

A Message from...

The President

There is a new undercurrent in the mainstream of the art world. While proponents of the shocking, the political, and the self-absorbed seem ubiquitous and vocal, others toil quietly in pursuit of the sublime and the beautiful. In an era of quick gratifications and immediate results, there are still those who take time to pursue a slow creative process. Assembling a thing, a picture, a world, bit by bit, mosaic artists journey through the paths of their creations unlike any other artists.

The Society of American Mosaic Artists was created to give voice to these persons, to help their paths meet, and to promote the uniqueness of their art. We have come together at an auspicious time. Mosaic artists stand at this millennium as living extensions of an enduring ancient art form while setting the groundwork for an aesthetic of the future. Making visual and social statements from myriad units of things, both recycled and manufactured anew, the mosaicist poignantly reveals the building-block nature of science and technology. Mosaic and assemblage artists are helping to define and determine the art of the new millennium. If their enthusiasm is a prediction of their advancement, then mosaic artists will propel their art into the creative vanguard of the future.

I would like to thank all the officers and board members who helped bring SAMA into being and devoted time and energy to establishing us as a new non-profit corporation. We are truly grateful for the support of the British Association of Modern Mosaicists and to Mosaic Matters for use of their web site. I would also like to thank John Ruoff of Fair Share, Roland Avinger, and of course our Treasurer, Lia Catalano, for assistance with our regulatory filings. Many thanks are also due to the Tile Heritage Foundation and the American Craft Council Library. And without the help of all those purchasing charter memberships, SAMA would not be here today.

Janet Kozachek, President, SAMA

Acknowledgments:

SAMA has been funded in part by the Orangeburg County Fine Arts Center, which receives funding from the National Endowment of the Arts. Matching funds were provided by the Puffin Foundation and by the following individuals and corporations:

Mr. Costante Crovatto of Crovatto Mosaics, Ms. Kendall Deboom, Ms. Teresa Ankerson of the Mint Julep Gallery, Ms. Sonia King, Ms. Allyson Way Hank, Ms. Janet Kozachek, Mr. James Alan Kozachez esq., Ms. Jessica Claydon of the Touchstone Gallery, Ms. Patricia Suprenant, Ms. Bella G. Wallace, Ms. Barbara Brinson, and Mr. Connor M. Henry of Cameron Glassworks.

Announcements

Our Future web site is under construction at South Carolina State University. Our first national exhibition is scheduled for November 2001 and will be held at the I.P. Stanback Museum. Look for details in upcoming newsletters.
The Mosaic works of member artists, Sven Warner, Jeri Burdick, Sonia King, Michele Petno and Janet Kozachek are featured in *The New Mosaics* by Danielle Truscott published by Lark Books (1-800-284-3388) 1999 ISBN 1-57990-8. One of Sonia’s works, "Pinnacle" was printed up-side down. It is reproduced here pointing in the right direction.

Kathryn Luther won a Merit Award for her Mosaic Chair at the National Art Education Association and National Convention in Washington, D.C. The chair was also included on the NAEA Website and poster.

Ken Knowlton was one of the winners of the Art Calendar’s July 1999 National Semi-Annual “Centerfold Contest” for his Seashell Mosaic "Mark Twain". Ken Knowlton’s artwork in the 1990’s consisted for the most part of computer-assisted mosaics, intriguing works whose appearance varies strikingly with distance. From far away, most of them are portraits, but at close range each is a vast array of actual seashells, or dominoes, pottery shards, puzzle pieces, or other small objects. They raise the question: Why do “see” what you think you see? In recent years, the seashell mosaics have won many awards in local and nation-wide art shows and competitions.

Knowlton still writes (and re-adapts) all of his own computer graphics programs. His attitude toward the use of computers in art, however, is still cautious and skeptical. "Do use the machine - if, when, and where it helps in planning, experimenting with, or previewing an imagined artwork. But," he emphasizes, "remember that it’s the artistic goal in each case, not the computer, that’s important."

Allyson Way Hank completed a mosaic interpretation of the Resurrection at the Church of the Redeemer in Orangeburg, South Carolina in winter, 1999. Ms. Hank also received a subgrant from the Orangeburg County Fine Arts Center for travel to attend Martin Cheek’s mosaic workshop in London.

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EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MOSAIC ARTISTS: MOSAIC WORKSHOPS

Title: TRADITIONAL MOSAICS
Instructor: Jeff Havill
Location: The Brookfield Craft Center, P.O. Box 122 Brookfield, CT 06804
Time and Date: March 18 - 19, 2000
Subject: Traditional Mosaics
Class size limit: 6
Cost: Craft Center members - $195 non-members - $220
For More Information contact: The Brookfield Craft Center 1-203-775-4526

Title: MOSAIC WORKSHOP
Instructor: Elizabeth Deutsch
Location: Mosaic Mercantile, 461 2nd Street, Loft 331, San Francisco, CA 94107
Time and Date: March 25 & 26, May 27 & 28
Subject: Architectural installation of glass mosaic
Class size limit: 12
Cost: $275 (2 days)
For More Information contact: Tile Heritage Foundation. Fax: 707-431-8455 e-mail: foundation@tileheritage.org.

WITS END MOSAIC in Sanford, Florida has suspended mosaic classes but plans to produce educational videos this year.
For More Information Contact: Michele Petno http://www.mosaic-witsend.com/
Wits End Mosaics, 407-323-9122, Fax: 407-322-8552
E-Mail: witsend@mpinet.net

Title: MOSAICS
Instructor: Sonia King
Location: The Creative Arts Center, Dallas, Texas
Time and Date: May 6 & 7
The Creative Arts Center in Dallas, Texas offers six mosaic courses a year covering various techniques, a wide range of materials, grouts and adhesives. Two day workshops are held periodically on different topics, including introductory lessons, stepping stones, etc. Additionally, there are opportunities for students to assist in the creation of mosaic murals.
For More Information Call: The Creative Arts Center at 214-320-1275.

Title: THE INDIRECT METHOD
Instructor: Allyson Way Hank
Location: The Orangeburg County Fine Arts Center
Time and Date: June 29, July 6, 13, 20 & 27
Subject: Create a concrete mosaic stepping stone using the indirect method.
Class size limit: 10
For More Information contact: Orangeburg County Fine Arts Center P.O. Box 2106, Orangeburg, SC 29116-2106. 803-536-4074 Fax: 803-536-2077.

Title: MOSAICS FOR CHILDREN
Instructor: Janet Kozachek
Location: Orangeburg County Fine Arts Center
Date: June 12 - 16
Subject: Create mosaic designs using various colors and textures of matt board and learn about famous mosaics, different styles and techniques.
Class size limit: 10
For More Information contact: Orangeburg County Fine Arts Center P.O. Box 2106, Orangeburg, SC 29116-2106 803-536-4074 Fax: 803-536-2077.

Title: BLACK & WHITE FIGURAL MOSAICS
Instructor: Janet Kozachek
Location: Orangeburg County Fine Arts Center
Date: June 12 - 16
Subject: Create mosaic designs in black and white while learning about artistic styles of the Roman period in which these designs gained popularity and sophistication.
Class size limit: 10
For More Information contact: Orangeburg County Fine Arts Center P.O. Box 2106, Orangeburg, SC 29116-2106 803-536-4074 Fax: 803-536-2077.

Title: REVERSE METHOD MOSAIC
Location: Gibbes Museum of Art
Date: April 1, 8, 15
Subject: Create a small mosaic with ceramic tile and concrete.
Class size limit: 10
For More Information Contact: Gibbes Museum Studio School, 76 Queen Street, Charleston, SC 29401. 843-577-7275.

MOSAIC CLASSES ABROAD
For information on Mosaic courses offered outside the United States, contact:
Mosaic Matters: www.users.dircon.co.uk/~asm

GALLERIES EXHIBITING MOSAIC ART
Judith Roberts
Portfolio Gallery
2007 Devine Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29205
803-256-2434
Rick Snyderman
Snyderman Gallery
303 Cherry Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106
215-238-9576
Published Opportunities

Mosaic Decorator's Sourcebook by Rosalind Wates
Quarto Publishing plc (www.quarto.com) - a major producer of high quality illustrated books for international markets is currently looking for a wide selection of mosaics to illustrate the above book. The publisher invites SAMA members to submit examples of their work for inclusion. All work featured in the book will be credited in full to the artist/maker.

To submit your work please send clearly labeled images, preferably transparencies to:
Laurent Boubounelle
Picture Research Department
Quarto Publishing plc
The Old Brewery
6 Blundell Street
London N7 9BH
United Kingdom

or contact either the art editor, Sally Bond (sallyb@quarto.com), or the editor, Kate Michell (katem@quarto.com).

Sources on Art Marketing:

Art Calendar is a professional monthly journal for artists which lists marketing and opportunities and publishes articles on marketing success stories of artists. Another useful text on this topic is Art Marketing 101, by Constance Smith, available from Craft Books 1-800-858-8515. Gradilie welcomes news and experiences of people successfully selling mosaics and we will feature these in upcoming newsletters. We will also keep our membership apprised of exhibition opportunities for mosaic artists.

Ask The Professional

Gradilie welcomes technical questions from our readers for our newsletter response or for posting in our future Mosaic Bulletin Board Column. Posting in the Bulletin Board should include a contact by address/phone/or e-mail for our general readership to respond to. Our first answers to information sought by charter members come from our officers and advisory board.

Q. What adhesive do I use for applying china to (1) furniture; (2) a metal base that will be filled with water and used as a birdbath?

A. An adhesive system is only as strong as its weakest link. Failure can occur if the bond is broken between the mosaic material and its adhesive OR between the adhesive and the substrate. Wood presents special hazards because of its susceptibility to warpage, which will pop the mosaic. Special care must be taken with both surface preparation and selection of the adhesive. The latex fortified thinsets, ideal for applying mosaics to cement-based surfaces, are unsuitable for wood or raw metals.

In working with used furniture or other portable objects first thoroughly clean the surface, using water-based cleanser and/or solvent, and a paint or varnish. Select a waterproof adhesive, such as epoxy, epoxy thinset or one of the "craft glues" and follow manufacturer's instructions carefully.

Make sure any metal substrate is sufficiently rigid that it will not deflect with normal handling and cause the mosaic to delaminate. Clean and roughen the surface. Steel, aluminum and some other metals will oxidize unless protected, forming a flakey or powdery layer that can shed the mosaic. To prevent this, apply a suitable primer coating; roughen and wipe the surface when dry and then proceed to apply the mosaic as above.


Features

The Handmade Tessera

The ease and convenience of commercially manufactured mosaic tesserae cannot be overestimated. Deadlines, large scale projects, and economic constraints make their use expedient. For a more hand-crafted look, however, many mosaicists create their own tesserae. For small works in particular, tesserae which are art works in themselves comprise a mosaic intensely reflecting the artist's touch. Sometimes many tesserae are hand-hewn from traditional materials - stone, smalti, cut tiles. Or perhaps they are only occasional individual baubles blossoming spontaneously out of a homogeneous strata.

Gradilie will feature artists who create their own tesserae and will share with readers their tools and techniques for creating these one-of-a-kind building blocks. We anticipate that by sharing our expertise, resources, and experimentation, we will enhance each other's work and provide inspiration to do something out of the ordinary.
**Fused Glass Over Gold**

by Janet Kozachek

There is nothing like the allure of gold. One feels rich just to gaze on it. The Aztecs considered it the sweat of the sun. For the medieval artisan, it was the atmosphere of heaven itself. I could not help but want to use gold, however costly and impractical, in my mosaics.

I experimented with fusing glass over gold in order to find a way to produce tesserae of varied hue but the dimensions similar to those of the usual rectangular smalti. Along with eventual success, my early experiments also yielded: glass that became opaque when fused over gold - completely obscuring the precious metal; gold that oozed out from between the pieces of the glass in which it had been sandwiched, and tesserae that didn't anneal properly and would split apart.

With time and patience, problems gave way to solutions:

1) Use only clear, clear irridized glass or very lightly tinted cathedral glass.
2) Avoid yellow.
3) Use only gold foil that is several times thicker than gold leaf and won't melt out before the glass fuses.
4) Fuse only like-to-like glass to ensure that the melting of both pieces occurs at the same temperature.
5) Anneal slowly.

I commemorated my search for just the right gold tesserae in a work entitled "The Search for Byzantine Gold," a mosaic face and hand consisting of both successful and failed tesserae.

To make gold tesserae, I begin with scraps of cathedral glass and cut them into equal-sized rectangles. The rectangles are first brushed with a thin coat of gum arabic. The gold foil is then carefully removed from its paper backing and placed onto a clean piece of matt board. Next, the first glass rectangle is placed gum-side down, flush with a corner of the gold foil. Using an exacto knife, I cut the gold along the edges of the glass. The glass is lifted off, with the gold adhering to the gummed side. Another piece of glass, gum-side down, is now placed on top of the gold side of the first piece -- creating a glass/gold sandwich. The next "sandwich" is created as I align another glass rectangle so that it adjoins the indentation where the gold leaf was previously cut.

After the desired number of tesserae have been assembled, they are arranged on kiln shelves prepared with kiln wash or covered with kaowool blankets. To fuse, the glass and gold tesserae are heated in the kiln to cone 015, then cooled for about two days before removal from the kiln. Glass that is tinted or irridized fuses at cone 016.

Lately in my glass-fusing, I have been seeking effects to gold but with more economical materials. Thin strips of mica between glass take on a bright metallic sheen when heated to cone 016 or above. I have been using this as an alternative to gold. Also, if stained glass is used in a mosaic, a similar effect can be obtained - without firing - by enameling the back of the glass with gold enamel paint or brass leaf. Recently, I used gilded, stained glass in a piece of mosaic furniture.

Whatever you try, bear in mind that the placement of gold in a work of art is as intense as the playing of a trumpet in a musical performance: know before hand how loud you want to sound and how often.

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**A SAMA Profile: Sven Warner**

by Lia Catalano

Artist, teacher, supplier, owner and operator of Mountaintop Mosaics in Castleton, Vermont, Sven Warner has been one of SAMA's Advisory Board members since the organization's inception in February 1999.

Sven Warner brings to his mosaic material supply business a knowledge and passion shaped by his eclectic background. Once a college physics major, Sven has a Bachelor's Degree in Fine Arts from Cornell University. For almost 25 years, his "day job" involved church work - beginning as a Unitarian-Universalist custodian, ending when he resigned from the Episcopal priesthood in 1998. Interwoven with this side of his life is an involvement in mosaics for the past 15 years; he professes it to be his "truest calling." Sven's mosaic work has included custom tile and mosaics for woodstove installations, developing educational materials for pattern work and classic mosaic design, teaching mosaics to local folks, especially college students, and learning how to run a supply business. Since 1995, he has worked full time supplying glass mosaic materials by mail order. He is now again taking commissions and this spring will begin selling the latest form of his teaching material, polytite.

On good days, Sven gives long-distance encouragement to someone who is embarking on a new mosaic project, or he works on a commission, or a photo of someone's work arrives. On bad days, he sends faxes to Italy inquiring about the status of backlogged orders, discovers lost paperwork, and sometimes tries to tell the computer what it should do with that particular 32 cents. From time to time, the Communion of Saints (who he says are the business's real owners) send him a clear directive, and it usually means that it is time for Sven to make a mosaic himself.

Sven conducts his life as someone who has almost reconciled his beliefs and philosophies with his livelihood. After 4 years of "owning" his own business, he hopes to soon make a living wage. Meanwhile, his writings about mosaics lead the way. In one of his articles on creating mosaics, Sven addresses both the mechanical and spiritual approaches to cutting tesserae. Yes, how to cut lines of tesserae is clearly explained and illustrated. But Sven gives the reader more - something which this reader finds that she returns to again and again when faced with a mountain of uncut tile. And that is how to invoke a rhythmic Zen approach to mundane tasks. In another article, Sven teaches us how to "let go" of our work when we finally sell a prized mosaic or complete a commission. (I remember dismissing that as not applicable to practical me - until I faced giving up a joyously created piece, and Sven's words came back.) As we strive to the higher planes of our art, such pieces of advice are as valuable, and scarce, as the gold in our mosaic palettes.

SAMA is fortunate to have Sven Warner as an advisor. He brings a wealth of mosaic expertise. But even more important, he serves to remind us of its spiritual roots. In his words, "Mosaics can show us, in their complete fragmentation, the way back to integration and wholeness."
My mosaics reflect my deep passion for geology and archaeology, coupled with an upbringing on the west coast of Scotland. My interest in geology stems from a visual awareness of shape, texture, and color rather than from the physical/chemical properties of rock morphology and rock placement. This pursuit was to develop while I was studying for a degree in the subject. Before this, however, I had studied mural design at Glasgow School of Art. 

Geology has held a great fascination for me, but there was always something missing from a scientific interpretation of the landscape. This absence was, of course, the human element. It was to this end that I turned my attention to field archaeology at the University of Glasgow.

Scotland, especially in upland, marginally cultivated regions, abounds in the remains of structures that tell a story of human habitation that has existed ever since the retreat of the great ice-sheets, some eight and a half thousand years ago. These remains I measure and draw, their form and topographical context interpreted, and the geological elements of landscape and construction materials explained. This union of the three disciplines of art, archaeology, and geology provides a tremendous stimulus in the creation of the mosaics themselves.

Slate is the primary material used in my work, although other rock types such as limestone and sandstone occasionally appear along with smalti. Ceramic-tile adhesive, coloured with water-based pigment, is used to fix the stone to tim-ber-board. The slate I gather on the very same coast near where I was raised. (It is never near to a road and consequently I have to haul it by backpack.)

As I work with the material, I am conscious of the fact that the slate was formed some six hundred million years ago, from fine muds that settled in a deep ocean basin. This is an astonishing timescale, one which puts our own existence into some perspective. (Incidentally, I believe the very same geological processes existed in what is now the northeastern United States. But the opening of the Atlantic created a split in the earth's crust; in other words, what is now a part of my country was once joined to a part of yours!)

I was introduced to mosaics back in 1972 by my tutor, George Garson, at Glasgow School of Art. I vividly remember the emotional impact of first seeing his work, in which slate figured predominantly. George has had a profound influence on my life since then, and during that time, he has involved me in large-scale mosaic murals.

At present, I am working on the theme of prehistoric standing stones. These monumental pieces dot the Scottish landscape and elsewhere on the Atlantic seaboard. One plausible explanation, though not widespread in the archaeological community, is that they were a sort of primitive calendar using solar and lunar alignments. Whatever the case, the notion of alignment has provided me with numerous ideas which I am currently exploring. Another strong theme, recently, is one in which I attempt to communicate the spirit of the first nomads, the hunter-gatherers, as they migrated across the land, following the retreating ice. Even today, those of us who have travelled alone or in small groups within remote regions have experienced a tremendous heightening of self-awareness - and of vulnerability - within the enormity of the natural environment.

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**Ancient Stones**
by Dugold Macinnes

**The Ravenna Mosaic Workshop**
by Diana Lundin
from a distance, it is probably five or six different shades of yellow. Break the rule and use one shade of yellow, you will get a flat, more graphic color. "If you want a vibrating and lively surface, you will use a mixture," Manuela said. "Next rule...you think those tesserae need to be in exactly the same shape? No. They are not precisely the same," she said. "What is important is not the single size, but how you arrange them. You arrange them along a line, either horizontal or vertical. From a distance, you don't get an idea of a mess." They show us how widening the interstices can give the mosaic a lighter spot. They show us how to change a row from one tessera to two smaller ones to achieve the same effect. And they show us how each piece of the highly reflective smalti is angled so that it will catch the light. "In modern mosaics, you can do whatever you want, but it's important to know what rules you are breaking to know what effect you will achieve," Manuela said.

After the lecture on arranging tesserae, we, except Ulrich and Roswita - pick our ancient copies. I pick a detail form a sash worn by one of the 22 virgins in the processional depicted in St. Apollinaire Nuovo, one of Ravenna's famous monuments. We have to trace each tessera twice in order to transfer the copy onto a bed of fresh lime, in which we will get a flat, more graphic color. "If you want a vibrating and lively surface, you will get a flat, more graphic color. "In modern mosaics, you can do whatever you want, but it's important to know what rules you are breaking to know what effect you will achieve," Manuela said.

"Cut, cut, cut," Luciana said. "The ancients must have felt as we cut our hard smalti, our work begins to take shape. We feel the rhythms that the mosaic work. Cheek's commentaries are descriptive rather than technical but they provide an invariably illuminating commentary as well as an instructive history of the media. This book is an inspiration to the artist and art lover alike.

-Allyson Way Hank

**Ancient Mosaics**

by Roger Ling,

Princeton University Press

*Ancient Mosaics* by Roger Ling is an excellent introduction to the origins and early development of mosaics around the Mediterranean and into the northern colonies of the Roman empire. A slim volume, with just 145 pages of text, it is well illustrated (with 47 color plates and 49 half-tone images) and provides an essential glossary and a two-page map of principal sites.

The author is an eminent classical scholar and writes with authority and affection about his subject, particularly emphasizing pictorial imagery. The historical and stylistic descriptions and analysis are detailed; the logical organization of materials reminds me of a good college art history course - erudite, but not dry or studded with jargon.

The accomplished mosaic artist as well as the novice will find an engaging and meaty reference to the early evolution of their chosen art form up to the beginning of the byzantine era. Little in the way of "how-to" information is presented here, but numerous recent books of that type are already available. The technical notes describing early mortars, mosaic materials and the analysis of patterns will all be of interest to those of us now using latex fortified thinsets, electric wetsaws and graphic design software - as well as to "purists" who prefer the older working methods.

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**BOOK REVIEWS** (continued)

direct, indirect, on flat, vertical and curved surfaces, on mesh, on wood, on rendered walls. The projects utilize traditional materials and designs, and employ a variety of laying styles. The objects created include the functional (mirror, table, floor) and the purely decorative.

What makes this book such a valuable addition to the mosaicist's library is the quality of the designs and applications. The designs are simple, yet inspiring, and demonstrate solid artistry. They encourage the beginner to start small, yet to work deliberately and creatively to produce quality results. Once the basic principles are understood, the beginner will be in a position to explore different materials, methodologies, and styles, but with confidence that time-honored and tested fundamentals are not being ignored.

What I missed in this book was a project involving, or even a discussion of, cement backer-boards - how to use them, hang them, etc. Also, there is barely a passing reference to convenient commercial alternatives to making one's own cement-and-sand mortar. Notwithstanding these minor omissions (for which information is readily available in other texts), I consider this book to be one of the best on the market for an introduction to mosaic art.

-Lia Catalano

**THE ART OF MOSAIC DESIGN**

by JoAnn Locktov and Leslie Plummer Clagett


If you're looking for inspiration, The Art of Mosaic Design is the book for you. The mosaic on the cover by Lucio Orsoni (of the Orsoni smalti family in Venice) is an indication of the diverse group of artists whose artwork is displayed inside. Authors JoAnn Locktov and Leslie Plummer Clagett have collected the work of contemporary mosaicists from around the world. The variety of mosaic art ranges from Jane Muir's organic landscapes to Felice Nicotello's three-dimensional sculptures. Each artist has a section that features an article about their work and techniques as well as beautifully reproduced photographs from their portfolios. This book is a must-have for aspiring mosaicists!

-Sonia King

**SAMA MEMBERSHIP**

Please detach and send with payment to:
SAMA, P. O. Box 428,
Orangeburg, SC 29116

$25.00 for individual membership
$50.00 for business membership.

Name: Mr.( ) Mrs.( ) Ms.( )
Address:

Phone: Fax:
e-mail:

Professional Artist ( ) Business ( ) Academic ( ) Other ( )

SAMA welcomes contributions of mosaic books to our library. If you would like to contribute a mosaic text contact us at the above address.

-SAMA
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