



Tile Heritage Foundation

for research and preservation of ceramic surfaces

Founded in July 1987 Tile Heritage is celebrating its 37th anniversary this year. Supporters like YOU... members, major contributors, industry sponsors, generous grantors... everyone... have made possible the continued fulfillment of the Foundation's mission to Document and Preserve tile history in the U.S., both past and present. THANK YOU!



Tile artist Carolyn Payne shows off her mural depicting a scene from the Isle of Capri, Italy for an outdoor kitchen in Kansas City, Missouri 2023.

All photos courtesy of the artist.

E-News for Spring 2024

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A Tribute to Tile Heritage

From Carolyn Payne, Payne Creations Tile, Kansas City

I wanted to reach out to you in 2024 and say thanks for the memories! I think I joined Tile Heritage around 1990 when two ladies came through Kansas City and saw one of my murals on a building on the Country Club Plaza. They came to my house and told me about Tile Heritage and I joined immediately!

2024 marks 40 years I have been a hand painted tile artist! I still do some work, but mainly retired. I attended seven of your symposiums and enjoyed the association with other Tile Heritage members at the Coverings shows. I just wanted to say thank you for bringing Tile Heritage to the United States and all that you have developed over the years!

A Tribute to Tile Heritage (continued)

As you know, I am not a tile maker person but a painter using tile as my canvas! Thought I would share a recent project I did last year for an outdoor kitchen in Kansas City. I have my own technique that I have developed over the years. My work always starts with a consultation and sketch to be approved by the client.



The original sketch approved by the client.

Then I apply a wax over the lines and coat the mural with 3 layers of white glaze.



Design sketched with a magic marker



After the wax is applied, the application of 3 layers of white glaze begins.

Then sketched in magic marker on the tile (I learned this technique from Bill Granizo. I loved that man and his work!)



After the wax is applied, the application of 3 layers of white glaze begins.

Then the colored glazes are applied and I might fire the pieces several times to get the finished look!

This mural was a scene from the Isle of Capri, Italy the client loved after returning from a trip!

Just thought you would like to hear from an old member and say thanks for the memories and all the valuable education!

Carolyn Payne/ tile artist

Show Me a Sign

By Shelby Kennedy

I recently completed a tile sign for Sacramento Dharma Center (SDC), an organization of three Buddhist meditation groups that recently bought and converted a modernist low-rise commercial building for their use.



Karen Hamilton, the artist, admires the finished signage made with large format porcelain tiles and water jet cut text.

Photography by Jim Hare.

This project was an active collaboration with Jim Hare, who leads the Zen group at SDC, and Karen Hamilton, an artist with a good eye for color and typography. I also relied on Kenyon Lewis, a ceramic and glass artist based in Cloverdale, for best practices and help in assembly and installation.

After the client supplied an initial drawing, the design process was collaborative. We ultimately decided to use large format (24" x 48") porcelain tiles as the base material, which would be cut by water jet to accommodate the lettering and to accommodate the mandala logo of the SDC. I agreed to make the mandala logo in my ceramic studio.

The water jet cutting was done by Marin Design Works (ken@marindesignworks.com). The letter-forms were cut out in the light-colored background tile and then the letters themselves were cut in dark grey tile. (We used Thaddeus White for the light background tile and Sahara Dark for the letters. We purchased these tiles from Bedrosians Tile and Stone.)

Show Me a Sign (continued)

Marin Design Works also did the slab cutting of the top and baseboard tile components from a cutting list that I gave them. As an alternative, the longest cuts could have been cut on a large Bridge saw capable of cutting 48" lines.

One challenge of the project was to fit and space the letters so that the text was not too close to tile edges, thereby creating too fragile an object for installation. Because the water jet cutter is computer driven, it was easy to try various text spacing "on paper" (actually by email) until the client was satisfied with the layout.



Kenyon (left) and Shelby back buttering the first layer.

Certainly, the most challenging aspect of this project was the creation of the mandala logo in clay - it took several iterations to finally arrive at a sound sculptural solution to the mandala. First, I made a three-layer version, attaching the layers using the score and (clay) slip method of laminated construction. This version cracked in the cooling phase of the firing.

Next, I made a whole new model from scratch and from this I made eight individual petal molds and a center piece in plaster. I poured clay casting slip into these molds. The casts were allowed to dry, painted with underglaze



Unloading the components from the A frame.

colors and given a first firing. A second firing was done with a clear matte glaze. I also made, fired, and glazed the outside trim to surround the assembly.

After the water jet cutting was completed, Kenyon and I pre-assembled the sign in four sections in the studio. We then set the porcelain tile parts and the mandala on Hardibacker w/Hydro Defense water proof cement board using Laticrete #254 Platinum thin set. We also inserted the letters into their openings and face-taped them in place. To prevent thin set from squeezing out to the front of the sign, we should have back-grouted the letter forms with unsanded grout in the chosen color - lesson learned.



Setting the first row, note support blocks.



Setting the big middle tiles.

Using an extra tile, we slid the full-size text tile onto an un-cut helper tile. Next we thin set the text tile with a 1/2" sq. notch trowel with the ridges running the short dimension and a skim coat of thin set on the backer board. Then we folded the two elements together using the extra tile to support the still fragile text panel. We let this sandwich of porcelain tile and backer board set and cure for 24 hours.

To transport all of our pieces to the job site, I built an inclined and padded transport rack like countertop and glass contractors use in their work. At the job site, the client had removed the old sign

and cleaned the concrete monument. We were lucky to inherit a 1" angle iron from the old sign, which we used to start building the sign from the bottom up.

First, using the same thin set and application methods, we set the base board element. Next came the full-size text tile and finally a 6" top strip. I used cabinet making clamps with wooden pads to temporarily "squish" the tile panels to the monument while they were setting up.

The next day we surrounded all the edges with the pre-made surface bullnose trim.



Karen, Shelby and Kenyon kick back to show you their sign!



Setting the petals of the Mandala.

After letting that set a short time, we grouted the entire sign with Custom's Prism grout, which does not require a sealer. I used a "pastry bag" to grout the sculptural element.

Since the sign was completed, my clients have received many compliments on the sign and expressions of gratitude from those who come to the Sacramento Dharma Center to practice meditation and learn about other aspects of Buddhist practice and ethics.

Shelby Kennedy,
[<slkstudio@icloud.com >](mailto:slkstudio@icloud.com)

Handcraft Masterpiece – Potentially at risk

Greetings!

I own an older home in the Rose Garden neighborhood of San Jose. As my husband and I are entertaining the idea of selling our home, I was hoping to get more information on the tiles used on the living room fireplace and throughout the master bathroom, to pass it along to potential new owners. I was surprised to find the exact same center tile on my fireplace in Wolfe & Higgins: Master Architects of the Spanish Revival. Feel free to respond by email or phone.

Thank you in advance for your interest and for any assistance,

Lilian



A Spanish Revival home built in 1930 in San Jose, California. Architect unknown.



A fireplace surround crafted at Handcraft Tile Company in San Jose, California in 1930, now in pristine condition. The decorative tile on each side of the firebox confirmed the tile maker as Handcraft, being featured in *California Tile: The Golden Era 1910-1940* (p. 214), Volume 1.

Lilian, greetings and thanks for contacting Tile Heritage.

Couple favors: retake your pictures at 300 dpi as your current images lose their clarity when they're enlarged.

We should be able to help. Do you know the year your home was built?

Looking forward...

Joe Taylor



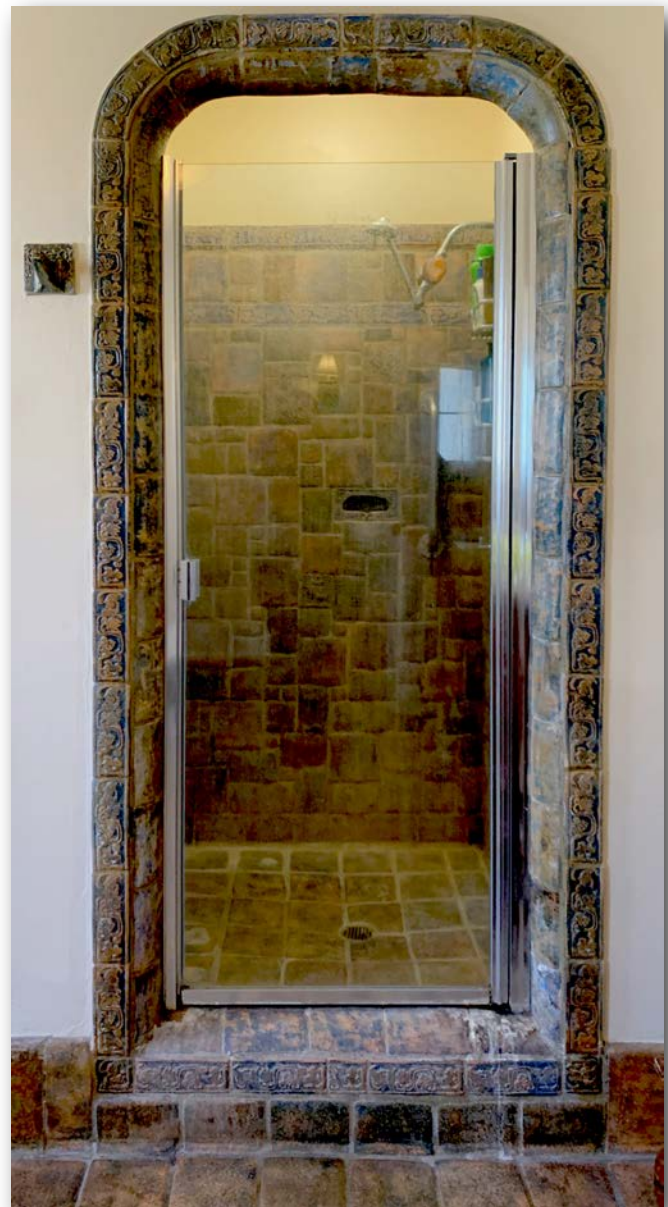
Hi Joe,

Thank you for your quick response and assistance!

My reason for reaching out to you is to try to ensure that the new owners (if we sell) understand - and, hopefully, appreciate - the history and merit of the tiles, as there has been talk about renovating the bathroom. Real estate records show that my home was built in 1930. In a 1931 phone book, I found that Frank M. Santana, who served on the city's planning commission, lived here.

In the master bathroom, in addition to the tiles, there are towel bars, a towel hook, built-in soap dishes, curtain rods, and tooth brush holder.

Kind regards,
Lilian



Stall shower in the master bathroom.

Handcraft Masterpiece – Potentially at risk (continued)

Lilian, your “final” images did the trick. You have Handcraft tile produced in San Jose (originally in 1926 the company was called San Jose Tile). I will send you a brief history of the company, which remains in business today but on a smaller scale than in the 1920s.

By the way, it was the decorative tile on the bottom of each side of the fireplace that gave away the company’s identity.

jt



Hi Joe,

Wow! That sounds kind of exciting! But what does this really mean?

Lilian

Your house is nearly 100 years old and is considered a historic structure representing architecture and design of the Spanish Colonial Revival in California. Were this master bath to be “renovated,” the historic value of your home would be compromised.

jt

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<https://endowment.tileheritage.org/>

A Unique Approach to Grouting

By Riley Doty

In 1909 architects Greene & Greene completed an Arts & Crafts masterpiece, the Thorsen House in Berkeley, California. Much has been written about their work, but Charles Greene's unique approach to grouting the dining room fireplace seems to have escaped notice for the past 114 years.



This fireplace, shown below, consists of a grid of 6x6 tiles inlaid with ceramic shards. Its design is unique and compelling but the texture and character of the grout joints goes unnoticed unless one inspects them from close range.

Above and at left, a closer look begins to reveal the unique texture and profile of the joints.

Riley Doty is a tile setter and tile historian based in Oakland, California. He served on the Tile Heritage board of directors for over 20 years. Here he writes about his fascination with a possibly overlooked aspect of Henry & Charles Greene's work.



NEW BOOK:

Nearly 30 years in the making!

From author Ben Tyjeski

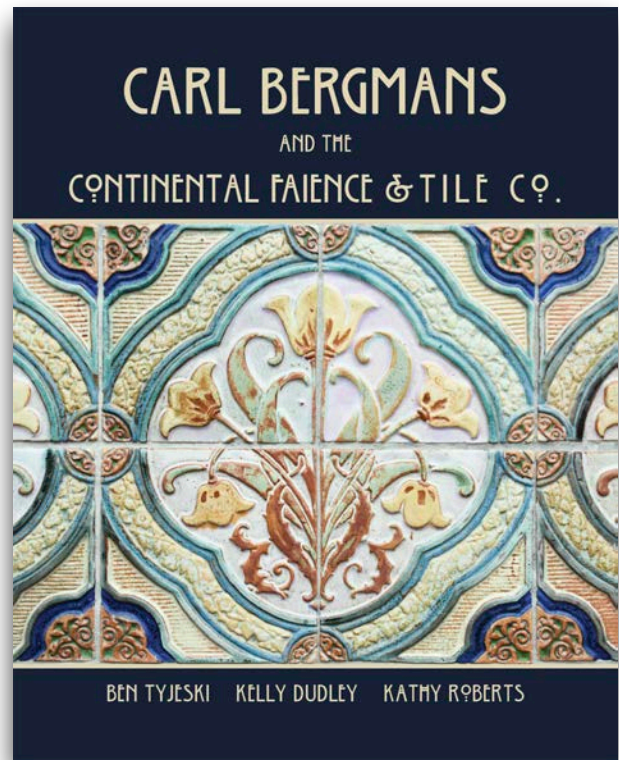
Continental Faience and Tile Company operated in South Milwaukee, Wisconsin from 1925 to 1943. It has taken almost 30 years for the authors to uncover the story of this relatively unknown tile company, whose tiles are found throughout Wisconsin but in many cases have been attributed to other American tile makers, most often to the Batchelder Tile Company.

The book covers both the history of Continental Faience and Tile Company and the life of Belgian immigrant Carl Bergmans, in many cases through his own words as taken from letters he wrote to Belgian author Marie Gevers throughout a 20+ year correspondence, and letters he wrote to architect Frank Lloyd Wright.

Continental Faience & Tile Company experienced rapid growth in its early years, doubling the size of the factory and installing a 140' tunnel kiln just before the Great Depression stifled the business. Mr. Bergmans was able to keep the business going during these difficult years when many other American tile companies closed their doors. After revamping the tile factory to produce pottery in its last few years, the business closed in 1943 due to the manpower shortage caused by World War II.

This lavishly illustrated book's 272 pages include more than 1200 color photographs and approximately 75 vintage black and white photographs that document more than 125 decorative tile designs; approximately 40 border tile designs; the factory; its products, and installations with Continental's tiles. A total of approximately 80 buildings are documented as having Continental's tiles, located in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Ohio, and Florida.

To purchase go to: www.continentalfaience.com



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