



## 2014 Mosaic Arts International Exhibition

by the Society of American Mosaic Artists

SAMA's annual juried art show, Mosaic Arts International (MAI), was presented at Williams Tower Gallery in Houston, Texas, April 24–May 30, 2014. The exhibition offered a rare opportunity to experience, in person, the unique texture and diversity of the best of contemporary mosaic art, an art form that is so rich and compelling that it is often difficult to capture the full essence in a photograph.

This year's jury panel included Reginald C. Adams, president and chief executive officer of the Museum of Cultural Arts Houston, Houston, Texas; internationally recognized master mosaic artist Giulio Menossi, Udine, Italy; and Jeannine Falino, an independent curator and museum consultant who has lectured extensively on American decorative arts, New York, New York.

"The artists in this year's exhibition have expressed creativity and innovation in their work, which illustrates the unique and compelling qualities of this most ancient of art forms," said Shug Jones, president of the SAMA Board of Trustees. "The mosaics, containing both traditional and nontraditional materials while employing classic and contemporary techniques, continue to explore the diversity of the medium in unexpected ways."

### Top Awards

The Jurors awarded Best in Show to Atsuko Laskaris for *Water Lily*, a masterfully executed stained glass image depicting a moment in the sun. Juror, Giulio Menossi commented, "This is a great example of technique that achieves the high points of mastery . . . the wonderful use of the range of light and dark without the fear of getting lost and confused in the world of color." (translated from the Italian).

The award for Technical Achievement, which acknowledges the work that exemplifies excellence in the methods, materials, and execution of traditional mosaic making, went to Brooks Tower for *The Valley*, an intimate expression of personal loss. Executed in the opus sectile technique, Tower masterfully merges precision stone placement with evocative imagery. Gary Drostle's clever, lighted representation of an electrical circuit, *Electron Flow*, was awarded for Contemporary Innovation as the work that best encourages experimentation and challenges the definition of mosaic art.



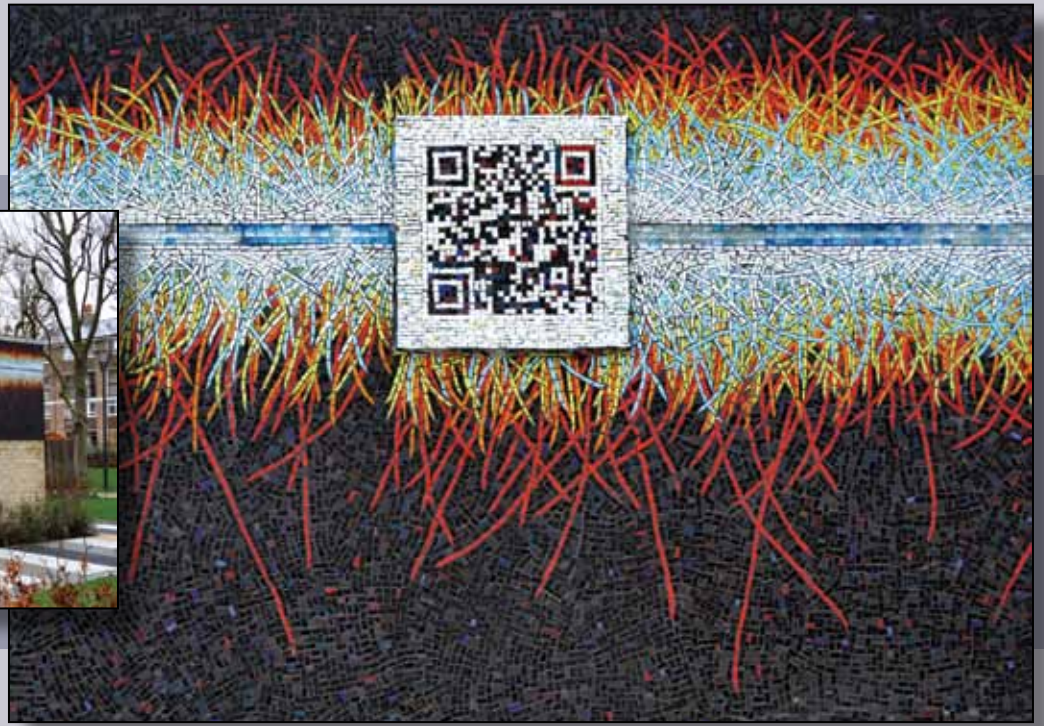
Atsuko Laskaris, *Water Lily*

### Individual Juror Awards

Each individual juror also made a personal selection for the Juror's awards. Reginald C. Adams chose *You itch!*, a sculptural work by Gwyn Kaitis (Joliet, Illinois). Adams remarked, "I love the integration of mixed media sculpture and the satire that Kaitis creatively integrated into the work. As with many of the pieces in the jurying process, this particular work caused me to revisit it several times to further investigate and explore the details and materials used in the mosaic masterpiece."

Giulio Menossi selected the ambitious series of 155 sculpted panels by Melissa Cole (Spokane, Washington), *Confluence (Of the Snake and Clearwater Rivers)*, which adorns a pedestrian bridge spanning a major highway. "This is an interesting project to revive and give life to a structure, otherwise without any interest . . . a perfect integration of landscape . . . a network . . . a road and the sky."

*Bass Man* by Patricia Marin (New York, New York), a figurative depiction of a jazz musician, captured the attention of Jeannine Falino for her Juror's Choice. "My personal favorite is *Bass Man* for its rich use of warm colors and for its treatment of the musician that seems to evoke the jazz world of the '50s. Moreover, the abstracted handling of the figure and the background that is achieved using broad patches of color recalls the work of Romare Beardon, who often made collages with pieces of colored paper and textiles. The subject was rendered with empathy, using a clear composition and rich color that yielded a memorable image," said Falino.



Gary Drostle, Electron Flow



Brooks Tower, The Valley

### Invitational Exhibition

Joining the 2014 juried members' show, was an Invitational Exhibit containing works from three internationally recognized mosaic masters: Emma Biggs of London, England; Giulio Menossi of Udine, Italy; and Sonia King of Dallas, Texas, and San Francisco, California, USA.

The Masters Invitational exhibit provided a rare opportunity for viewers to experience the work of three strongly unique voices in contemporary mosaic. "I am thrilled that we were able to present these particular artists' work together this year," said Dawnmarie Zimmerman, SAMA executive director. "Viewers experienced three very different aesthetic approaches toward the use of materials and color in fine art mosaic, as well as the result of three artists who exquisitely navigate the essential relationship between tesserae and substrate. Their level of mastery is seemingly effortless, albeit decades in the making, resulting in the development of an authentically sophisticated visual language that can be emotional, intellectual and/or meditative.

The Society of American Mosaic Artists, a nonprofit organization of over 900 members, is dedicated to educating, inspiring, and promoting excellence in mosaic arts. SAMA is the largest mosaic art organization in the world, including mosaic artists, collectors, materials suppliers, and art educators.

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Visit [www.americanmosaics.org](http://www.americanmosaics.org) for more information about the Society of American Mosaic Artists.

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