



The Annual Mosaic Arts International Exhibition Series 2021

by Shawn Newton

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the Society of American Mosaics Artists

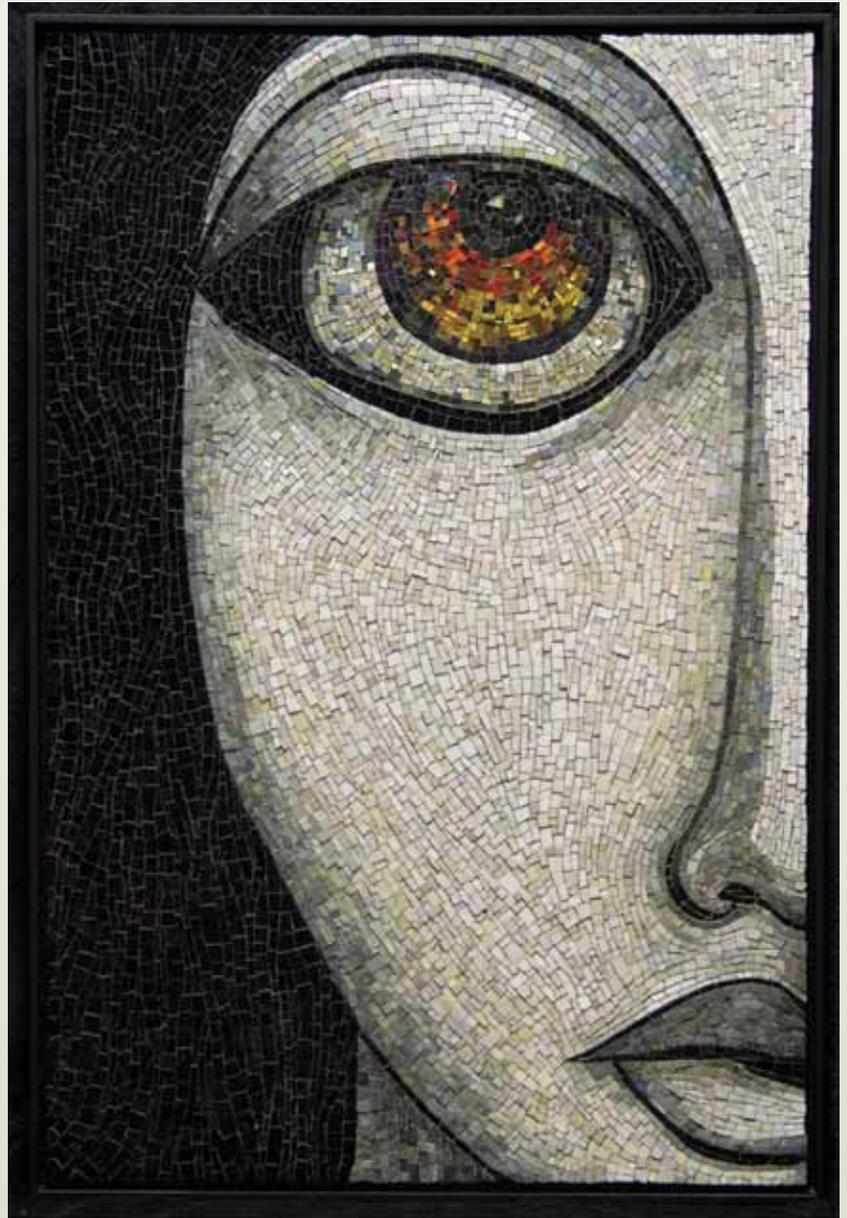
The Society of American Mosaic Artists (SAMA), a nonprofit organization dedicated to educating, inspiring, and promoting excellence in the mosaic arts, was founded in 1999. This vibrant and ever-expanding group of more than 900 members includes mosaic artists at all levels, mosaic aficionados, collectors, materials suppliers, and art educators. The group has put a renewed emphasis on strengthening ties with other mosaic organizations around the globe to pursue common goals and develop new programs relevant to its members.

SAMA's annual Mosaic Arts International (MAI) exhibition series invigorates a new perspective of mosaic art in numerous contexts and celebrates established as well as emerging artists working in the medium today. The series is comprised of separate, juried exhibits featuring the best in contemporary fine art, architectural, community, and site-specific mosaics from SAMA's diverse international membership. Fifty-four selected works from members throughout the world reflect the multiplicity of the mosaic medium and its endless applications.

A Virtual Exhibition for 2021

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, SAMA cancelled its 2020 exhibition and is presenting the 2021 exhibition as a fully interactive, virtual experience. Many of the works in the Fine Art segment will remain on view and are available for sale through the exhibition website indefinitely.

SAMA's Executive Director Dawnmarie Zimmerman, who designed the exhibition, explains how viewers will be able to experience it. "Artists who use this medium spend countless hours producing work that is best presented in person for viewers to experience the aspects of texture, color, reflectivity, and intricacy of design that is possible with mosaic. We have created an intimate digital experience wherein viewers receive large, juicy images and longer, more in-depth statements from artists to create a connection. It is a very dynamic and intuitive user experience that is easy to navigate and accessible on all devices."



Jacki Gran

Meet the Jurors

Julia Lang-Shapiro, Director of Media, Visual, and Performing Arts for Long Beach Public Schools, and Anabella Wewer, graphic designer and internationally exhibited mosaic artist, selected the exhibition winners. Each shared her perspective on the benefits of juried art exhibitions for artists as well as viewers.

“The arts are the voice and memory of all societies. They express perceptions of the past, present existences, events, feelings, ideas, and thoughts about human life, learning, and beliefs. Art is one of the main resources for broadening our experiences beyond events in our surroundings. As artists, we have to give ourselves over to creative expression and be willing to share our creative experiences with the world around us. For adjudication, this takes a certain amount of determination and courage.” — Julia Lang-Shapiro

“Any juried show is a representation of the combined perspectives and backgrounds of the jurors, the limitations of the show’s criteria, and the pool of entries, including its supporting materials. My hope for MAI is not just that it shows the best of our community, but that it helps to elevate mosaic’s acceptance as a fine art within the larger art community.” — Anabella Wewer

Winning Artists

Best in Show

Jacki Gran

Homestead, Florida, USA

Fire Within, 2019

36.5" x 25" x 2"

Mexican smalti and gold

Communicating my feelings can often be difficult. You can rely on me to listen to your problems, but I don’t often share my own. Through my mosaic journey, I have found a way to express the passion that is inside me without the filter of words.

“Painting can produce a beautiful portrait, but the lines and luminescence of hard materials in this work produce an effect that cannot be achieved with paint—a perfect example of what mosaic can do that other mediums cannot.” — Anabella Wewer



Technical Achievement Award

Michael Kruzich

San Francisco, California, USA

Trittico del Pacifico, 2020

66" x 52" x 1.5"

Stone, Italian and Mexican smalti, colored gold

San Francisco chef, Peter Hemsley, was specific in the subject matter but left the rest to me. I incorporated the movement and fine details that I enjoy imbuing my works with and chose to do a black thinset background that is poured up to the edge of the mosaic but slightly below the mosaic level. That gives the subject a slight forward relief from the background.

“Part of the mastery of one’s medium is to know which technique and which materials to use, and to decide on scale and proportion to achieve one’s artistic vision.” — Anabella Wewer

Michael Kruzich

Contemporary Innovation Award

Donna Van Hooser

Goodyear, Arizona, USA

Violet, 2018

18" x 33" x 1"

Telephone wire, various hardwoods

I'm always excited to meet a new material to use in a mosaic. Every object, piece of glass, or in this case, a cable full of colorful telephone wires, presents its own limitations and challenges to be overcome and explored. *Violet* is one of my favorite mosaic subjects. From her serious expression to her not-so-serious pose, she is the perfect weim-model—regal yet slightly goofy.

"Donna's mastery in working only with the limited color palette of electric wire to present us with a beautifully and expertly executed portrait, elevates the work to the fine art category and has challenged the definition of mosaic art." — Anabella Wewer

Juror's Choice — Julia Lang-Shapiro

Yulia Hanansen

Baltimore, Maryland, USA

Light as a Wave as a Particle, 2019

27" x 81" x 3" (combined dimension)

Smalti glass, cement mortar on hand-formed substrate

Each panel of this triptych represents a section of a full, visible light spectrum. The "Redshift" panel represents the light that has been traveling away from us, and the "Blueshift" panel represents light that has been traveling toward us. The central panel, after which the whole triptych is named, shows a full light spectrum.

"The panels are an undulating ocean of technicolor smalti glass, showcasing the myriad of values found in the color spectrum." — Julia Lang-Shapiro

Juror's Choice — Anabella Wewer

Barbara Uhlenbruch

Melbourne, Australia

Goodbye Old Life, 2020

27.5" x 27.5" x 3"

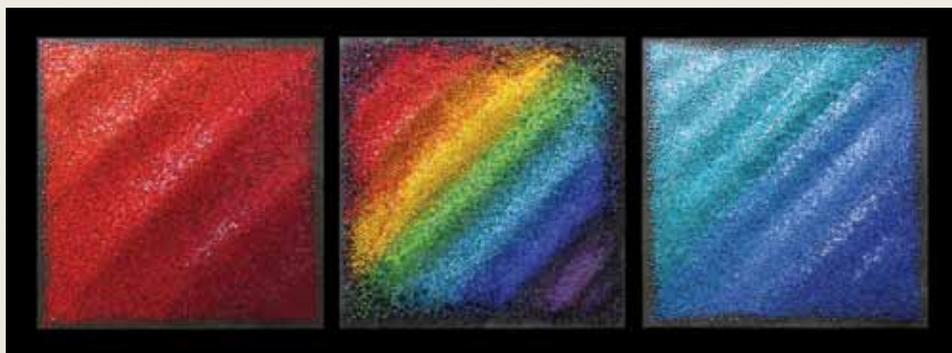
Smalti Italian and Mexican glass, marble, gold smalti

In early 2020, there was a worldwide sense of knowing that things were changing in an unprecedented way and that life, as we knew it, was fast disappearing. This work captures a sense of the loss of something treasured while still holding on to a sense of hope for its return.

"The color work within the simple andamento is anything but simple. It's a rich, vibrant darkness that leads to light using a beautiful gradation, a personal favorite, punctuated by bits of gold. I can imagine standing there, next to the figure, waiting." — Anabella Wewer



Donna Van Hooser



Yulia Hanansen



Barbara Uhlenbruch

Site-Specific Best Architectural Mosaic

Bonnie Cohen

Akron, Ohio, USA

CONNECT, 2020

55' x 8' x 4'

Glass mosaic, recycled glass, porcelain tile, stainless steel, Cleveland carbon steel, mirror, smalti
Installed at Cleveland State University, Washkewicz College of Engineering, Cleveland, Ohio

The artwork draws an earth-bound map: Cleveland State's GPS coordinates anchor the university itself in place. The seven monumental letters were designed using the Golden Rectangle, a mathematical formula based on a set of numbers known as the Fibonacci Sequence. Eight hundred years after its discovery, it is still inspiring artists and engineers to connect science, technology, and nature to achieve balance and beauty.



Bonnie Cohen



Site-Specific Best Community Mosaic

Ann Wydeven

Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA

La Casa de Esperanza Charter School, 2019

25' x 15'

Glass tile

Installation in Waukesha, Wisconsin, USA

“The House of Hope” is a full-service charter school with a mission to provide opportunities for children to achieve full social and economic participation in society, with an emphasis on the Hispanic population. The mural is devoted to both primary and higher education. **GA**

Visit www.mosaicartsinternational.americanmosaics.org to view additional MAI entries. To learn more about SAMA and how to become a member, go to www.americanmosaic.org.

Ann Wydeven

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