



E-NEWS FROM TILE HERITAGE

April & May



2008



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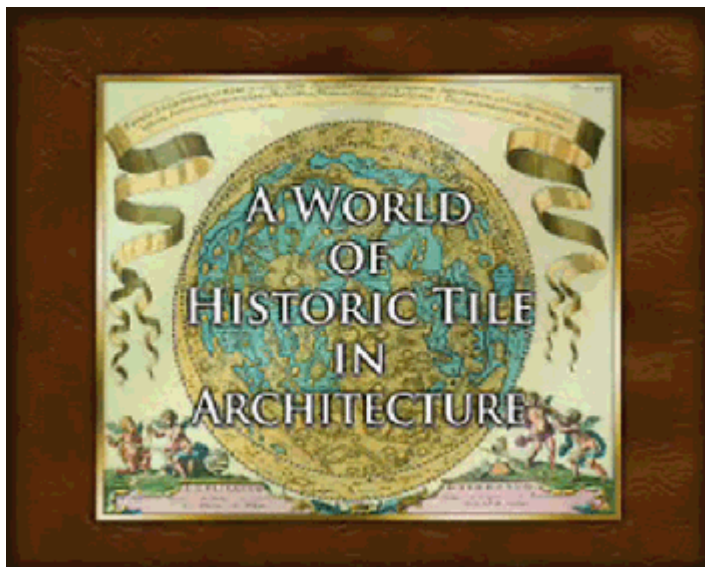
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California poppies in full flower,
just north of Healdsburg, California
April 2008



A World of Historic Tile at Coverings

The Tile Heritage Foundation, noted for its visual presentations of historic tiles at **Coverings** in recent years, is presenting a **survey of significant installation** of tile, stone and mosaic from around the world at this year's convention, April 29 through May 2nd in Orlando. Designed specifically for the big screen, this visual extravaganza features settings dating from the ancient world to the 20th century, a period extending nearly 2000 years. In addition to installations in Italy, Spain and the United States, you can expect to see important work from fifteen other countries, shown chronologically and demonstrating a grand procession of artistic achievement. Every selected site whether seen in passing or viewed with others will dazzle the senses and inspire your creative impulses.

“A World of Historic Tile in Architecture” is sponsored by Coverings and produced by the Tile Heritage Foundation with technical assistance from **Audio Visual Innovations**. The video will be shown at numerous venue throughout the convention floor, providing viewers with a unique, dramatic experience, designed to stimulate the imagination.

Again this year Tile Heritage is a guest of the Tile Council of North America. Come see us at Booth 2816!

Tile Artist Goes to Pieces

Carolyn Payne has been involved with commercial art tile projects and high-end homes, creating custom, hand-painted tile murals for over 23 years. Her works are well known in Kansas City, where she lives, and are prominent on the Plaza there, where her works are featured on clock towers, public art displays and many store fronts.

Like many other tile artists Carolyn adorns her own home with her work as well. “I have dabbled some in mosaics around the studio--- attached some to my front porch and to the fireplace in my living room. I covered up an old red brick fireplace I hated. I still have my fountain out in front of the studio too, which is mostly mosaic! The grouting is a big mess but amazing how it looks great when done!”

Visit www.paynecreations.com



**Carolyn Payne adorns her living room
in Kansas City**
Photo courtesy of Carolyn Payne.



Rosemarino con Fringuelli, 36" x 48"
by Cynthia Harris.

Photo courtesy of the artist.

Mosaicist Comes in from the Cold

THF member Cynthia Harris, an accomplished mosaic artist from Waterloo, Iowa (formerly of Tulsa, Oklahoma) found herself in Healdsburg, California and called!

“Thank you so much for showing me the collection. Although California is warm, green and beautiful, I was very inspired to get home to the studio and get some things going! Had second thoughts when we arrived home to blowing snow and a broken water heater. Soon, I'll send some photos of the Linnaeus Garden tiles in Tulsa. Again, your tile collection is amazing, and I appreciate your meeting with me on such short notice.”

Thanks!



Historic Tile Tour in San Diego

Save Our Heritage Organization (SOHO), the premier preservation group in San Diego County and the newest **Tile Heritage Hub***, invited **Sheila Menzies** and **Joe Taylor** to join in their annual celebration in mid-March, speaking on California tiles and then leading two open-air tour-trolleys through the suburban communities and then the downtown area visiting both private and public tile sites. It was a thrill for us both as the event was so well-organized and, importantly, all kinds of enthusiastic people showed up!

Among the lovely homes we visited was a Mission Revival-style residence on Altamira Place in Mission Hills with an impressive **Batchelder-Wilson** fireplace mantel and hearth in the living room. It was identified as Design 474 in a 1927 Batchelder catalog. The fireplace was in pristine condition; a custom made, wrought iron screen was fitted to the opening without compromising the original installation.



On Gregory Street in North Park a surprise **Fireplace mantel by Batchelder-Wilson, late 1920s**

was in store for us in a late 1920s Spanish Colonial Revival-style home. From the house's modest exterior who would have guessed a stunning **Claycraft** mantel with Art Deco-style decorative tile complemented by elongated, trapezoidal shapes and rectangle around the fireplace opening and a triangular hearth design drawing attention to the fire. Claycraft fireplace mantels are often assumed to be made by Batchelder as the latter was a much larger and generally better known company; both companies made similar looking field tiles. However, it is always the decorative or design element themselves that provide the true identity.



Fireplace mantel by Claycraft Potteries, late 1920s

Among the public installations we visited were the newly restored fountain and benches in the **Alcazar Gardens in Balboa Park** situated beside the monumental California State Building (now the Museum of Man) designed by architect Bertram Goodhue for the 1915 California Panama Exposition. The Alcazar Gardens were designed by architect **Richard Requa** for the 1935 California Pacific International Exposition, patterned after gardens of the same name in Seville, Spain. The restoration team, overseen by The Committee of One Hundred, was organized by local tile maker **Laird Plumleigh**, who some years earlier produced the nearby Plaza de Panama Fountain. **Dennis Caffrey** of the **Tile Guild** in Los Angeles made the reproduction tiles for the restoration; **Chuck Fitzgerald** of El Cajon performed the delicate task of removing the damaged material and replacing it with the new. The results are impressive, even to the trained eye!

* **Tile Heritage Hubs** are designated locations throughout the United States where people can go to talk tiles and seek information about local tile installations. **SOHO** headquarters: 2476 San Diego Avenue in Old Town. Drop by or visit www.sohosandiego.org.



Recently restored fountain in Alcazar Gardens, Balboa Park



Period bathroom, circa 1928,
with American Encaustic tiles.
Photo courtesy of Ron May.

Tile Sleuths at Work in San Diego

Our tile sleuth in San Diego, **Ron May**, has recently forwarded a couple of gems.

General Pasqual Ortiz Rubio was the 33rd President of Mexico, and after resigning he retired to the U.S., residing for several years in the mid-'30s in a 1928 Spanish Colonial Revival house, possibly designed by architect **Richard Requa**. Although difficult to identify without being there in person, the bathroom tile looks to be **American Encaustic**, produced in Los Angeles.



Mayan-style fireplace mantel by Malibu Potteries
circa late 1920s
Photo courtesy of Ron May

The Sills House is a 1929 single story Spanish Eclectic residence built by Lawrence Anderson under Kensington Heights' stringent **Richard Requa**/Architectural Review Committee guidelines. The defining characteristics include its Spanish-style red clay tile roof and vents and the Mayan-like relief fireplace and hearth tiles in the living room made by **Malibu Potteries**. Fred and Eva Sills were wealthy capitalists from

Ontario, Canada and Chicago, who moved to San Diego in retirement in 1930. Eva Sills lived in this home until her death in 1958.



Tile wall fountain by Patricia Kaszas, circa 2005

Street one block east of the I-5 freeway. Here we found **Patricia Kaszas'** striking beautiful wall fountain accompanying a small number of chairs and tables where people were enjoying their fresh tortillas, made on the premises! Less interested in the food than the tiles, we were especially impressed by the quality of the painting. Patricia is a local artist and a longtime THF member.

And we did our own sleuthing while in San Diego. Adjacent to our hotel in Old Town we recognized the work of **Diana Mausser, Native Tile & Ceramics**, on the stair risers leading up to Zocalo's restaurant at the corner of Conde and San Diego Ave. Her polychrome, geometric *cuerda seca* designs are distinctive for their clean lines and astute glazing techniques.

Another colorful surprise was coming upon a small courtyard next to El Indio, a quick-service take-out shop at 3695 India



Stair risers at Zocalo's
by Native Tile & Ceramics



A Salute to Denis O'Connor (1933-2007)

From Lillian Sizemore

British-born master muralist **Denis O'Connor** passed away on December 26, 2007. He was 74. O'Connor's most recognized works are the colorful **Home Savings & Loan** and **Home Savings of America** murals that enhanced the bank's facade with imagery of California history and idealized family life. **Washington Mutual** bought the branches in 1998 and it is still possible to see many examples of O'Connor's landmark mosaic in their original locations throughout the U.S. He produced more than 80 murals over his long career. The detailed design that

Artist and master mosaic muralist, Denis O'Connor, at his Anza, California studio in early 2007.

Photo by Lillian Sizemore.

embellish these buildings leave a legacy of some of the finest contemporary mosaic work in the country.

O'Connor held a degree from the Royal College of Art in London, and he taught drawing and sculpture at Sunderland College before moving to Claremont, California in 1959 with his young family. In 1960 he was hired by **Millard Sheets Associates** as assistant mosaicist and quickly went on to head the department. O'Connor started his own mosaic company in 1963 but continued to collaborate with Sheets and later with Susan Hertel, interpreting their paintings into massive architectural glass and stone mosaics with his characteristic, modernist setting style.

Denis retired in 1995, though his last masterwork was completed in 2001. Working alone, it took two years to complete a 25-foot by 15-foot interior mural for the **St. John Vianney Church** on Balboa Island. The vitreous glass mural depicting double angels received a standing ovation from the congregation upon its unveiling.



Farmers of the Pacific Rim, 90 West Portal Ave., San Francisco. Masterful detail especially in the unique textile patterns, circa early 1970s.

Photo courtesy of Denis O'Connor.



Mural designed by Susan Hertel on Rosecrans Blvd., La Mirada, California, circa mid-1970s.

Photo by Lillian Sizemore.

Over the past year I made several visits to O'Connor's Southern California desert studio with my colleague **Lu Mack-Durini** of Long Beach; he became a mentor and friend. He was very happy to re-engage with mosaic professionals and generous with his knowledge, time and humor. May we long remember Denis O'Connor's extraordinary talent and contributions to mosaic arts and architectural muralism.

Lillian Sizemore is a mosaic historian, artist, and educator. She is working on a biographical documentary of mid-century mosaic artists. Her feature-length story on O'Connor will appear in THF's publication, *Tile Heritage: A Review of Tile History*, to be published.



The California Gold Rush storyline on Van Ness Blvd. at Lombard in San Francisco is depicted as multiple glass mosaics set into cut travertine. This was a unique design approach for the bank facades that usually featured one central mural above the entrance, circa 1973.

Photo courtesy of Denis O'Connor.

A Seascape Mosaic at Fletcher Cove

Betsy Schulz, whose business is **A Design Garden** in Del Mar, California, has designed a sea-inspired, seascape mosaic mural for the City of Solana Beach's Fletcher Cove. The tiles were hand-made with two types of red clay; Schulz sculpted all the relief fish. All of the tiles were pressed with shells, coral and other indigenous artifacts to create fossil-like impressions. Then they were kiln-dried, bisqued, glazed, and then high-fired.

The charming city of Solana Beach in north San Diego County encompasses 1.7 miles of beach front bordered on the north by Cardiff



More mosaic along the pathways at Fletcher Cove

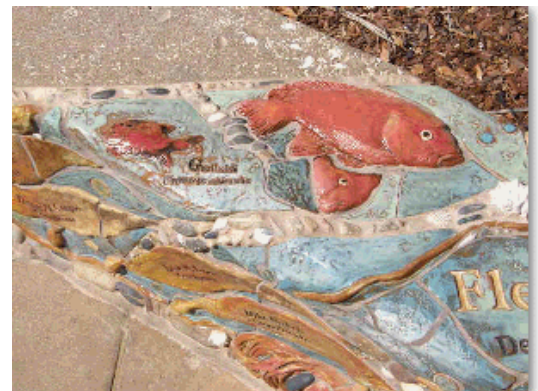
her work has been very positive, in part because everyone is able to take ownership. It's truly community art, not just a solitary expression of the artist's design. Throughout the mosaic itself, beginning with the bathroom facilities in 2005 and the more recent work along the numerous pathways, inspirational words, statements and donors' names are embedded into the tiles. This is a trademark of Schulz's work. See more at <http://www.adesigngarden.com>.



Schulz mosaic at the entrance to Fletcher Cove

State Beach, and on the south by the city of Del Mar. Fletcher Cove is the main beach park at this mostly residential community located at 111 S. Sierra, where Lomas Santa Fe Boulevard meets the beach, Fletcher Cove is uncrowded and family-friendly offering easy public access and free parking.

Schulz promotes community involvement as much as possible on all her projects. Everyone is encouraged to help place tiles and assist in the grouting. The community reaction to



Detail on top of a wall at Fletcher Cove