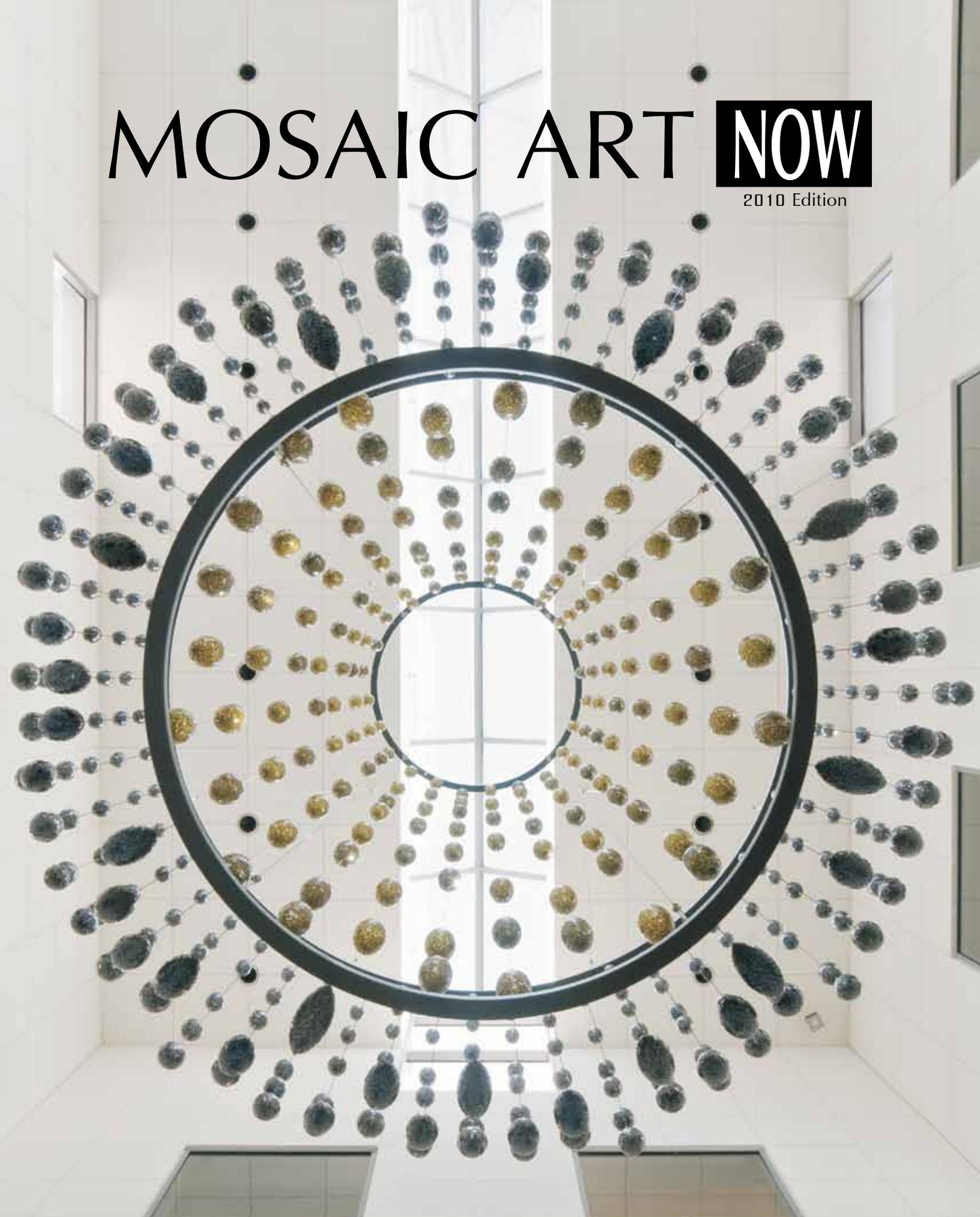


MOSAIC ART NOW

2010 Edition



Morning by Ann Gardner. Glass, composite material, concrete, steel. 18 h x 12 w x 12 d feet Photography: Lisa Jacoby



Night Shirt
by Julie Richey (United States)
2009 Grand Prize Winner

Orsoni Prize 2009: International Award for Mosaic Fine Art

TO BEGIN AGAIN

by JoAnn Locktov

“Returning to Venice and the Domus Orsoni for the first time in four years, I had the uncanny feeling that I’d been away not years, but weeks. The heavy green door to the Domus still swings open to reveal a private world of lush mosaics and a family’s fascinating legacy. It was an indescribable thrill to see that they had already installed my “Night Shirt” among the works in the gallery. The staff is, as always, welcoming and generous. The Domus rooms are as I found them during the first visit: sophisticated, well-appointed and ideally situated just steps from the classroom where, once again, I’d be spending the majority of my Venetian holiday.”

These are the recollections of Julie Richey, the 2009 Orsoni Grand Prize Winner. Along with her cash prize of 1,000 Euros, Richey was flown to Venice from her home in Texas to participate in a week-long Master in Mosaic class. She invested her time at Orsoni to focus on a new commission, a mosaic altar piece for the University of Dallas to be installed in Rome, Italy.

Night Shirt, Richey’s award winning mosaic exhibited for 3 months in the Angelo Orsoni Gallery, captured the discovery of a shared experience. Reminiscing with Lucio Orsoni at the award presentation, “We spoke about the mosaic conference in San Francisco several years ago. It was his first encounter with the American mosaic community and its enthusiasm for all things mosaic; and it was the site of my inspiration for the *Night Shirt*, which depicts the San Francisco skyline in the wee morning hours. Turns out we both were in awe of San Francisco Bay.”

Lucio Orsoni together with Pino Bisazza chose *Night Shirt* because of Richey’s “exceptional ability in depicting an atmospheric landscape of pure poetry that harmonizes with the sculptural form of the clothing.” In particular it was the “appreciable touches of light” that Richey included, creating two reflections, one of the 3 a.m. sky over San Francisco and one of deeply felt memories.

In contrast to Richey’s 19 years as a professional mosaicist is Magda Busetto, whose mosaic *Occhio* won Honorable Mention and 3 kilos of Orsoni gold mosaic. Busetto is a resident of Venice, she walks through several calle to arrive at the doorstep of Orsoni, where she searches for perfect colors. In 2005 when she returned from a trip to Australia, she was inspired to learn about mosaics as a technique to interpret the aboriginal art that she had witnessed in her travels. One day in Venice, Busetto met the piercing glance of a stranger. The look that lasted an instant haunted her and she needed to capture the magnetic exchange. *Occhio* was created instinctively and quickly, mirroring the spontaneous moment that was the catalyst for its creation. The jurors were startled to feel their normal role as viewers reversed. When viewing *Occhio* they felt like they were being watched, animating the inanimate mosaic eye. Busetto is just beginning her explorations in mosaic art; however, the acknowledgement she received winning Honorable



Julie Richey accepting award from Lucio Orsoni at the Orsoni Gallery in Venice



Occhio
by Magda Busetto (Italy)
2009 Honorable Mention



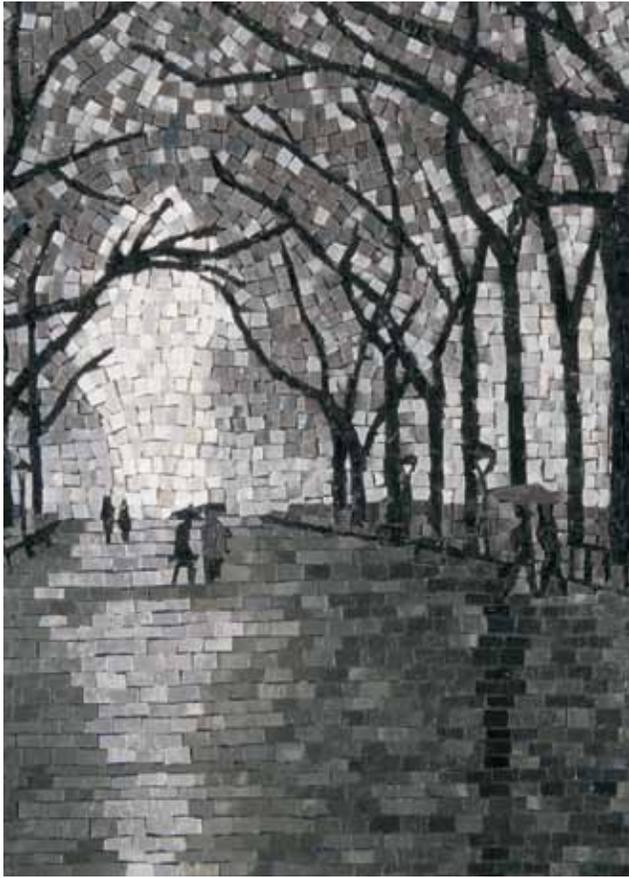
Julie Richey and Antonella Gallenda

Mention has strengthened her resolve to express herself with smalti and gold.

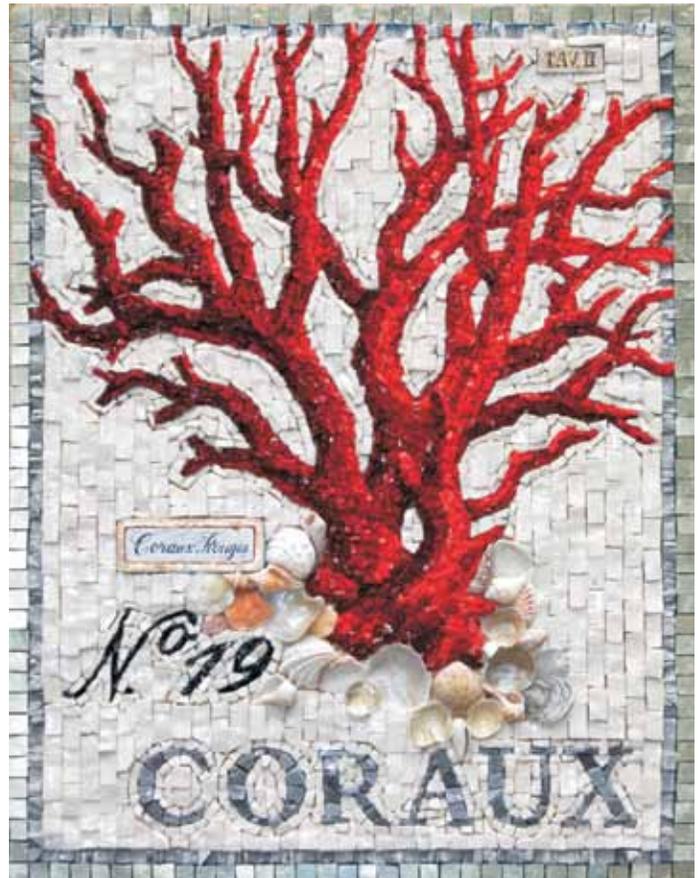
Three Finalists, Greg Haas, Kate Kerrigan and Angela Staehling each received 1 kilo of Orsoni 24k gold mosaic. Their award winning mosaics reflect diverse intentions and inspirations. Greg Haas, also from Texas, elevates material to the central focus. He is drawn to the “solid form, saturated color, material massing, tessellation and reflective brilliance of true smalti.” Using one color and measured geometric distances, Haas achieves a “mosaic relief” with the emphasis on pure material.

Kate Kerrigan is both a professional photographer and mosaicist. *Rainy Day Central Park* is an interpretation of her original photograph into a chiaroscuro landscape, mastering shading and andamento to establish form and perspective. A resident of the San Francisco Bay Area, it was Kerrigan’s ability to “capture an intense light” that confirmed her Finalist award. Using numerous palettes of gray enabled Kerrigan to achieve seamless transitions in her evocative mosaic.

While traveling for a year in Europe with her family in 2008, Angela Staehling discovered magical shell-lined grottos and bathhouses. A professional painter for 17 years, Staehling became captivated by the “organic nature of glass allowing the art form to change appearance as light reflects off it from different angles.” Her award winning *Coraux Rouges* is her first mosaic after completing a 3-day workshop at Orsoni. Now living in Illinois, Staehling is designing an entire series of mosaic sea forms. *Coraux*



Rainy Day Central Park
by Kate Kerrigan (United States)
2009 Finalist



Coraux Rouges
by Angela Staehling (United States)
2009 Finalist



Blue Wave
by Greg Haas (United States)
2009 Finalist



Night Shirt (Detail)
by Julie Richey (United States)

Rouges received recognition for “a sophisticated use of coral smalto while keeping a naïve simplicity in the design.” According to Lucio Orsoni, the mosaic brought back childhood memories of reading “samplers” that used strong graphic images to instruct young Venetians.

The Orsoni Prize continues a legacy that started with Lucio Orsoni’s great grandfather Angelo, in 1888. It provides the opportunity to recognize excellence and spirited accomplishment in contemporary mosaic art. When asked if he has advice for artists working today, Lucio Orsoni vigorously replied, “When you arrive at a good point and you are satisfied with your work, that is the time to start again, at the very beginning.” He is encouraging artists to become perpetual students, to challenge themselves, to be uncomfortable because “it is only by beginning again will you be able to think mosaic.” He has grand expectations for 2011 when the next Orsoni Prize will be awarded.

JoAnn has written two books and numerous articles on contemporary mosaic art. She currently manages public relations for Orsoni Smalti Veneziani and design related clients at Bella Figura Communications. She can be reached at joann@bellafiguracomunications.com



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Mission

Mosaic Art Now promotes the international understanding and appreciation of contemporary mosaics through high-quality publications and a lively online presence. We deliver provocative and inspirational content for artists, curators, architects, designers, collectors and educators.

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Photos (above) from left to right: *One Day* by Ann Gardner, Laurel True with students at the Steiner School, *Clay End* by Emma Biggs, *Nightshirt* by Julie Richey, *Solar Flare* by Yulia Hanansen, and *Meredith* by Ellen Blakeley.