connecticut; and the Museo Anahuacalli, Mexico City. Most recently, the artist was awarded the Park Avenue sculpture exhibition in New York City by the Sculpture Committee of the Fund for Park Avenue and the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation's Art in the Parks program. Alma Allen's work is in the permanent collections of several public institutions, among them the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Palm Springs Art Museum in California.

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Jeffrey Uslip - BIO

For nearly three decades, Jeffrey Uslip, the U.S. Pavilion curator, has organized solo exhibitions with some of the most innovative and challenging artists of our time. They include Hurvin Anderson, Mark Bradford, Lynda Benglis, Laurie Simmons, Joyce Pensato, Carla Klein, Hede Bühl, Barkley Hendricks, Kelley Walker, Leslie Hewitt, Michael Queenland, Igloolik Isuma Productions, Lisa Yuskavage, Katharina Fritsch, Joe Goode, Jesse Howard, and Agnes Denes.

Uslip's landmark exhibition Hurvin Anderson: Backdrop traveled to the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, where it was shortlisted for the prestigious 2017 Turner Prize.

In 2022 Uslip was co-curator of the Malta Pavilion at the 59th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia. The exhibition, titled Diplomazija Astuta, featured artist Arcangelo Sassolino, who reimagined Caravaggio's seminal altarpiece The Beheading of Saint John the Baptist as a kinetic sculptural installation that overlaid biblical narrative onto the present, resituating Caravaggio's immanent themes within modern life.



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Jenni Parido - BIO

For the past fifteen years, Parido has focused her philanthropic, charitable, and humanitarian efforts on a wide range of causes, including child welfare and protection, arts education and cultural preservation, water safety and drowning prevention, animal welfare, and animal rescue. She has served in advisory and leadership capacities for nonprofit and community-based initiatives such as Redefining Refuge, Live Like Jake, and Big Dog Ranch Rescue.

Most recently, in 2025, Parido founded the American Arts Conservancy, a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to preserving, promoting, and educating through American visual art, with a focus on cultural diplomacy, public access, and educational engagement. Since its founding, Parido has led the organization in diverse efforts to curate and commission publicly accessible exhibitions, develop youth and educational programming, support historic and contemporary American artists, and partner with international cultural institutions, including initiatives aligned with the U.S. Department of State's Art in Embassies program and America's 250th anniversary.



This May, the American Arts Conservancy, under Parido's stewardship, is serving as the commissioning organization for Alma Allen: Call Me the Breeze, the official United States Pavilion, 61st International Art Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia.

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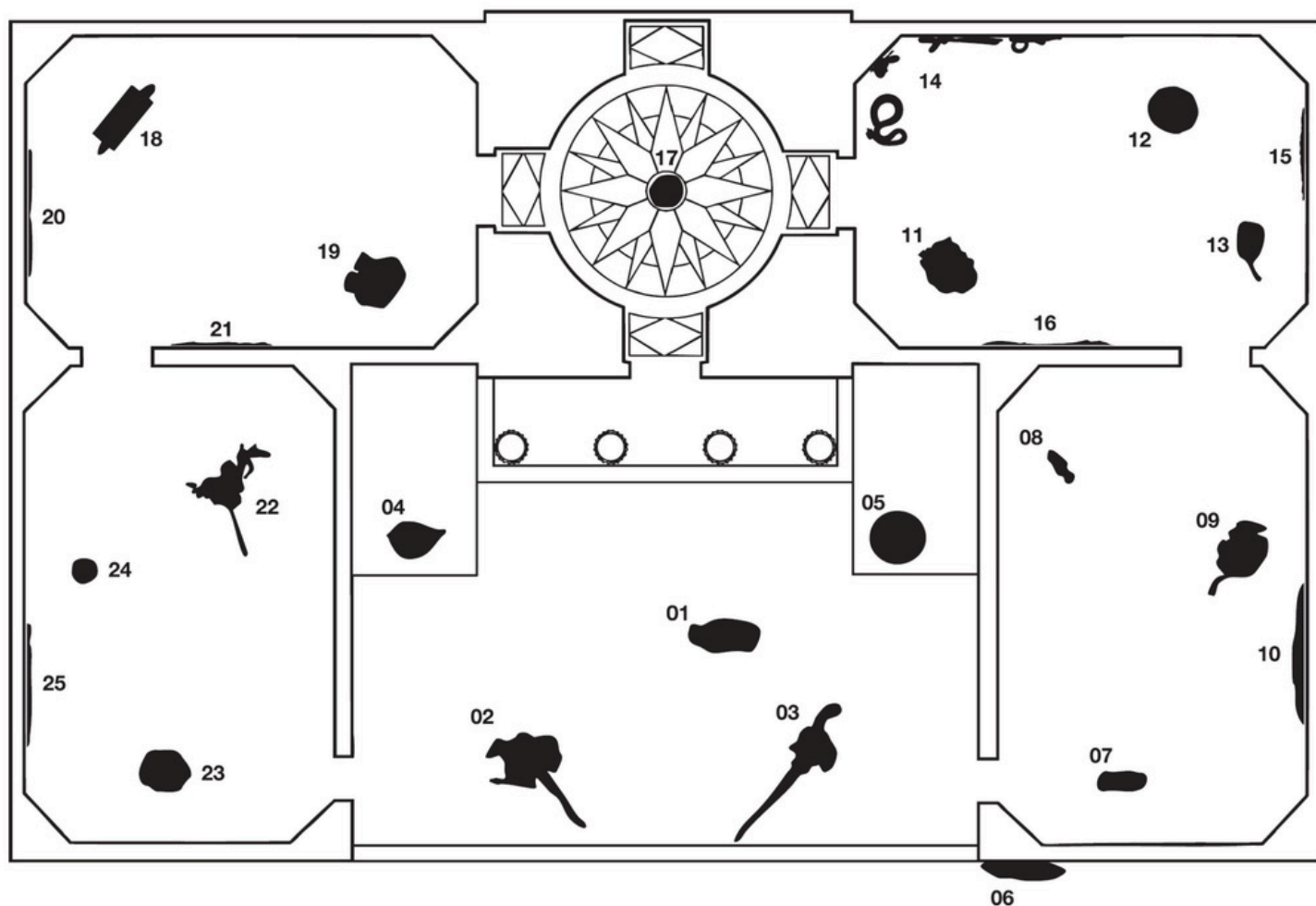


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LEGEND

- | | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|--|----|--|--|----|---|---|
| 01 |  | <i>Not Yet Titled</i> , 2026
Bronze
H 100.00 x L 124.00 x W 64.00 cm | 11 |  | <i>Not Yet Titled</i> , 2022
Bronze
H 220.50 x L 102.90 x W 99.10 cm | 18 |  | <i>Not Yet Titled</i> , 2024
Colorado yule marble, wood pedestal
H 206.00 x L 160.00 x W 36.00 cm |
| 02 |  | <i>Not Yet Titled</i> , 2024
Bronze
H 177.20 x L 298.40 x W 191.10 cm | 12 |  | <i>Not Yet Titled</i> , 2025
Mexican onyx
H 92.50 x L 88.00 x W 86.00 cm | 19 |  | <i>Not Yet Titled</i> , 2025
Bronze
H 153.90 x L 120.00 x W 110.00 cm |
| 03 |  | <i>Not Yet Titled</i> , 2024
Bronze
H 177.80 x L 350.50 x W 104.10 cm | 13 |  | <i>Not Yet Titled</i> , 2022
Bronze
H 117.00 x L 53.00 x W 106.00 cm | 20 |  | <i>Not Yet Titled</i> , 2022
Bronze
H 301.00 x L 166.50 x W 15.00 cm |
| 04 |  | <i>Not Yet Titled</i> , 2026
Gatemalan green quartzite
H 200.00 x L 94.00 x W 75.00 cm | 14 |  | <i>Not Yet Titled</i> , 2026
Bronze
Dimensions variable | 21 |  | <i>Not Yet Titled</i> , 2026
Bronze
H 180.00 x L 143.00 x W 17.00 cm |
| 05 |  | <i>Not Yet Titled</i> , 2019
Mexican marble
H 158.00 x L 96.00 x W 90.00 cm | 15 |  | <i>Not Yet Titled</i> , 2026
Bronze
H 160.00 x L 153.00 x W 8.50 cm | 22 |  | <i>Not Yet Titled</i> , 2021
Bronze
H 150.00 x L 350.00 x W 240.00 cm |
| 06 |  | <i>Not Yet Titled</i> , 2026
Bronze
H 71.00 x L 90.00 x W 22.00 cm | 16 |  | <i>Not Yet Titled</i> , 2023
Bronze
H 117.10 x L 200.00 x W 8.50 cm | 23 |  | <i>Not Yet Titled</i> , 2014
Claro walnut
H 61.00 x L 88.90 x W 85.10 cm |
| 07 |  | <i>Not Yet Titled</i> , 2016
Persian travertine
H 127.00 x L 35.60 x W 61.00 cm | 17 |  | <i>Not Yet Titled</i> , 2026
Bronze
H 450.00 x L 88.00 x W 81.50 cm | 24 |  | <i>Not Yet Titled</i> , 2024
Mexican onyx
H 181.60 x L 34.30 x W 35.60 cm |
| 08 |  | <i>Not Yet Titled</i> , 2022
Bronze
H 120.00 x L 66.00 x W 30.00 cm | | | | 25 |  | <i>Not Yet Titled</i> , 2026
Bronze
H 158.00 x L 180.00 x W 13.00 cm |
| 09 |  | <i>Not Yet Titled</i> , 2022
Bronze
H 194.00 x L 140.00 x W 96.00 cm | | | | | | |
| 10 |  | <i>Not Yet Titled</i> , 2026
Bronze
H 206.00 x L 210.00 x W 28.00 cm | | | | | | |

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IMAGES

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