



# Mosaic Arts International 2019

Introduction by Tami Macala, President, SAMA

Photography by the Artists Unless Otherwise Noted

The 18th Annual Mosaic Arts International Exhibition series (MAI), sponsored by the Society of American Mosaic Artists (SAMA), invigorated a new perspective of mosaic art in numerous contexts while celebrating both established and emerging artists working in the medium today. The 58 selected works reflected the multiplicity of the mosaic medium and its endless applications.

SAMA was honored to present this annual exhibition series in partnership with two iconic cultural institutions located in Nashville, Tennessee—The Parthenon Museum and the Nashville Public Library Art Gallery. The result was a collection of works that SAMA proudly presented to thousands of visitors in hopes of expanding their appreciation and understanding of mosaic art.

## MAI 2019 Fine Art Jurors

### Joseph S. Mella

Nashville, Tennessee, USA

“I was fascinated by the range of art that was submitted. One outstanding work of art served as a metaphor for the artist’s personal experience with cancer, while others strove to comment on current events. Having captivated artists for millennia, natural forms still find their place in some of the best art in this exhibition. Meghan Walsh’s Best in Show, *Mushin*, finds its roots in the forces of nature and, in particular, the sea.”

### Kim Emerson

San Diego, California, USA

“As artists, I believe the beauty of our ideas must transcend the human spirit in a time of great need to understand the world around us. The *how* is the artist’s sole responsibility.”

### Toyoharu Kii

Tokyo, Japan

“Pursue what is the uniqueness of mosaic. Look for things you cannot do with other techniques. This is the basic stance when making a work as a mosaic. The identity of mosaic as an art form is in there.”



Meghan Walsh, *Mushin*

## Best in Show

### Meghan Walsh

Washington, D.C.

#### *Mushin*

29" x 19" x 9"

Stone, glass, shells, horseshoe crab carcass, pottery, kiln cones  
2018

“There is untranslatable wisdom that we can attempt to express through our artwork. The sea contains primordial wisdom along with the wisdom of cultures left behind for survival in a new world. The horseshoe crab, dating back to 450 million years ago—even before dinosaurs—holds untranslatable wisdom itself.

## Technical Distinction Award

*Excellence in the methods, materials, and execution of traditional mosaic making*

### Anabella Wewer

Macungie, Pennsylvania

#### *Vino Versato*

18" x 18" x 11"

Marble, Litovi glass, porcelain

2018

"I enjoy the hunt for the right colors and materials and love every second of cutting material to find the right color or the unexpected gifts within. I hunted for just the right marble to make the spill look real, to transition from the white to the woman-made Litovi that was the perfect color—matching the towel that I had actually spilled wine on."



Anabella Wewer, *Vino Versato*



Mia Tavonatti, *Origin*

## Contemporary Innovation Award

*Encouraging experimentation and challenging the definition of mosaic art*

### Mia Tavonatti

Santa Ana, California

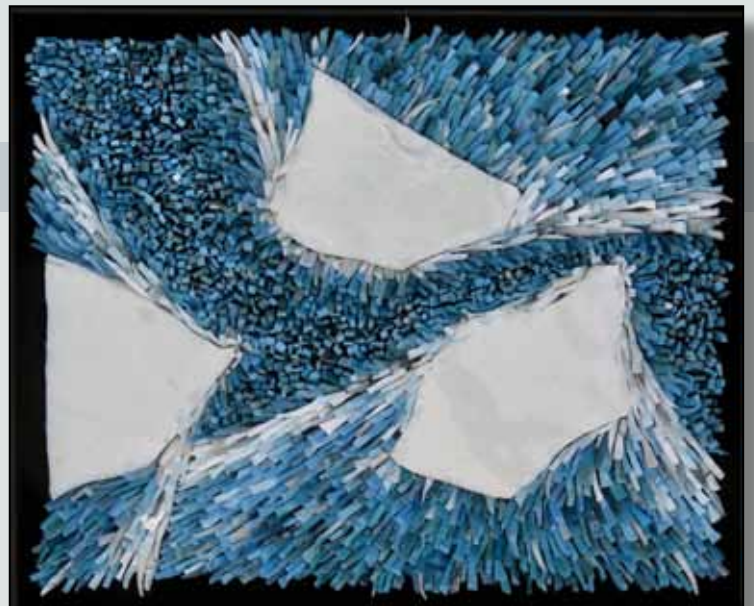
#### *Origin*

15" x 11" x 6"

Stained glass, smalti, fused glass, fiberglass mesh, resin support

2018

"Water is the ultimate mirror, reflecting not only our self-image, but also the light, winds, and stormy weather of our souls as seen in its ripples and currents. With great effort, the soul is liberated after lying dormant for years beneath the surface of emotional waters that are too deep to tread."



Margo Anton, *Going with the Floe*

## Jurors' Choice: Kim Emerson

### Margo Anton

St. Albert, Alberta, Canada

#### *Going with the Floe*

7.75" x 9" x 1.50"

Smalti, sea spines, transparent, kyanite

2018

"I've never traveled north far enough to see ice floes. I imagine a dramatic scene—large pieces of ice moving swiftly, jostling and careening off one another. Like the ice floes, people bounce off one another, with relationships forming and ending, coming together, moving in unison for a time, then splitting apart. Try as I might to fight this reality, my efforts are to no avail. It's best to go with the floe."



## Juror's Choice: Joseph S. Mella

**Kate Butler**

Bungendore, Australia

**Remember Paris?**

27.50" x 27.50" x 3"

Unglazed porcelain, vitreous glass, hand-formed substrate

2017

“Vast tracts of the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, which was the largest living structure on our planet and full of life, energy, and dazzling color, are now bleached or dead. Some corals are able to recover but only if we act quickly and reduce the threats we impose. The alternative is having this national treasure fade into a distant memory.”



*Kate Butler, Remember Paris?*



*Karen Ami, Novel Ties, Chapter X*

## Juror's Choice: Toyoharu Kii

**Karen Ami**

Chicago, Illinois, USA

**Novel Ties, Chapter X**

28" x 23.50" x 7"

Clay, slip, marble, slate, mortar on polystyrene

2018

“Destruction and repair is a metaphor for life cycles and changes. It is how beauty is found in the damaged, then reborn as whole. I love love, and I love art. It is an exploration and investigation, a struggle to express without words, and in that struggle, a gift of truth.”

## MAI 2019 Site-Specific Juror

**Kim Emerson**

San Diego, California, USA

“It is said that public art is not for the lighthearted! Mosaics as public art is time consuming, more costly, and sometimes a real challenge to convince any client that it is a good investment. One must please a community or finicky client, plan the entire process with no mistakes or setbacks, work with community volunteers and committees, ensure that everyone is productive while having a good time, install without any glitches, and create a project that will last *forever!*”

## Best Architectural Project

*Excellence in design and installation methods that sustain harmony with the surrounding architecture and environment*



*Mia Tavonatti, Baptismal Font and Pool*

**Mia Tavonatti**

Santa Ana, California, USA

**Baptismal Font and Pool**

Installation at Holy Trinity Catholic Church, Ladera Ranch, California, USA

Fabrication and Installation by Mia Tavonatti Productions, Inc.

Assistants: Tara Tavonatti, Ann Marie Price

Handblown glass bowl: Caleb Siemon

36' x 36" x 36" (Baptismal Font); 50" x 32" (Face); 10' x 8" (Pool)

Stained glass, smalti, fused glass

2017

“This mosaic reflects the genesis of life symbolized in traditional Catholic baptisms. The mosaic water flows from the back of the font, over the top, under the blown glass infinity water bowl, and down the curved face of the font, culminating in an explosion of light reminiscent of the ‘spark of life’ at the bottom of the immersion pool.”

**Best Community Mosaic**

*Excellence in design and installation methods to represent the community and organization for whom it is installed*

**Kathleen Crocetti**

Watsonville, California, USA

Installation on Main Street, Downtown Watsonville, California, USA

**Celebrating the Diversity of Labor**

Twelve 46"-diameter circular sidewalk insets; four 36"-diameter insets

Porcelain tile, mortar bed, thinset, grout

2017

“An exciting aspect of my job is helping the local community members articulate what is unique about their neighborhood—bringing neighbors with potentially divergent ideas together to facilitate a conversation that not only gives individuals a voice in creating images for their public spaces, but also allows them to make deeper connections with each other.”



*Kathleen Crocetti, Celebrating the Diversity of Labor*

**Juror’s Choice: Kim Emerson**

**Eileen Gay**

Sparks, Nevada, USA

Installation at Airport Heights Elementary School, Anchorage, Alaska, USA

**Talking Trees**

8.50' x 18'

Glazed porcelain tile, fused glass accents, modified thinset, urethane grout, artist-fabricated EPS/concrete sculptural forms

Photo by Kevin Smith

2018

“A concrete sculptural mosaic of trees and logs representing Time, Weather, and Nature surround a central form that features Alaska’s State Flower, the forget-me-not. The circular positioning creates a gathering place for talking, listening, sharing, and learning. The space encourages use as an outdoor classroom or for other presentations.”



*Eileen Gay, Talking Trees. Photo by Kevin Smith.*

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