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(Brockton, Mass.) Fuller Craft Museum, New England's home for contemporary craft
Museum Hours: Tuesday – Sunday 10:00 am – 5:00 pm, Thursday 5:00 – 9:00 pm

FULLER CRAFT MUSEUM PRESENTS

Art of Mosaics: Piecing It Together

July 3, 2013 - October 27, 2013

High resolution images available online at <http://fullercraft.org/press/art-of-mosaics-piecing-it-together/>

From huge public murals, to the tiniest patterns in the face of a watch, the “Art of Mosaics: Piecing It Together” exhibition defies expectations because the 30 plus pieces in the show vary so widely in methodology, materials, scale, and subject matter. The artists in this exhibit represent a spectrum of what has been an explosion of renewed interest in mosaics from the late 20th century up to today. Using a variety of techniques and materials, they have been reinventing the medium and exploring new ways of covering objects, walls, and more with bits of glass, ceramics, beads, polymer clay, marbles, resins, semi-precious stones, precious metals, and many other materials that allow an idea to be expressed freely.

The exhibition contains teapots by Bette Anne Libby, gorgeous landscapes by Cynthia Fischer which capture the spirit of each season, and portraits like that of Amelia Earhart by Sally Dean and “*Madonna of the Rockies III: If Wishes Had Wings...*” by Syma—all rendered in mosaics. The exhibition also features a fascinating time lapse video of Isaiah Zagar building his “In a Dream” mural. Other artists included in the show: Lyn Christiansen, Mary Kanda, Lisa Houck, Laura Hiserote, Cynthia Toops & Dan Adams, Joshua Winer, Mo Ringey, Megumi Naitoh, and Keke Cribbs.

Historical Background

Mosaics are an ancient art form, going back millennia. The idea of embedding pebbles into a substrate in a design goes back at least 4000 years. A temple in Mesopotamia, 3rd century BC, has mosaics of colored stones, shells and ivory. The Greeks raised it to a higher art form about 4th century BC, by making patterns and scenes using different colored stones to create designs on their floors and walls. By 200 BC, small ceramic, stone or glass pieces called tesserae were being made to use in creating “paintings” on surfaces, such as seen at Pompeii and Herculaneum.

The rise of the Byzantine Empire in the 5th century shows mosaic art taking on new characteristics as the tesserae became much smaller and evolved to being made of glass, called smalti. This small size allowed the artisans to cover walls and ceilings with very detailed art works. Often the smalti was left ungrouted to allow the light to refract and reflect within the glass.

During this time, Italy and Ravenna, in particular, became the center of late Roman mosaic art. The ancient religions and, later, Christianity, adopted the art form to fill their temples and cathedrals with exquisite mosaic murals, many of which have survived to today. This era also saw the rise of micromosaic objects as religious icons. During the Renaissance, Italians made them as souvenirs; jewelry and other very small objects depicting local landmarks, mythology and famous paintings. In micromosaics, the tesserae are often oblong, not square, and can number as many as 3,000 – 5,000 per square inch.

During the Renaissance, in Europe large mosaics were largely replaced by frescoes for a period of time. But other parts of the world continued to build edifices covered in highly detailed mosaic designs.

In the early 20th century, we see artists such as Antoni Gaudi covering walls, sculptures and benches in his Parc Güell, Barcelona with a variety of broken ceramic shards and tiles set into cement, called trencadis in Catalan, or pique assiette and now generally known as bricolage—the use of a variety of materials set into the substrate of cement or other material. As an example, Niki de Saint Phalle, mid 20th century, influenced by Gaudi, created enormous sculptures covered with mosaics.

Current Exhibitions at Fuller Craft

Art of Mosaics: Piecing It Together

July 3, 2013 - October 27, 2013

Reversible Reactions: Art Meets Science @ The MIT Glass Lab

June 8, 2013 – November 3, 2013

Across the Grain: Turned and Carved Wood

April 7, 2013 – September 22, 2013

About Face: Portraiture Selections from Fuller Craft Museum's Permanent Collection

April 30, 2013 – September 28, 2013

Mark Davis: Icarus

Ongoing

Traditions and Innovations: Fuller Craft Museum Collects

Ongoing

Coming Soon to Fuller Craft

Made in Massachusetts: Studio Furniture of the Bay State

October 12, 2013 – February 9, 2014

About Fuller Craft Museum

Fuller Craft Museum, New England's only museum of contemporary craft, is dedicated to the objects, ideas, and insight that inspire both patrons and artists to explore life through the art of contemporary craft. Fuller Craft Museum is located at 455 Oak St. in Brockton, MA. The Museum is open Tuesday through Sunday, 10:00 am – 5:00 pm, with free admission for all Thursdays from 5:00 – 9:00 pm. Admission is \$8 adults, \$5 seniors and students, free for members and children 12 and under. For more information on Fuller Craft exhibitions and events please visit www.fullercraft.org or call 508.588.6000.

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