

vicki stavrou

Sunny Side Up

November 15 to November 29, 2025

Vicki Stavrou explores the Palm Springs and mid-century modern phenomenon along with the two iconic identities of this time - Barbie and Ken.

Both Barbie (born 1959) and Ken (born 1961) emerged alongside mid-century modernism in the shape of sophistication and a perfectly designed life. Mid-century modernism represented a confident new way of living - open plan spaces, organic lines, and minimalist forms set amid the optimism of atomic age America.

“Palm Springs was the epicentre of mid-century modernism due to the influence of movie stars in Hollywood who desired a nearby escape and Palm Springs was perfectly situated for this need”.

“Exploring mid-century modernism in Palm Springs is a fascinating look at the architecture and lifestyle where desert light, elegant homes and pastel palettes combined to lure movie stars to the desert. It was a time of post war optimism, playfulness and freedom of expression with clean lines, leisure, and a strong relationship between indoors and out.”

“Painting Barbie and Ken is a way of playing with dolls in my imagination and bringing them to life in mid-century modern settings. Barbie and Ken mimicked the lifestyles of this era with style and confidence. I love to use strong pastels and the mid-century palette is teeming with beautiful bold colour combinations.

Vicki's paintings depict these two simultaneous cultures. She combines them to show how Barbie and Ken indeed personified the perfect lifestyle. Barbie's first home was a cardboard mid-century modern home (which sold for \$3). Paired with mid-century modernism Barbie and Ken tell a story of how architecture and fantasy shaped modern identity with humour, beauty and hope and filled it with light, cactus and breezeblocks.

Vicki was one of 14 artists from Australia and America selected to exhibit in Lost in Palm Springs a National touring exhibition curated by Dr Greer Honeywill. She has been a finalist in the Doyles Art Awards in 2025 and 2024 when her landscape work was Highly Commended. She has been a finalist in the Lethbridge small scale art award, Border Art Prize, Gallery 7 Art Prize, Byron Art Prize, 30 x 30 Art Prize, third prize winner at the C.A.S.E. Postcard show, and selected as a finalist in the BAM Art Prize in 2018 where she received an honourable mention for her work. Her work is in private collections throughout Australia and overseas.

