

JURORS: “Art Tile America 2021 – from Sea to Shining Sea” VIRTUAL - December 5-31st 2021

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This competition brings to the forefront recognition for the creative and entrepreneurial spirit of art tile makers. I am thrilled to participate in such an endeavor.

Designing tile installations for the past thirty years with a keen focus on adding contemporary art tile to everyday architecture has been my career, using some tiles of my own design and many from the hundreds of tile artists I have had the pleasure of working with over the last three decades. One approach is to closely match the tile selection to the architectural design to reinforce a period look, e.g., Victorian, craftsman, mid-century, minimalist, and so on. Another approach is to create a timeless design in which a client’s personality is brought forward in a way that does not suggest a specific era, while avoiding getting trapped by the latest fad. Fads date a project and can quickly become tiresome – when that happens, they generally don’t remain a permanent improvement! The takeaway is to design using contemporary elements in an unexpected way that creates a timeless design.

Promoting the vast array of technique and artistry of contemporary art tile studios is exciting. Whether using art tile as a complete design concept or combining art tile with commercial tile there is an unlimited palette of design possibilities. How one approaches these possibilities depends on budgetary considerations, size and scope of the project, and the functionality of the materials being considered. Done thoughtfully, the design enriches a sense of place, provides a lasting artform, and perhaps even creates an impact on the architectural record of our time.

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I am excited to be invited as a guest juror for “Art Tile America 2021 – from Sea to Shining Sea”, organized by the Tile Heritage Foundation. This exhibition has a special meaning to me because of its concept of connecting a wide breadth of tile artists from Canada, Mexico, and the United States who use the clay medium to express their ideas, personal stories, and social environments. In addition, inviting artists to participate in this exhibition with the Tile Heritage Foundation continues the tradition of tile-making, keeping the work of many tile and mosaic artists alive by sharing their passion for clay and the wonderful tradition of tile making, continuing its long and rich history.

Since prior to recorded history, cultures across the globe have used ceramic tiles to embellish interior and exterior structures with beautiful ornate designs, with some of the earliest examples of ceramic tiles discovered from Egypt in 4000BC. Over the centuries the tile tradition continued through a range of empires and cultures, such as the Persians, Assyrians and Babylonians, who created large-scale tile pieces for architectural installations, followed by the Greek and the Roman empires, the very intricate Iznik tiles created during the Ottoman Empire, and much later through the great production of Delft tiles in Holland from the 17th and 18th centuries until today, to name only a few. In the 21st century, despite their ancient origins, tiles are still very much a part of modern life and can be seen in train and subway stations, fronts and interiors of buildings, and more commonly in bathrooms and kitchens, as well as one-of-a-kind art pieces in museums and private residences where an infinite array of designs are executed through the artists’ uses of patterns and glazes.