The world has become much smaller because of the Internet, and that is especially true for the artist community. Perhaps we take for granted how simple it is to view mosaics in South Africa, get technical advice from a British artist, or discover an exhibition opportunity in Australia, all from our desks in the U.S.A. Over the years, I have forged relationships with artists and educators in other countries, discovering again that we can speak the same language through art.

As artists working in mosaic, we find that there is so much to be learned from other communities. It is in that spirit that SAMA has initiated a reciprocal partnership program with other arts organizations such as the British Association of Modern Mosaic, the Mosaic Association of Australia and New Zealand, International Association of Contemporary Mosaicists, the Handmade Tile Association, Tile Heritage Foundation, and Community Built Association.

It is our hope that this network of relationships will expose all our members around the globe to new possibilities beyond their own borders. The exchange of information with these art communities is another example of how SAMA has grown in 10 years.

So many artists work in isolation, existing without community interaction or forums for information and collaboration. Since SAMA was established in 1999, its board members, staff, and enthusiastic volunteers have worked to educate, inspire, and promote excellence in fine mosaic art by organizing programs, events, and activities that serve and enrich our artist-members and the public.

As we move into our second decade, remember that your membership is vital to our strength and global reach. Help us grow by contributing an article to Groutline, donating to our 10th Anniversary Legacy Fund, participating in our next conference in Chicago in March 2010, or volunteering to help on one of SAMA’s many active committees. As one of SAMA’s corps of volunteers, I look forward to being continually inspired by your work and your commitment to our organization.

Karen Ami
President
The Society of American Mosaic Artists

Contributors: Rosanna Peña, Yvonne Allen

Groutline is published quarterly to promote mosaic art in the U.S. and abroad.
© 2009 Society of American Mosaic Artists. Reproduction or distribution prohibited without permission. Address: PO. Box 624, Ligonier, PA 15658-0624

Editorial queries may be sent to groutline@americanmosaics.org.

Articles and opinions expressed herein represent the views of the authors and not necessarily the views of SAMA, its board of directors, or the membership as a whole. Advertisements are purchased and do not imply endorsement by SAMA, its board of directors, or its members.

Groutline Fall 2009

What Is Mosaic? Part 3 8
SAMA 10th Anniversary 9
Tip of the Quarter 18
Volunteer Spotlight 19
SAMA News 18-19

Features
Discovering the Mosaics of Louis Comfort Tiffany 10-11
Business Book Round-up 12-13
Tunisian Mosaics 14-15

Departments
Inspiration: Randina Casenza 3
Regional: Miami Mosaic Academy 4
Artist Profile: Shawn Newton 5
Step By Step: Mosaic Palette Table 6
Ask A Pro: Substrate for Exterior Floor 7
Workshop: Smalti’s Next Level 16
Mosaic in Jeopardy: San Antonio 20

COVER: Detail of a mosaic glass ceiling in Chicago. Louis Comfort Tiffany, Tiffany Studios, 1905. Photo by Ben Crouch.
A willingness to leave the past behind sparks fresh ideas.

12 X 12 X 12: A Year in Mosaics

Randina Casenza’s mosaic diary chronicles the changes in her life.

by Glynnis Kaye

In January 2008, Berkeley, California artist Randina Casenza embarked on what she envisioned as “a spiritual discipline, a desire to make a commitment and see it through.”

“I would complete one 12-by-12-inch mosaic a month,” she said. “Subject matter was driven by what was going on in my life that month. It could be a memory, a feeling, a wish, or an event.” The resulting dozen mosaics serve as a sort of “tesserae journal,” revealing an intimate view of an artist’s inspiration over the course of a year.

At the start of the project, Randina was working—unhappily—at a full-time corporate job in San Francisco. Seeking the courage to make changes in her life, she summoned up *The Red One* in a self-portrait for January’s mosaic. “*The Red One* is my inner warrior,” says Randina. “Visible, fiery, and fearless, she is the part of me that is afraid, but does it anyway.”

In April, Randina began acting on the courage *The Red One* provided, deciding to leave the security of her day job to pursue an art career. Her *April Fool* mosaic aptly depicted the tarot image of the fool stepping off the cliff.

May’s mosaic of a melting hand represented the banishment of *The Brown One*, or “the fear-based part of me that has been in charge much of my life,” explains Randina. Her June mosaic portrayed the elephant-headed Hindu deity Ganesha, the Remover of Obstacles. “Having a day job has been an obstacle much of my life,” notes Randina. “While it provided me with the means to do some of the things I wanted to do [art], it didn’t leave me very much time or energy to do it.”

July’s mosaic, an iconic image of a winged heart, captured some of the freedom she began to experience after leaving her job, while September’s mosaic, created from vintage tile, represented what Randina describes as “new patterns and ideas emerging from the old stories and structures.” By December, Randina seemed more comfortable with her new life as an artist. Her contentment was reflected in a vitreous glass mosaic of a winter’s evening sky.

Randina is now a resident artist and studio assistant at the Institute of Mosaic Art in Oakland, where she’s taken mosaic classes for several years. Among the insights gained from her year-long project: “There is no such thing as a ‘simple’ mosaic. It always takes longer than I think it will. The flow of creativity has its own time and cannot be bullied by calendar or clock. Design and inspiration appear when they’re good and ready. That said, self-imposed deadlines prohibit over-thinking and ‘analysis paralysis.’ Lesson learned, borrowed from Nike®: ‘just do it.’”

Glynnis Kaye is a freelance writer and mosaic artist from Pleasanton, California. Email GlynnisKaye@sbcglobal.net.
When going after a goal, it’s important to never lose the integrity of the journey.” –Gina Hubler

Earlier this year, the Miami Mosaic Academy (MMA) relocated base operations to a new storefront location in the vibrant business district of Coconut Grove, Florida. I recently spoke with MMA owner and educational director Gina Hubler about her insatiable desire to teach and share the magic of mosaics.

CP: What is your artistic backstory?
GH: I have been an artist and designer all of my life. My college major in interior design evolved into creating high-end, very unique furniture pieces. My interest in mosaics developed as I experimented with using them as inclusions in my furnishings. My mosaic journey continues to this day.

CP: How would you describe MMA, and what is its mission?
GH: I see MMA as a destination point school for our local, domestic, and international clientele. Our mission is to educate the public about mosaic history, styles, techniques, and applications. We focus on teaching mosaics as a fine art form and as an architectural finish, with emphasis on how these variations can be intertwined. Our goal is to respect and nurture the creative souls of those who pass through our doors.

CP: What can your students expect when they come to MMA?
GH: A good balance of teaching and sharing with each class is vital to their collective experience; however, I also want to provide individualized training and personal contact, access to on-site supplies and resources, and a multitude of insights and ideas from the many visiting teachers/educators who contribute to the MMA curriculum.

CP: MMA serves as a hub for other operations. What are those?
GH: While our primary location is in Miami Metro, we also have teaching studios in Allentown, Pennsylvania and Umbria, Italy. I am a gypsy at heart and love to travel, so we conduct international outreach through our Mosaic Tours program. These adventures are scheduled twice annually and can accommodate up to eight participants. Lastly, our retail operation, mosaictools.com, keeps us very busy and on the leading edge of materials, tools, and design innovations.

CP: What advice can you give about making a living as a mosaicist?
GH: While I love materials and the feel of creating, I also have a strong business side to my psyche. My advice is this: money cannot be the primary motivator. This wonderful realm of mosaics is so much more than dollars and cents. It is about focusing on the creative growth of others and the medium as a whole. If one does these things, everything else can fall into place.

Curriculum

Curt Penland, owner of Imagine More Mosaics, will make mosaics his full-time vocation upon retirement. Email ghstridur@aol.com.
Artist Profile

Shawn Newton

The winner of a Mosaic Arts International Juror’s Award and two Members’ Choice Awards talks about inspiration and technique.

Grountline: What do you think it is about your mosaics that captures the imagination of other artists?

SN: I have been overwhelmed by the generosity of my fellow artists, and I can only think that we must share a similar personal reaction to art. What first attracts me is a scene that I want to be part of. A lot of my subjects come from personal visual experiences that I have had—the narrow window of an ancient monastery that frames the riotous color of the landscape beyond . . . the serenity of a beautiful European courtyard where women hand out lunch leftovers to dogs in the street. Perhaps fellow members have seen something similar or can imagine themselves in such a scene and identify with that aspect of my work.

GL: What is your greatest challenge?

SN: All of my pieces that incorporate bas relief are challenging because the journey from sketch to completion takes many detours. The process of pulling dimension out of a flat surface is both frustrating and fascinating. The trick is to create enough depth in the base structure to promote realism, avoid too much distortion, and allow enough space to lay in your glass.

GL: Your approach to mosaics is unique. How did your method evolve?

SN: I create a lot of detail in small spaces by cutting a lot of very tiny pieces. My final goal is to create a moment in time. With the bas relief technique, I feel I am “building a stage” to present each new idea. I think that’s the most appealing thing about this technique . . . you can create a story in a “box,” and somehow that makes it a bit more personal than a two-dimensional approach.

GL: What tool could you not live without?

SN: Obviously my nippers, but my trips to the dentist have provided me with dental tools that assist in cleaning and digging up badly placed tesserae.

GL: As a self-taught artist, what advice can you give to others?

SN: Be persistent! When I was unable to locate enough color variations in my tesserae (mostly due to inexperience), I created tiny pieces of painted polymer clay. In the last 10 years, the emergence of instructional books containing gallery sections has provided a visual record of a wide range of contemporary styles. As long as you are able to experiment continuously with different materials, have patience while cutting glass for a mosaic that seems to be inhaling tesserae, and can withstand the occasional bloody cut, you’ll make a good start!

GL: Do you have a favorite resource?

SN: Books by Sonia King, Martin Cheek, and Elaine Goodwin are wonderful mixtures of technique, history, and contemporary work. The Mosaic Art Now yearbook CD and magazine provide access to a huge amount of inspirational work. Another valuable resource: Simply create and catalog your own collection of printed or digital pictures from anywhere and everywhere.

Shawn Newton of Wallingford, Connecticut, has been creating mosaics for 10 years while working full time as a graphic designer. www.bitbybitmosaics.com

Between sketch and completion come many detours.
Step By Step: Building a Palette Table

by Shug Jones

During a recent trip to Cuernavaca, I participated in a smalti intensive workshop and toured the Perdomo Studio. I was enthralled by the sight of the mosaics in progress, but what interested me most was an old writing table that had been outfitted to hold boxes of smalti in an array of colors. Determined to build one for myself when I returned home, I never dreamed just how helpful it actually would be.

Not only does my “palette table” help me organize my tesserae, it does so in such a way that I can see every available color at a glance. I label the bins so that when my supply of a certain color gets low, I know exactly what to order. It’s even given me more room to work because I don’t have 30-40 plastic boxes stacked around my workspace.

You can build one quite easily to meet your particular needs. It can be a freestanding table or a tabletop model. It can hold a couple dozen colors or a hundred. I like to work with three in a “cockpit” style layout, with everything in easy reach. I position a tabletop palette to the left of my work easel, and freestanding palette tables on my right and left.

MATERIALS:
• Adjustable-angle studio/drafting table (on casters or tabletop model)
• 1¼-inch lathing strips
• Label maker
• Chipboard boxes (4-by-4-by-2 inch or sized to meet your needs), plastic containers, or molded parts-bin inserts (available online)

STEPS:
1. Measure the front, back, and side edges of the drafting table or drawing board and cut strips of 1¼-inch lathing to fit.
2. Use screws to affix the lathing strips to the table edges so the wood projects at least ½ inch above the tabletop to prevent the boxes, containers, or bins from sliding off.
3. Take the tops off the chipboard boxes and set aside. If the tops are the same depth as the bottoms, they can both be used as bins.
4. Arrange the boxes and tops on the table to form a grid.
5. Load your tesserae, labeling as you go. I make note of the brand and color name/number to help identify what needs to be replenished.

NOTES:
• If your drafting table has side-mounted tool bins, you don’t need lathing on the sides.
• I recommend boxes or individual containers over parts-bin inserts because they are easily rearranged if you need to change the color layout.

Shug Jones, co-owner of custom design-focused Tesserae Mosaic Studio, Inc., in Plano, Texas, teaches various fine art mosaic workshops around the U.S. and serves on SAMA’s Board of Trustees. www.tesseraemosaicstudio.com
Ask A Pro:
Substrate Preparation for Exterior Floor Mosaics

by Gary Drostle

Q. I am working on a commission for an outdoor park that will receive very heavy pedestrian traffic. Among other elements, I am creating a 3-foot diameter circular mosaic to be installed in the ground at the very center of the park. I am concerned that either a Hardibacker® or Durock® substrate would crumble at the edges or deteriorate over time. Is there another type of substrate available for this type of installation?

A. Hardibacker and other such boards are NOT suitable substrates for floors, particularly for exterior trafficked areas. Exterior floor mosaics should be fixed to an in-situ base, either a concrete slab or a sand-and-cement screed (a finishing layer of mortar) bonded to a suitable concrete base with an overall minimum thickness of 3 inches (preferably 6 inches in a public place). The exact overall thickness necessary should be determined by the contractor laying the base or the architect/engineer in charge. In-situ bases should be professionally installed by a licensed contractor, and must be dry, sound, and free from cracks and hollow-sounding areas. (I recommend mixing the sand-and-cement screed and the concrete for the base with a forced-action cement mixer, not a rotary drum mixer, to eliminate clumps of unmixed sand that could cause a later breakdown of the base.)

Allow the base itself to dry adequately before installing the mosaic. This process should include covered drying for a few days to slow the initial set, followed by a minimum of six weeks drying time (longer in poor drying conditions).

Also note the following requirements for floor installations:
• When preparing the base, incorporate adequate and appropriate slopes for the run-off of surface water.
• The finished mosaic surface should be flat (to avoid a tripping hazard), slip-resistant, and suitable for weathering (check with your tile manufacturer).
• Anhydrate screeds (gypsum-based mortar compounds that are sold as rapid-drying screed mixes) should NOT be used in combination with cement-based mosaic fixing adhesives, as they will break down.
• Larger floor installations and perimeter junctions with dissimilar materials will require the addition of suitable movement joints as required.
• Floor installations in public areas will require adequate provision for the safety of pedestrians during the installation period, such as barricades or tape and signage. For health and safety guidelines, see www.osha.gov.

London-based artist Gary Drostle specializes in mosaics and murals for public spaces. He won the Best Architectural Award at Mosaic Arts International 2008 and is President of the British Association for Modern Mosaic. www.drostle.com

Photo: M. Starling

For rates and information, email advertising@americanmosaics.org or call Brian Felix 951-204-7887

ADVERTISE your products or services in GROUTLINE

For rates and information, email advertising@americanmosaics.org or call Brian Felix 951-204-7887.
What Is Mosaic?
In Part 3 of the series, the author shares thoughts from fellow artists.
by Leah Shafir Zahavi

What is mosaic? What is the very essence of our work, and how can we be a part of its evolution?

George Fishman reminded me that SAMA published a “definition” of mosaic a few years ago. “Maybe,” he wrote, “it’s time to do that again and let people throw stones at it, as part of this discussion.”

One of the thoughtful “stones” that landed in my inbox came from Lynn Bridge, who wrote, “I didn’t know that there is a serious debate going on to include/exclude art from SAMA shows based on rules for what is mosaic . . . I would hate to see SAMA . . . limiting what constitutes an acceptable medium.” According to Lynn, any attempt to define mosaic would inevitably build a glass ceiling of “rules” that would inhibit mosaic artists from exploring new creative possibilities. “For the artist . . . rules are made to be broken,” she wrote. “Why not a painting covered with stained and clear glass mosaic? Why not tesserae imbedded in a painting?”

First, a clarification. My elemental goal in posing the question, “What is mosaic?” was not to limit the definition of mosaic, but rather to expand it. My aim was to revisit old notions, open mosaic to new possibilities, and push the boundary of what we think is possible. I believe that contemporary mosaics should reflect our time, visually and conceptually, and hope that the tough questions I pose will serve as a catalyst for change.

Of course, change is controversial. Crossing the boundaries between different art media and combining disparate materials and techniques would certainly yield exciting new works. However, these mixed-media creations run the risk of losing their identity as mosaics, because the mosaic may lose its primacy in the mix.

Matteo Randi once said, “I cannot define mosaic, but when I see one I can identify it as such.” This may be as close as we will ever get to a definition. To me, mosaic is neither a technique nor a set of materials. How I label my work—that is, whether I identify it as “mosaic” or “painting”—seems quite irrelevant. I am an artist, and art is what I make. But if I had to somehow define it, I would say that mosaic is an image with a sensitive membrane of veins running across its surface, a membrane that breaks the image yet, at the same time, holds it together.

It’s not easy to walk the tightrope between tradition and modernity. In the end, “no answers here, just more questions,” as George Fishman thoughtfully remarked, adding that “…although provocative, this discussion needs to be right at the heart of our conferences and our Groutline.”

Leah Shafir Zahavi is a curator and art educator, and the founder of the Inner Piece studio, specializing in handmade ceramic pieces for mosaic. Leah attends SAMA conferences annually with her mother, Ilana Shafir. www.inner-piece.com
Celebrating SAMA’s 10th Anniversary

As we approach the end of SAMA’s first decade, we turn the spotlight on charter member Michele Petno.

by Rhonda Heisler

“M y life in mosaics has been ruled by serendipity,” says Michele Petno of Orlando, Florida. A self-described “serial entrepreneur” and mentor to other business owners, Michele has just launched her fifth such enterprise, Mozaic Arts, Inc. “Whenever I see a need in the mosaic market, I try to meet it,” she explains.

In 1994, a serious illness prompted Michele to evaluate her life and make some changes. She opened an antiques/junk shop called Wits End Furnishings and in the process came upon some old sample boards of 1-by-1-inch ceramic from a nearby tile dealer. Serendipity! She used the tiles to mosaic the shop’s bathroom door, and when customers saw her creation, they wanted to learn how to do it and where to buy supplies. “Within three months I had become Wits End Mosaic!” she recounts.

At the 1995 Coverings show in Miami Beach she met a number of tile and glass manufacturers who became instrumental to her growing business. Soon she was sourcing and selling mosaic materials and offering a weekly class in broken tile mosaic and picassiette that British mosaicist Martin Cheek referenced on his website, attracting students from distant states and even South America.

Michele taught herself mosaic technique, consulting the only book she could find, Setting Tile by David Byrne. Another Orlando mosaic enthusiast introduced her to master mosaicist George Fishman of Miami, who became a friend and technical adviser.

By the 2003 Miami conference, Michele had sold Wits End Mosaic to Susan Jeffreys, started her second mosaic business, Smalti.com, and developed the first shopping cart on a mosaic website. “I have Sonia [King] to thank for encouraging me to be a vendor at the Miami meeting,” she recalls. “I didn’t think many would be there to buy my smalti and millefiori, but was I wrong! The line at my table was out the door!” Michele has attended every conference since, as a SAMA sponsor, vendor, instructor, and raffle donor. In Mesa in 2007 she taught a highly praised mosaic portrait class using a tonal value system she developed based on a painting technique.

In 2007, Michele sold Smalti.com to Kim Wozniak to concentrate on her third mosaic venture, Murano Millefiori. Donning yet another hat in 2008, she became director of Mosaics in Mexico, Perdomo’s program of instruction offered at their Cuernavaca facility. Longing to return to teaching and her own studio work, she sold Murano Millefiori to SAMA member Pris Ewing of Little Hunter Mosaics earlier this year.

Now, under the name Mozaic Arts, Inc., she will offer a beginning smalti class in Orlando to complement Perdomo’s advanced class in Mexico. She’ll also teach millefiori and picassiette technique.

SAMA has been a consistent presence at each step. “I love the conference experience,” she says. “From a creativity standpoint, where else can you meet with so many people who share the same passion? The atmosphere is electric. The exhibition has given credibility to mosaics as a fine art form, and the show just keeps getting better and better. I always come home so full of inspiration.”

From a business standpoint, “SAMA is always creating new customers for me, and once a year the vendor show brings the market together in one place. The people I talk to most often are in SAMA. So many members are now part of my extended family, and at the conference I get to meet my customers in person. Some have become business associates and friends for life.”

Michele personifies the generous spirit of artistic and professional leadership that defines the SAMA experience. When she learned of plans to launch a $100,000 Legacy Fund drive to guarantee the organization’s financial future, Michele pledged immediately. “We’re all in this together,” she noted. “I want to help SAMA bring mosaic art to a wider public and gain the respect it deserves. Supporting the organization that supports our art is the right thing to do.”

Rhonda Heisler, SAMA vice-president, creates mosaic fine art mainly in hand-cut opaque stained glass from her studio in Skillman, N.J. www.rhondaheislermosaicart.com
When Edith Crouch vacationed in New York in 2006, she visited an exhibition of the work of Louis Comfort Tiffany in the American Wing at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. She was particularly drawn to the stained glass mosaics in the show and was surprised to learn that little had been written about that aspect of Tiffany’s work.

Numerous publications over the years have described the stained glass, lamps, and art glass produced by the Tiffany Studios between 1880 and 1930, but usually mosaics were mentioned only briefly or neglected altogether. Edith has a theory about this: “Many of the art objects and stained glass [works] have filtered through the marketplace for years, while mosaics, for the most part, were created as architectural elements specific to a building.” Therefore, they were rarely seen and never captured the public's attention.

Edith knew that the story of the Tiffany Studio mosaics needed to be told. That night, it came to her in a dream: she would write the book herself.

Fortunately Edith didn’t dismiss her dream as many of us tend to do; instead she submitted the idea to Schiffer Books. She was amazed that the publisher accepted her proposal despite her having never written a book before. What followed was a two-year journey following a trail of documents that led to the mosaics and resulted in an extensive, incredibly detailed, and beautiful book on these “lost” treasures, some of which had never been documented or photographed.

To locate the mosaics, Edith pored over the collections of the Rakow Research Library at Corning Museum of Glass, the Charles Hosmer Morse Museum, and archives of the New York Times. She was able to locate Tiffany business documents, newspaper articles, and even old church bulletins that were used to update parishioners on the progress of commissioned mosaics.

Edith hit a goldmine when she located a roster used by Tiffany Studios to record their mosaic commissions. Following the leads in this document, Edith embarked on a journey that stretched from inner-city churches across the country to a tequila factory in Mexico. Her son Ben accompanied her and took many of the photos that serve both as historical record and, equally important, eye candy in this visually stunning book.

Readers will enjoy the story of her yearlong campaign to obtain permission to photograph the seven interior mosaics Tiffany created for the U.S. Mint in Philadelphia. Visitors cannot bring cameras into the Mint, but Edith persisted, insisting the documentation was necessary. Government officials finally relented and hired someone to shoot the first official photos of the seven mosaics. Let’s hear it for mosaic activism!

Sadly, not all of the mosaics she found have fared well. Some are in poor condition or are at risk, sited in churches that are struggling to afford the upkeep on their buildings. In at least one case, a church hired someone to dismantle a large mosaic wall installation in an effort to sell it to raise much-needed funds.

There are many fascinating stories-within-stories in the book, such as the fact that Tiffany was to some extent an early feminist. He felt that women’s hands were of the ideal size to create detailed glass work, and he employed many female artisans, a practice that union men picketed against. He paid his primary artisan, Clara Driscoll, the then-astounding salary of $10,000. It was clear from
news articles of the time that Tiffany appreciated his mosaicists and made sure they received accolades for the work they created.

When it came time to turn in the manuscript, Edith submitted well over 1,500 photos. Her publisher implored her to pare it down. With the 708 photos ultimately included, Edith’s book would be the most expensive Schiffer had ever published. At press time, the Olympic Games in Beijing interfered. The Beijing printing factory used by Schiffer was one of many companies shut down by the Chinese government in order to “clear the air” over Beijing in anticipation of the games. The book was finally printed after the Olympics concluded.

Would Edith do it all again? “Of course,” she says, describing the odyssey as a “lovely experience, meeting passionate people and learning the fascinating history of Tiffany mosaics.”

And what is next for the author? She’s not waiting for a dream this time. She’s already begun work on a new book documenting the glass techniques used by Tiffany Studios. We look forward to learning more about this remarkable group of artisans and the amazing work they produced.

Gwyn Kaitis, Chicago-area mosaic artist, teaches at the Chicago Mosaic School and is a member of the SAMA Board of Trustees. www.organicartifacts.com
The Counselor, The Coach, and The Consultants:
Three Approaches to Managing Your Art Business

by Bill Buckingham

How to Survive and Prosper as An Artist: Selling Yourself Without Selling Your Soul
by Caroll Michels

I’d Rather Be in the Studio!
by Alyson B. Stanfield
Pentas Press, 2008

Art/Work: Everything You Need to Know (and Do) As You Pursue Your Art Career
by Heather Darcy Bhandari and Jonathan Melber
Free Press, 2009

There comes a time when being creative is not enough, and you face the realities of selling your artwork. So you take off your creative hat and reluctantly put on your business hats. Yes, hats! Like it or not, you are now your own agent, public relations and marketing manager, salesperson, curator, business administrator, shipping expert, bookkeeper, inventory specialist, webmaster, legal watchdog, etc. This is not a world of tesserae and artistic expression, but one of words, numbers, networking, pitches, and negotiations.

Turning your passion into a business can be daunting, but these three books are a good place to start. All three are cafeteria-style books that allow you to easily jump around, picking the sections you want to explore. Topics include marketing yourself, writing an artist resumé and statement, working with gallery owners, pricing your work, and more. All three titles cover the same topics with very similar advice, although you will find useful tidbits of information unique to each book. The authors do differ in their approaches, so if you only have time to read one book, pick the one that best suits your style.

How to Survive and Prosper as an Artist by Caroll Michels is the yardstick by which all other books in this genre are judged. It has been in print for more than 25 years and is now in its sixth edition. Michels comes from a counseling background where she has helped artists work through issues like managing their careers, dealing with rejection, confronting dealers, and making a living as an artist. Her book is filled with examples and anecdotes along with detailed, and often wordy, explanations. I particularly like her advice on setting (and maintaining) a pricing policy as a tool to approach negotiations from a position of strength instead of weakness. Best of all, the book contains an extensive appendix of resources. Michels also maintains two websites, www.CarollMichels.com and www.ArtistHelpNetwork.com, where you can find additional resources, albeit, for a fee.

I’d rather be in the studio!
by Alyson B. Stanfield

The second book’s title states what we are all thinking; I’d Rather Be in the Studio. Alyson B. Stanfield’s subtitle, The Artist’s No-Excuse Guide to Self-Promotion, reveals her orientation. She is a “take charge” and “be the best you can be” career coach. There are fewer explanations and less hand-holding in this book and more lists and principles to follow. (Be prepared for a lot of “winning”...
and sports metaphors.) Each major section opens with an “excuse” which she immediately discredits. I like the excuse used to open the section on marketing and self-promotion: My art speaks for itself! “Your art has never spoken for itself,” Stanfield reminds us as she launches into a no-excuses presentation of strategies and attitudes we can use to differentiate and promote ourselves as artists. Like Michels, Stanfield has a website—www.IdRatherBeintheStudio.com—which is less a companion to the book and more of a (you guessed it) promotional vehicle for Stanfield and her book. It is good, however, to see someone who has definitely taken charge and unashamedly puts herself out into the world. It’s a lesson most of us can take to heart.

This brings us to the third book and new-kid-on-the-block: Art/Work: Everything You Need to Know (and Do) As Your Pursue Your Art Career by Heather Darcy Bhandari and Jonathan Melber. Of the three books, this is by far the most hip and contemporary. Unlike Michels and Stanfield, the authors do not come from a counseling background. Bhandari is a gallery director and Melber an arts lawyer. Although they discuss the same topics and generally offer the same advice, they speak from the trenches and present a more straightforward approach. Think of them as consultants who can guide you through the different roles you take on as an arts businessperson.

Yes, they talk about how to promote yourself, deal with galleries, and other similar topics, but they also discuss how to properly ship a work of art, how to create a certificate of authenticity, and other practical issues that we may never consider until they come up. My first criticism of this book was that the numerous quotes from dealers, curators, and art professionals take up almost a third of each page. I initially saw these as distractions, but on a second reading, I discovered they contained many snippets of wisdom and very practical advice. Apart from this, the book is full of sample forms, agreement letters, charts, and lists. Unlike the other two books, there appears to be no companion website, but the book came out earlier this year, so a website may be added later.

So take your pick and dig into one or more of these books. You’ll get good advice, support, and list upon list of useful resources from Michels, the counselor who will hold your hand; motivational encouragement from Stanfield, the coach who will prod you into action; and practical guidance from Bhandari and Melber, the consultants who provide reality checks as you try on all those business hats.

In a previous life before mosaics, Bill Buckingham authored career management books and software programs. He is now an artist, publisher of the Mosaic Art Now magazine, and merchant of Mosaic Rocks! www.MosaicArtNow.com
The North African country of Tunisia is bordered on the west by Algeria, on the south by Libya and the Sahara Desert, and on the north and east by 868 miles of beautiful Mediterranean coastline. Europe is only 93 miles to the north. My daughter and I visited Tunisia in May 2009, finding a beautiful, secular Islamic country with an amazing history, charming customs, and wonderful Roman ruins and mosaics.

The earliest peoples of North Africa were the Berbers, but in the seventh century B.C.E., Phoenicians extended their maritime trading culture from what is present-day Lebanon to Tunisia, displacing the Berber people. In 814 B.C.E. Carthage was founded, and it is here that early marble mosaic insets depicting the goddess Tanet appear in red clay floors.

The abundant mosaics and ruins present in Tunisia today were produced between the second century B.C.E. and the sixth century A.D., prior to the Arab conquest and following Rome’s defeat of the Phoenicians. While the black-and-white, geometric style of mosaics prevailed in Italy through the third century A.D., the Roman mosaics in Tunisia took a different course, featuring a polychrome form and lively pictorial realism. Unlike in Rome where mosaics were the prerogative of the wealthy, itinerant artists of Tunisia spread the art form to the ceilings, walls, floors, and courtyards of nearly every public and private building, even cistern walls.

My suggested itinerary begins with the Bardo Museum in Tunis, which claims to feature the largest collection of Roman mosaics in the world. Set aside a whole day to see this wonderful museum, where a one-dinar (70-cent) photo permit will allow you to take all the pictures that you like.

Next visit Carthage, where the Gallery Musée National de Carthage features fifth-century A.D. mosaics. Don’t miss the modern mosaics depicting the invasion of Tunisia during World War II at the U.S. War Cemetery. Then head west to the Roman city of Dougga, where you will find incredible in-situ mosaics dating to the second century B.C.E. as well as ruins of temples, theaters, and baths.
Moving on to the coastal city of Sousse, founded in ninth century B.C.E., you can enjoy the modern Club Med atmosphere, but don't miss the Sousse Archaeological Museum and Kasbah, which houses one of the best collections of mosaics in the country. Then head further south to El Jem's museum to discover a small but exquisite mosaic collection and a Roman villa with great in-situ pavement.

Finally, near the Roman Colosseum, take time to visit the Mosaique D'Afrique school and workshop, where artisans and students create reproductions of Roman mosaics using the same small stone tesserae and the reverse method of the early Romans.

Most of the Roman settlements in Tunisia were in the north, east, and central areas of the country; however, some western outposts were built to protect the country from marauders. Two of note are Roman Sufetula, now Sbeitla, and—nearer to the Algerian border—Kasserine, best known for the World War II Battle of Kasserine Pass between Patton and Rommel. Both were important regional centers dating from the first to the third century A.D. and have extensive in-situ mosaic floors in temples, homes, and public baths. When Byzantine Christianity replaced the polytheistic Roman culture in the sixth century A.D., many of these sites became beautiful mosaic-decorated churches and baptismal fonts.

As you travel further west into areas of desert, oases, and rugged mountains on the Algerian border, the 10,000-year-old Berber civilizations still predominate. Here Berber customs prevail, with women wearing full body-covering robes and men dressed in hooded woolen capes to protect against extremes of temperature, wind, and blowing sand. Architectural use of caves and underground structures is also unique and well adapted to the environment. Mosaics here take a quite different form. The towns of Tozeur and Nefta have beautiful examples of ornamental brickwork constructed from adobe-type bricks that protrude from surfaces to create intricate monochromatic patterns. These bricks are usually handmade by pressing the dampened sand/clay into wooden forms that are air dried and then fired in large wood-fired kilns.

These are but a few of the abundant sites throughout Tunisia, where new experiences and extraordinary mosaics await you.

Editor's Note: Read more about Tunisian tile mosaics and view Deborah's photographs online at the Groutline section of www.americanmosaics.org. Deborah Verfaillie, a San Diego mosaic artist, works mostly in smalti, ceramic tile, and vitreous glass.
Workshop: Smalti’s Next Level

A truly effective workshop teaches more than technique.

by Sue Coombs

In July I attended Smalti’s Next Level, Sue Giannotti’s four-day workshop at the Chicago Mosaic School, to expand on my previous experience with Italian smalti. Having already taken a workshop with Sue, I knew I would be challenged. Not only did she take me to the next level in smalti techniques, she also encouraged me to think about my intention and purpose, issues that would make a difference in my work.

This workshop focused on the use of a larger-sized tessera known as the B cut (2 by 2 by 3/8 inches). Using it in combination with the more commonly known A cut (5/8 by 3/8 by 1/4 inches), the artist can explore the full potential of smalti and its varied surfaces and textures. This contrast in tessera size is often found in contemporary smalti mosaics.

Sue explained that in addition to using the B cut, you can cut and use any irregularly sized tesserae from the original smalti “pizza” form (9½ by 9½ by 3/8 inches). Using contrasting sizes of tesserae expresses varying degrees of importance and visual weight. You can achieve further B cut enhancements by increasing the reflectivity and texture of the smalti surface. Sue demonstrated this technique by using the hammer (without the hardie) to shear small divots from the smalti face. This technique was not difficult to master and provided instant gratification!

Understanding the concept of andamento and executing it correctly can be a challenge. Fortunately, Sue is well versed in the topic and has developed an excellent method to explain how to use andamento to express dimension. Using a mock-up technique, we employed three-dimensional objects to mimic the shapes within a mosaic composition. Why? After studying the shape, we assigned andamento “lead lines” using a felt-tip pen or narrow tape to illustrate the contours of the forms. We then replicated these lines on the final working design to guide the tessera placement. By planning the andamento this way, we used our working time more efficiently.

Sue’s energetic and thought-provoking approach kept me motivated throughout the workshop. She posed important questions about the art we make, such as: “Why am I choosing this design? What does it mean to me? What does it say about me? Does it tell a story? Am I connecting consciously or unconsciously to it?”

She followed this with a powerful suggestion: “Your life is finite and someday you’ll make your last mosaic. You know how time-consuming mosaics are. Why not make mosaics with meaning, passion, and a story? Why not make your soul happy by making mosaics that speak to you?”

Sue challenged me to take my work to the next level by being more purposeful. Admittedly, fabrication issues, commission considerations, and the need to generate income can distract me from a conscious connection. But addressing these personal questions and allowing the answers to guide my creative decisions can only be beneficial to me, the mosaics I make, and the people who view my art.

Sue Coombs is a Chicago-area mosaic artist who is working to complete her certification in Fine Art Mosaics at the Chicago Mosaic School.
Sculpture Objects & Functional Art Fair

November 6-8, Navy Pier
Opening Night  Thursday, November 5

SAVE THE DATES

SOFA NEW YORK – April 16-19, 2010
SOFA WEST: Santa Fe – July 8-11, 2010

sofaexpo.com

Produced by The Art Fair Company, Inc.
Wanted: Your best original work for consideration in our annual juried member’s exhibition. Held in conjunction with SAMA’s annual conference, the Mosaic Arts International (MAI) exhibition is the prime opportunity for members to present their work to a new audience. The 2010 exhibition will be held at the world-famous Navy Pier in Chicago, Illinois. Visit www.americanmosaics.org for prospectus, dates, categories, prizes, and recent winners.

CALL TO ARTISTS
MOSAIC ARTS INTERNATIONAL 2010
ENTRY DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 2, 2009

Wanted: Your best original work for consideration in our annual juried member’s exhibition. Held in conjunction with SAMA’s annual conference, the Mosaic Arts International (MAI) exhibition is the prime opportunity for members to present their work to a new audience. The 2010 exhibition will be held at the world-famous Navy Pier in Chicago, Illinois. Visit www.americanmosaics.org for prospectus, dates, categories, prizes, and recent winners.

Tip of the Quarter
Cary’s Brown Sugar Hand Scrub

Try the recipe below for a hand scrub that will remove grout and its color stain, leaving your hands feeling soft and smooth.

Fill a small open-mouthed container with brown sugar. Add olive or some other type of oil until all the sugar is dampened and you can scoop some out with your finger. You want the mix to be about the consistency of a frozen smoothie. Add a drop of vanilla or some other type of scent if you like.

Massage a small amount into your hand for a few minutes, making sure you work it into your cuticles. Add a drop or two of shampoo or dishwashing soap and continue massaging. If the mixture seems too abrasive, add a little water to reduce the friction. Just make sure you don’t scrub too hard! Rinse hands well. They will be clean and soft.

Variations: You can use regular or superfine sugar if that’s all you have, but brown sugar has a nicer texture. Some people use salt, but it burns if you have any cuts, and I ALWAYS seem to have cuts. You can also add shampoo or dishwashing soap directly to the mixture. It will settle a little, so stir it before using.

–Cary Tracy Pugh

Celebrate fall, the season of opportunities.
Join SAMA or volunteer today! Learn more at www.americanmosaics.org.

Volunteer Spotlight Carol Tarr

I joined SAMA in 2006 and attended my first conference in Mesa in 2007, where the only person I knew was my best friend and travel buddy. We attended several workshops and met many wonderful people, especially the volunteers who were quick to answer any questions. After returning home, I decided to volunteer for the next conference in Miami. My first experience was setting up and working the registration desk, greeting individuals whose work I had admired for so many years and also seeing old friends from Mesa.

In 2008, there was a call for help on the Sponsorship Committee, and I raised my hand without knowing what I was getting into. I knew the committee chair, Sharon Plummer, from a mosaic tour of Italy and Spain that summer; she would make my adventure an easy one. I don’t really like calling people and asking for money, but these donations are essential to the success of SAMA’s annual conference. We heard a lot of “no thank you’s,” but even with the awful economy, we were able to raise enough funds to make the San Diego conference a success.

Yvonne Allen, the volunteer coordinator, was very helpful in putting us at ease and working around our schedules. If you are on the fence, get off it and volunteer! It’s a great way to discover new friends who share your enthusiasm for mosaics.

–Carol Tarr, Chapel Hill, N.C.

To volunteer with SAMA, send an email to volunteer@americanmosaics.org.

Join The Society of American Mosaic Artists

and begin receiving Groutline. Please print and complete this membership form and send it, along with a check or credit card information, to the address below. Please allow 3-4 weeks for membership processing. You can also join online at www.americanmosaics.org.

Payment Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership Types</th>
<th>Payment Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Name: ____________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Name</td>
<td>Business Name: ____________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mailing Address</td>
<td>Mailing Address: ____________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>City: ____________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>State: ____________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Country: ____________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZIP</td>
<td>ZIP: ____________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>Phone: ____________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax</td>
<td>Fax: ____________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>Email: ____________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>Website: ____________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Membership Types

please check one

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U.S. Member</th>
<th>International Member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$55</td>
<td>$75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25</td>
<td>$45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>Professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100</td>
<td>$120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>Corporate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$250</td>
<td>$270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patron</td>
<td>Patron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$350</td>
<td>$370</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Is this a membership renewal?  ❑ Yes  ❑ No

Note: Memberships expire one year from date of joining or renewal (effective 09/01/09).

SAMA Membership Benefits

ALL LEVELS

• Groutline, SAMA’s quarterly newsletter
• Andamento, the monthly e-newsletter
• Member rates and privileges for the annual Mosaic Summit and Vendor Marketplace
• Private access to Members Only section of SAMA website
• Inclusion in the website’s Members Gallery
• Exhibition opportunities
• Submit questions to “Ask A Pro”
• Eligibility to apply for the annual Robin Brett Scholarship
• Networking opportunities
• Optional listing in Annual Member Directory and one copy

STUDENT

• Available to students with valid ID for up to three years

PROFESSIONAL

• Link on SAMA website
• Ability to list classes on website
• Use of SAMA logo
• Special listing in Directory

CORPORATE

• Use of SAMA logo
• Website link from SAMA’s Suppliers page
• Ability to purchase advertising
• Advance-conference sponsorship opportunities
• Special listing in Directory

PATRON

• Special acknowledgements and listings
• Most advance-conference sponsorship opportunities

Mail or fax to:

SAMA Membership
P.O. Box 624
Ligonier, PA 15658
Fax 1-724-238-3973

Questions? Call:

Toll-Free: 1-866-902-SAMA
Direct: 1-724-238-3087

TOTAL AMOUNT

Membership Dues $__________________ + Donation $__________________ = $__________________

Payment Method:

❑ Check enclosed
❑ Credit Card (information below)

Card Type: (Circle One)  ❑ VISA  ❑ MasterCard  ❑ American Express  ❑ Discover

Card Number: ____________________________

Expiration Date: ____________________________

Signature: ____________________________

Billing Address of Credit Card (if different from mailing address at the left)

Address: ____________________________

City: ____________________________

State: ____________________________

Country: ____________________________

Zip: ____________________________

UNITED STATES

Individual $55

Student $25

Professional $100

Corporate $250

Patron $350

INTL.

Individual $75

Student $45

Professional $120

Corporate $270

Patron $370

Note: Memberships expire one year from date of joining or renewal (effective 09/01/09).
Mosaic in Jeopardy

San Antonio Saga

“I was in San Antonio in early July and found this mosaic on the River Walk,” wrote Rosanna Peña of Houston, Texas. The mural, composed of thousands of tiny pieces of glass and ceramic tile, is located at the entrance of Garcia Art Glass and depicts the Bexar County Town Hall and surrounding area. “Once I got a little closer, I noticed that on the left-hand side there was a huge crack in it.” A look into the mural’s history revealed an interesting back story.

Tom Stell, an original member of the famed Dallas Nine group of regional artists, was commissioned by Tesoro Petroleum Corporation to create the mural as part of the River Walk extension project. He was working on the 9-by-13-foot mosaic when he passed away in 1981. According to The Handbook of Texas Online, “Another artist completed the mural, which departs from Stell’s design and installation techniques.”

A historical plaque shows completion by Charles F. Winans, an influential surrealist, band manager, and 1960s-era cultural figure. Winans, who passed away last year at the age of 67, fell under the influence of Stell in the 1970s. Certainly it was an honor to finish out this commission.

Stell’s enduring mosaic work—six glass mosaic panels depicting Indians of North and South America (1968)—stands at the base of HemisFair Plaza’s Tower of the Americas in San Antonio.

Editor’s note: If you encounter a public mosaic in peril—either threatened with demolition or in need of restoration—Groutline wants to know about it. Please email groutline@americanmosaics.org and include “Mosaic in Jeopardy” in the subject line.