



Josh Agle, aka Shag, is a master of the mid-century lounge aesthetic. His work, including "Downtown Buzz" (right) and "Desert Polynesia" (far right), often represents the Palm Springs lifestyle.



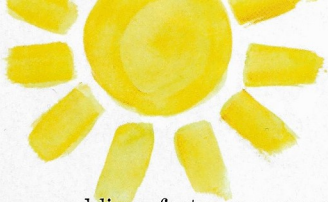
MIDCENTURY MODERN MAN

"When people think back on nostalgic times, they tend to remember the good things, and that's what I'm trying to do with my paintings. I paint the party, not the hangover," says artist Josh Agle, better known as Shag (his nom de brousse is a playful blend of the last two letters of his first name and the first two letters of his last).

An icon of the Palm Springs art scene, Shag is renowned for his candy-colored scenes that celebrate all things mid-century modern, from swinging poolside soirees, Rat Pack roués and the cult of the tiki, to, of course, the far-out fashions and trendsetting architecture that abound in the Southern California town. Equal parts "Jetsons," "Mad Men" and James Bond, the work is informed by commercial illustrations of the '50s and '60s—with a soupçon of satire and modern-day sensibilities.

"When I first began doing my own work, it was aspirational. I painted the things I liked and the things I was surrounded by—art I hoped to buy and parties I hoped to go to one day," says the artist, who got his start as a graphic designer in the record industry. His artwork took off in the mid-'90s after a piece he contributed to an exhibition attracted the attention of collectors and gallerists who wanted more.

In the early 2000s, the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation commissioned Shag to paint a piece featuring local tiki architecture. The image, "Desert Polynesia," rendered in vivid shades of orange, red



and lime, features a group of Hawaiian print-clad tourists on board the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway; a stylized version of the Caliente Tropics hotel looms in the distance. Projects for the Greater Palm Springs Convention and Visitors Bureau soon followed. In 2009, he opened his own gallery, Shag, The Store, on the edge of the city's famed Old Las Palmas neighborhood.

"Shag's art captures Palm Springs' people, style and art. It represents an era of the city that is still as glamorous today as it was when the stars put it on the map," says CVB vice president Jeff Miraglia.

Many of the environments in his paintings are real places—houses in Palm Springs, where he owns a Donald Wexler-designed retreat, or near his home and studio outside of Los Angeles—filled with quintessential midcentury furnishings. Love an Eames lounge? It's there. As are classic Noguchi coffee tables, Malm fireplaces and ever-so-groovy Arne Jacobsen Egg chairs.

"The people who were creating the furniture and midcentury modern houses felt like they were improving the world with their designs, that in 10 or 15 years that chair or that home was going to increase the condition of every American," Shag says of his inspiration. "It's total optimism in design, and I love that enthusiasm."

"A lot of the people in my paintings I also know or knew," he continues. "Now they've been turned into archetypes." There are sophisticated, svelte ladies with beehive hairdos and genteel gents dressed to kill. "And whenever I need a little spot of dark in the foreground, I throw in a cat to balance the composition," he adds.

The designs are flat, with sharp edges, and the colors—minimalist palettes of purples, yellows, turquoises, greens and oranges—range from the kitschy brights of the 1950s to the earthy hues of the early '60s. The look is achieved with acrylic paints. Prints are silkscreens, an old-school throwback to the works of such Shag favorites as Alexander Calder, Andy Warhol and even the attractions posters once displayed at Disneyland.

"There's a certain whimsical, mysterious element to Shag's art that is fun and makes people smile when they see it," says Miraglia. "When people think of Palm Springs, he should be a part of that story. Just as Warhol is a part of the pop culture of our country, Shag is a part of the pop culture of our destination." (shag.com) —RLR



SHAG'S 4 FAVORITES

FAVORITE ARCHITECT John Lautner. He designed some famous homes in Palm Springs, including the Elrod House and Bob Hope's residence. He really pushed a lot of boundaries, and his houses kind of look like supervillain lairs.

FAVORITE COCKTAIL Singapore Sling. It's a powerful gin-based drink, and it's a lot more tart than sweet.

FAVORITE RAT PACK MEMBER Frank Sinatra. Although

I love them all, there's something about Frank. He was responsible for getting all the celebrities to move to Palm Springs. He built his house there in 1948, and everyone followed him.

FAVORITE THING ABOUT

PALM SPRINGS If I have to narrow it down to one thing, I'll say the architecture. There are a lot of cool getaway places that I like, but Palm Springs is the only one that has a strong emphasis on midcentury vacation architecture.

