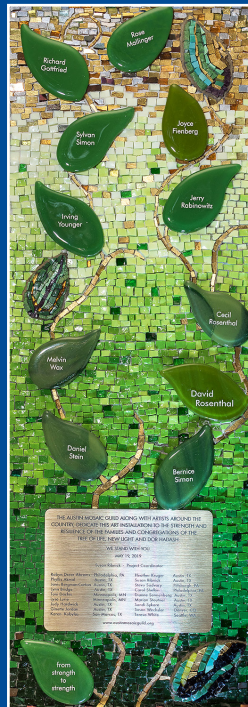


FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT: MOSAICS INSPIRED BY TRAGEDY



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CINCINNATI**

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

All of us can remember where we were at times when tragedy struck. Depending on the generation, it might be the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, the Challenger disaster, 9/11, Sandy Hook Elementary, Stoneman Douglas High School, or the Tree of Life Synagogue massacre that triggers our memory of a time and place.

As I write these words, I have just returned from an active threat meeting for staff, students, and faculty of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Back in the day, when I was an elementary school student, I remember civil defense drills during the Cuban missile crisis, and routine fire drills. Now, in schools, and in the workplace, we have active threat meetings and drills for safe evacuation and sheltering in place in the face of rampant antisemitism, hate crimes against people of color and of targeted faiths and ethnicities, and acts of white nationalist terrorism.

When David Kalla, a member of the Tree of Life Synagogue approached me about a mosaic project initiated by Susan Ribnick of Austin, Texas that was inspired by the events of October 27, 2018, my reaction to this collective artistic response to a visceral, violent attack was overwhelming. Brimming with color and creativity, the eighteen works by eighteen artists from around the world expressed themes of hope, resilience, and social justice in the face of the unthinkable. Soon after, I began communicating with Susan Ribnick, and the seeds for this exhibition were planted. Postponed twice by the pandemic, there was a silver lining. The number of artists and works doubled to thirty-six, double *“chai,”* the numerical equivalent of double “life” in Hebrew.

Art teaches. Art transcends. Art elevates. Art inspires. A sixth-grader named Cooper D. left a hand-written note in colored crayon at the memorial that grew up around the Tree of Life Synagogue. The note quoted Amos 5:24:

*Let love and justice flow like a mighty stream.
Let peace fill the earth as the waters fill the seas.*

This poignant message found its way into two mosaics in the exhibition, and it expresses the hope that permeates every work in this show. It is my hope that *From Darkness to Light* will lead to conversation and action around the tough subjects of hate crimes, antisemitism, gun violence, and injustice, so that in Cooper D.’s lifetime, love, justice, and peace might prevail.

Abby Schwartz
February 2022

REFLECTIONS FROM LEAD ARTIST SUSAN RIBNICK

I remember exactly where I was on October 27, 2018, when I saw Headline News on CNN about a shooting in a synagogue in Pittsburgh. Eleven people died after going to their house of worship, one of whom was a Holocaust survivor. You don't have to be Jewish, or a resident of Pittsburgh, or even a member of the Tree of Life Synagogue to be outraged by news like that.

In what was a visceral reaction to an event far away, I felt an intense need to do something or say something, as tacitly listening to this "news cycle" and doing nothing felt somehow complicit. What happened there could happen anywhere to anyone in any house of worship, but this one hit close to home.

Some background. I am co-president of The Austin Mosaic Guild (AMG) and I also own a small company, Vintage Mosaic which specializes in Italian glass mosaic, based in Austin, Texas. AMG was formed over a decade ago with a few like-minded artists and has grown to over seventy members in and around Austin. I believe in the power of collective artistic endeavors, and I have initiated and organized a number of them, big and small, over the years.

I called a board meeting the day after the shooting to express my outrage and stop ruminating about a tragic event directed toward Jewish people. What ensued was a long and intense discussion about how we might respond and send a message that a shooting, any shooting, be it a school, a church, a mosque, or a synagogue is a reprehensible action that has consequences. This is how the Tree of Life Project began on an overcast afternoon in Austin, Texas.

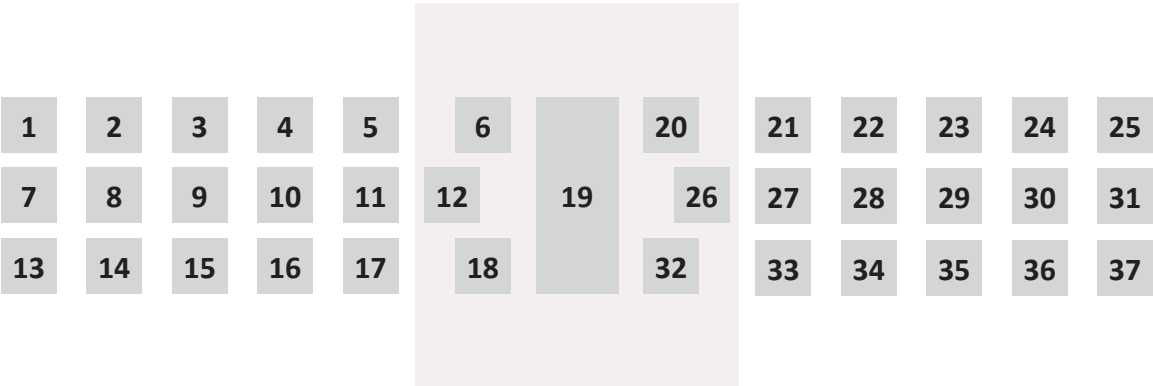
What started off with half a dozen local artists grew exponentially into a larger undertaking. It started with ten, then twelve and then I decided that eighteen, the Hebrew number that corresponds with 'life' was the right number of artists. Rabbi Neil Blumofe of Congregation Agudas Achim in Austin met with us when we had little to show but he felt it was an important project, one that needed a podium and a wall. He connected us with the Tree of Life Synagogue, which was key. After all, we knew no one there, and had no idea if they wanted art from a largely unknown group of artists, now from all over the United States. Enter Dave Kalla, long-time congregant and now ambassador of the Pittsburgh synagogue. Dave attended the first exhibition of *The Tree of Life Project, From Darkness to Light* in Austin in May of 2019. Three public exhibitions and almost four years later, the international project has doubled in size to include thirty-six exemplary pieces created by

artists from all over the United States and five countries. And it continues to expand with the invitation of more artists who feel compelled to respond to the issues of antisemitism and violence.

With the recent headlines out of Colleyville, Texas fresh in our minds, this project which addresses antisemitism in particular, seems as relevant today as it did when it was begun on that afternoon in Austin in 2018. We hope that our collective artwork will call attention to such problems. Participating artist Rachel Davies of Dunblane, Scotland, where there had been a shooting at an elementary school, states our collective hope eloquently:

“I have created this piece not only as a way to remember the victims of gun violence, but as a symbol of hope and strength for the communities who are left to cope with the consequences of such events.”

KEY TO THE INSTALLATION



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Arches archival paper

Arches paper is a brand of air-dried paper that is used by printers and watercolorists. It has a warm white color and is produced in hot-pressed, cold-pressed, and rough varieties. Arches paper is made in the village of Arches in the Vosges, France.

Aventurine

Aventurine is a form of quartz, a hard, crystalline mineral composed of silica (silicon dioxide), characterized by its translucency and the presence of platy mineral inclusions that give it a shimmering or glistening effect termed aventurescence.

Bullseye glass

Bullseye is colored glass that is manufactured for use in art and architecture. Bullseye glasses can be used for stained glass and mosaic work, and most are tested-compatible for fusing and other methods of forming glass within a kiln.

Cane

A cane is a long and narrow piece of glass, usually in the form of a rod (round in cross-section). Canes are made by stretching a mass of hot glass to the desired thickness and are often made with encased designs that can be seen from the side or when cut in cross section.

Crash Cooling

Opening the kiln after fusing to allow a rapid cooling of the fused glass and to prevent further fusing.

Etched glass

A kind of decorative glass, etched glass is the result of a series of small cuts made to the glass, by acidic, caustic or abrasive substances, after the glass has been manufactured. The cuts normally appear white against the glass and can be made into patterns or images.

Fused glass

Fused glass refers to any piece of glass formed after heating two or more pieces of glass together in a kiln.

Millefiori

Italian for “a thousand flowers.” Commonly refers to glass objects made from masses of *murrini* slices.

Mosaic

Made by assembling *tesserae* (small bits) of stone, colored glass, ceramic, or other material to form a design or image, and fixing the tesserae in a mortar ground.

Murrini

A thin slice of complex, patterned glass *cane* that can be used as a component in another glass object.

Oceanside Glasstile

Established on the Californian coast, Oceanside Glasstile has pioneered the development of handcrafted glass tile since 1992. It remains one of the few companies in the world to combine modern technology with the craftsmanship of dedicated people, who from start to finish transform their product by hand. Oceanside Glasstile is eighty-five percent post-consumer recycled bottle glass.

Smalti

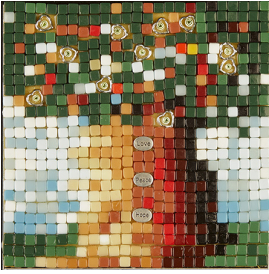
Smalti (the plural of smalto) are specialized mosaic *tesserae* (small bits) made from richly colored glass. Originally developed for Byzantine mosaics, the glass contains metal oxides which produce an almost infinite range of color possibilities. The molten glass is poured into flat slabs which are then broken into individual smalti with rough, irregular surfaces that may be pitted with air bubbles. A thin layer of gold leaf can be embedded in smalti to produce gold tesserae. Smalti mosaics are normally ungrouted.

Stringer

A thin, spaghetti-like, strand of glass used as a decorative element in the hot glass arts.

Tesserae

In mosaic work, small pieces of stone, glass, ceramic, or other hard material cut in a cubical or some other regular shape.



1. *Tree of Life*

Shanee Woodbridge, Austin TX

Glass mosaic, 2021

The Tree of Life is made of roots, bark, limbs and leaves. They all come from the same source. It may appear changed as light moves around it but it is still the Tree. All parts are equally needed for a healthy tree. Light determines how it is seen as are people. Love comes from all of the colors and parts of the Tree.

Woodbridge is a tile professional who has worked in the field of tile and mosaic design since 2002.

shaneewo@yahoo.com



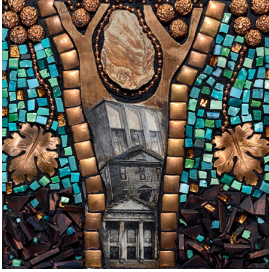
2. *Mantra*

Carol Nemir, Austin, TX

Mexican and Italian smalti, gold smalti, 2021

In his collection of reflections, *The Hungering Dark*, Frederick Buechner compares humanity to an enormous spider web, and suggests that “as we move around this world and as we act with kindness, perhaps, or with indifference, or with hostility, toward the people we meet, we too are setting the great spider web a-tremble.” To his point, I believe that whether we realize it or not, none of us has been left untouched by the hate crimes and mass shootings that pervade today’s society. These acts have hit closer to home to some than others, but we have all been impacted in some way, and we each contribute in some way to the direction in which the web will next ripple. The mantra “Peace Begins with Me” reminds me of the responsibility and the power I have to ensure that the choices I make on a daily basis contribute to a more peaceful world.

Carol Nemir first learned about mosaic art many years ago in a local community art school class. It has only been in the past few years that she has embraced mosaic art as a form of self-expression. She loves the meditative quality of the process required to create a mosaic piece, as well as the tactile feel of the medium. Carol is drawn to detailed designs and especially loves to create landscapes using smalti as the primary material.



3. History of the Tree of Life Synagogue

Janis Bergman-Carton, Austin, TX

Smalti mosaic, mixed media, 2019

My tile draws on visual and material elements from Pittsburgh, where the Tree of Life Synagogue has lived since 1864. Photo transfers of the three buildings in which the congregation has been housed since the early 20th-century form the central “tree” in my tile. Between its two branches is a fossil with leaf patterns from the Monongahela River. The textures and colors that surround the tree of life in my piece convey the theme of destruction and rebirth.

I am an artist, historian, and memory keeper who lives and works in Austin, Texas. I taught art history for twenty-five years at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, specializing in modern European art. Research and teaching about art and cultural memory in Postwar Europe became the basis of my current studio practice. Many of my pieces start with old photographs of absent loved ones or personally meaningful places. I build around the photo transfers using found objects, foraged natural materials, mosaic elements, and vintage memorabilia.



4. The Ascension

Valerie McGarry, Whitby, Canada

Cut marble, smalti mosaic, 2021

The design represents the ascent to heaven, from the dark to the light. Each of the eleven victims are represented by a thin piece of blue smalti. I looked up their ages and the length of the piece represents the age: the youngest was fifty-four and is one inch and the oldest was ninety-seven and is two inches. The thin blue line represents their spirits connecting to heaven.

I worked for many years in the field of Biochemistry. My love of science and nature has had a huge influence on my mosaics. After leaving that field in 1995 I returned to my love of art and began working in mosaics. I believe there is something new to be learned each and every day and I will continue to expand my knowledge of the medium throughout my lifetime. In 2017 I was one of the organizers of the very first Canadian Annual Mosaic Exhibition (CAME), created to promote Canadian mosaic art in Canada. This annual

exhibition takes place in a different part of Canada each year and I am very happy to be a part of the CAME team of volunteers. My mosaics are in private collections in Canada, Australia, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States.
<http://valeriemcgarrymosaics.com>



5. *Hamsa*

Teresa White, Bothell, WA

Stained glass, silver beads, mixed media, 2021

I felt that creating a mosaic *hamsa* was an appropriate symbol for the Tree of Life Project. The primary spiritual meaning of the hamsa is protection against the evil eye. Its most universal meaning is that of unity and protection, and in every representation the hamsa hand is a means of protection from evil.



6. *Into the Light*

Robyn Abrams, Philadelphia, PA

Stained glass, ceramic mosaic,
mixed media, 2019

Made of stained glass, beads, and ceramic tile, this tile symbolizes peace and hope. When tragedy strikes there is a choice to either dwell in the darkness or seek the light of hope and understanding. This tile represents the faith to move forward during hardships, and the strength to rebuild a better tomorrow.

Robyn is a self-taught artist who enjoys painting and mosaics. She believes in the healing power of art, and gladly participates in community projects that raise awareness.



7. *Alisa Speaks Out*

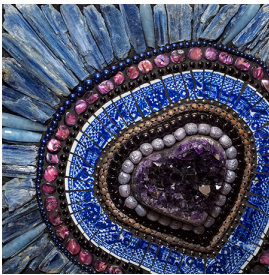
Jacki Gran, Homestead, FL

Smalti, gold mosaic, 2021

We must use our voices to bring positive change. Communicating my feelings can often be difficult. Through my mosaic journey I have found a way to express the passion that is inside me without the filter of words.

I have always been creative—drawing, painting and designing. I had no formal education outside of school art classes and began making mosaics eighteen years ago. I am particularly fond of mosaic portraiture. Being part of the mosaic community has been the best, most rewarding growth I've had personally and as an artist. I joined the Society of American Mosaic Artists as a beginner and developed the skills, confidence and friendships I have because of my association with this group.

<https://mosaicartsinternational.americanmosaics.org/2021fineart/jacki-gran/>



8. *Love*

Susan Wechsler, Denver, CO

Amethyst quartz, natural stone, ceramic tile, mixed media, 2019

My contribution to this meaningful mural is all about LOVE. It begins with an amethyst heart and radiates from the center symbolizing love. Love for each other, love of community and a personal love for my mom who has passed, I wanted to include her in my piece.

I have a BFA from the University of Michigan in sculpture, and an MFA from NYU in costume design. After a suggestion from my mom to make mosaic dresses, I happened upon the perfect dress form to turn into art. I bought fifty and began a signature series of sculptural mosaic dresses that perfectly reflect my artistic background in both sculpture and theatre design. These dresses became my signature piece that garnered attention worldwide. My body of work also includes shrines and animal totems, which can be found in hotels and private collections nationwide. In addition, my new contemporary series explores patterns found in the industrial world and in nature and mixing the two in complementary compositions. I live in Denver, CO and spend a considerable amount of time teaching workshops across the United States and abroad.

<https://www.mosaicsbysusan.com/>



9. *An Affirmation of Life* – חַי

Gila Rayberg

Perdido Key, FL

Smalti mosaic, gold smalti, 2021

My design centers on the word *LIFE, CHAI* in Hebrew, which is also the numerical equivalent of eighteen, a powerful and ritualistic number in the Jewish tradition. I created a simplified version of the tree of life, to include eleven branches, each topped with a golden leaf, to commemorate the eleven lives lost in the incident. On a more personal note, my father's name, Chaim, is derived from the same root. As a first generation American daughter of a Holocaust survivor, I grew up with a keen awareness of antisemitism, always trying my best to eradicate hatred and bigotry from my own life. It is an honor to contribute to this project. L'Chaim – To Life!

Gila Rayberg arrived at the visual arts after a successful career as a freelance musician and educator. After earning her master's degree in music from Arizona State University in 1989, Gila moved to San Francisco and quickly became involved with a community of improvisational musicians, composers and artists. Her love of travel then led her to a life of performing and teaching instrumental music at a newly established University in Borneo, East Malaysia. On returning to the United States, Gila landed in New Orleans, where she worked in the music world until hurricane Katrina changed everything in 2005. At that point, while evacuated, Gila turned her focus to creating art full time.

In the summer of 2018, Gila was one of nine artists from seven countries invited to the third Contemporary Mosaic Art Symposium in Sardinia, Italy, to create a substantial work in a renovated fifteenth-century convent, the planned site of a Museum of Contemporary Mosaic Art.

Gila travels extensively around the United States and internationally, giving portraiture workshops specializing in the use of up-cycled dishes alongside more traditional materials. She has received numerous awards for her expressive and whimsical portraits and has been widely published.

<https://www.gilamosaics.com>



10. Healing Love

Margery Marshall, Kyle, TX

Digital collage print on Arches archival printmaking paper, watercolor, iridescent paint, crash glass stringers, Italian millefiori, 2021

We, all peoples, all faiths, all beliefs, all nations, suffer such horrendous traumas and heartaches. Yet, amidst it all, we all come together in love, we heal together, and love one another no matter the differences.

Margery Hall Marshall loves to tell people's stories and she does that through visual art in her mosaics and photography montages. She is a sixth generation Texan who has been working as a freelance artist and fine art designer under the name of *Lone Star Studios* since 1988. Her graphic design work involved a variety of projects for the State of Nevada, art and history museums and galleries, and non-profit agencies and small businesses. She has curated and directed many art exhibitions and has shown her own work in solo and group shows since the early 1990s. She has served as a volunteer missionary in Bolivia, Africa, and Haiti. She is employed as a Disaster Case Manager by Lutheran Disaster Response and is active in the Austin Mosaic Guild and the Texas Freelance Association. <http://www.lone-star-studios.com/margery-hall-marshall>



11. Embrace the World, One Heart at a Time

David Chidgey, San Antonio, TX

Cut marble, stained glass, 2021

This mosaic is a series of hearts made out of art glass that stand above the contrasting, cut marble background. The top and bottom sections are stained glass. I used glass painting for lettering. My contribution was inspired by art created by kindergartners at the Community Day School Kindergarten that was installed around the Tree of Life Synagogue (<https://www.treeoflifepgh.org/heartstogether>). It was a series of colorful, painted hearts row on top of row. Below them was a title, "Embrace the world one heart at a time." My hope is that those who see this work will read those words and be as profoundly touched as I have been.

David Chidgey enjoys taking individual fragments, imperfect and broken, and combining them in such a way as to reveal a rich tapestry for the senses. David does this by contrasting elements of light and shadow, shape and texture, brilliant color and muted tones through the language of mosaic. David's work is inspired by his early years growing up on a small farm in Texas, storytelling, rhythms of the natural world, spirituality, and indigenous cultures. David maintains a studio practice in San Antonio, Texas.

<https://artglassmosaics.com/home.html>



12. Hope

Toni Dachis, Minneapolis, MN

Folded paper, 2019

Sometimes when you're in a dark place you think you've been buried but actually you've been planted. Currently the "Papercuts" technique she has created has drawn attention, out of her desire to repurpose materials that would normally end up discarded. Toni manipulates cut paper strips by folding and gluing them to the substrate like pieces of a puzzle. What you see are the folded edges. With so much destruction in the world, creating is Toni's contribution to the balance of what we destroy while preserving history in an abstract way. Repurposing everyday materials gives old materials a new life and meaning before they become obsolete.

Toni is a Minneapolis based multi-media artist. Her clean conceptual style is influenced by her earlier career as a graphic designer. She received her BFA in graphic design from the the Minneapolis College of Art and Design (MCAD) in 1978 and has continued to study printmaking in MCAD's summer program (2009-2014). After ten years in graphic design and raising two children, Dachis began painting murals, designing interior accessories, and started two non-profit organizations. Her choice of materials—newspapers, magazines, scrap paper, and even 'bad' prints from the printmaking process—is integral to the message of each piece, her sensitivity to the environment, and the times in which we live.



13. Star of David

Sandi Sykora, Austin, TX

Smalti, gold smalti,
mixed media, 2019

I chose the Star of David for my piece for its symbolism. I felt it was appropriate for the Tree of Life Project. The Star of David, also known as the Magen David (Shield of David), has been a symbol associated with Judaism for centuries. A stone bearing the Star of David in a synagogue in the Galilee dates back to the third century. It is believed to have been used as a decorative design in Near Eastern cultures.

Sandi holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Texas at Austin, and an Associate Arts degree from the Art Institute of Houston. She is a member of the Society of American Mosaics Artists and is currently the co-president of the Austin Mosaic Guild. www.mosaicsbysandisykora.com



14. Be the Change

Suzanne Fisher, Cincinnati, OH

Stained glass, smalti mosaic, mixed media, 2021

I made the mosaic *Be the Change* after feeling overwhelmed with sadness and despair at all the terrible things that are happening in the world today when people try to hurt or kill or terrorize others because of how they look or what they believe. I used a handmade tile created by pressing a leaf into clay, and built the mosaic around that.

Twenty years ago, in Cincinnati, Timothy Thomas, an unarmed black man was killed by police. After that, three days of rioting resulted in a curfew being set for the city. In an effort to create something positive out of that tragedy, two women from Peaslee Neighborhood Center and the Art Academy of Cincinnati wrote grants to create a community art project that would result in many permanent works of art in the city. I was the artist hired to oversee the mosaic bench, archway, planters and panels that still exist today. We had a design phase that began with writing words that inspired artwork. Some of the words and phrases ended up in the mosaic pieces. *Be the Change* is reminiscent of that process.

I was trained as a painter but have been using scraps or shards of something broken or discarded to create art works my entire artistic life. I have always been interested in getting inspiration from my art materials, letting them help guide the direction of the work of art in some way, and with the idea of piecing broken things together from the past to make new forms. I use shards of colored glass, broken china, and many other discarded items such as broken windshield glass and metal scraps and incorporate them with traditional glass and ceramic tile, stone, glass mosaic smalti and marble to create mosaic murals of all sizes. In addition, I combine mosaic elements with acrylic paint, resin, and collage materials to create mixed media pieces I call resin paintings.

I have received many commissions to create mosaic murals of all sizes for educational and religious institutions, private homes, and corporations. They include Cincinnati Children's Hospital in Liberty Township, Mason City Schools, The Delta Flats and DeSales Flats, Golf Manor Synagogue, and the Church of the Redeemer in Hyde Park.

I received my BFA in painting from Miami University and my MFA in painting from the University of Cincinnati. I was awarded a 6-month residency from the Ohio Arts Council at Public School 1 in Queens in 1987 which hosted artists from all over the world. In 1997, I spent three weeks at an international residency at the American Academy in Rome. I have received numerous grants from the Ohio Arts Council, Summerfair, and the Kentucky Foundation for Women for my artwork in various media, including animation. My work is available at Caza Sikes, Banz Studios and Art Design Consultants in Cincinnati as well as Gallery One in Naples, Florida.

<https://suzannefisherart.com>



15. Coming Together in Peace

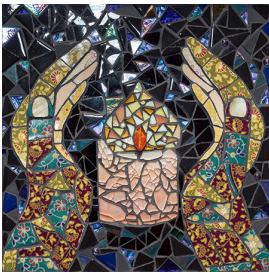
Steve Sadvary, Pittsburgh, PA

Stained glass, 2019

Patterns of all types, whether they be geometric, floral, waves, swirls or whatever, must adhere to laws of conformity and repetition. All types of human cultures, races, religions, countries and states can be viewed as patterns conforming to laws, traditions, and beliefs.

What this piece of artwork is trying to achieve is to bring together four different patterns in a comfortable way. Having the patterns, “Coming together in Peace” was a slight challenge for the artist, but in the end it proved to be an exercise in compromise, empathy and civility. If we could all bend more at the edges—consider the possibilities.

Stevo Mosaics is based in Squirrel Hill. Steve’s work can be seen in many architectural applications.



16. Light One Candle

Karen Kobylus, San Marcos, TX

Stained glass, mixed media, 2019

After being invited to participate in the Tree of Life mosaic project, Kobylus visited the synagogue’s website and was moved by a brief blog post by Rabbi Jeffrey Myers reflecting on the upcoming holiday of Chanukah. He wrote of being inspired by the song “Light One Candle.”

Don’t let the light go out, it’s lasted for so many years.

Don’t let the light go out, let it shine through our love and our tears.

As she read those lyrics, it had not been very long since she had attended a vigil for the Tree of Life victims. The image of people holding candles and sheltering them from the wind was fresh in her mind. She hopes her mosaic, *Light One Candle*, is a reminder of how we all can bring light to darkness and protect and nourish that light.

Karen Kobylus is a mostly self-taught mosaic artist who has been making mosaics for over twenty years. Her work has been exhibited in Central Texas, and she has participated in other mosaic collaborations throughout the United States. She is part of the Jewish community in San Marcos, Texas.



17. Zakar (To Remember)

Roxana Nizza, Canyon Lake, TX

Smalti mosaic, gold smalti, mixed media, 2021

It has been an honor to be asked to participate in the memorial mosaic project to commemorate the eleven lives lost, their families and the community of The Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, PA. This piece is titled “Zakar” which means “To Remember.”

“To zakar is to employ your hands, and feet and lips to engage in whatever action that remembrance requires” (Chad Bird). In the Tree of Life, there are eleven acorn caps representing each of the victims. The acorn caps represent perseverance, and the gold represents purity.

Roxana embarked on her mosaic journey in 1993 while visiting art galleries in Wimberley, TX where she found a simple mosaic vase and fell in love. She thought mosaic would be a great outlet for her hidden and repressed artistic talents. She has recently moved to her dream home in the Texas Hill Country where she continues creating fine art mosaics.

For sixteen years, Roxana specialized in large scale and site-specific mosaic projects for gallery, architectural, community and home settings. Roxana’s mosaic art can be found throughout the United States and is represented in private, public, and corporate collections.

Gr8dane13@hotmail.com



18. Snowdrops

Rachel Davies, Dunblane, Scotland

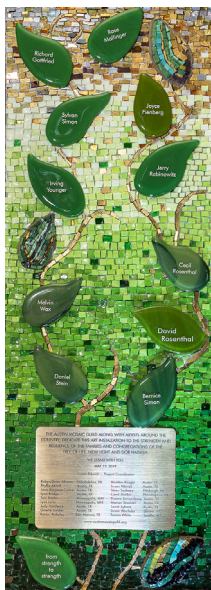
Slate, aventurine, recycled ceramic mosaic, 2021

Snowdrops are often thought to be a symbol of strength, purity and hope. I live in Dunblane, Scotland, where snowdrops are one way of remembering the sixteen children and their teacher who were killed by a gunman in 1996.

I have created these snowdrops not only as a way to remember the victims of gun violence, but as a symbol of hope and strength for the communities who are left to cope with the consequences of such events.

I use a range of materials in my work, particularly those which allow me to create texture and dimension. Slate is one of my favorite materials to use—it is strong yet delicate and can contain a range of colors and surfaces. I also love using stone and smalti (a special type of glass for mosaics). I am a professional member and Chair of the British Association for Modern Mosaic (BAMM).

<https://www.racheldaviesmosaics.com>



19. Dedication Panel

Design: Susan Ribnick, Austin, TX

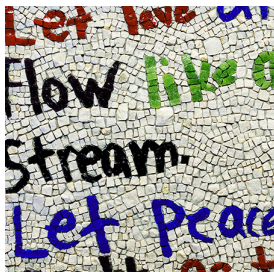
Made in collaboration with members of the Austin Mosaic Guild

Bullseye fused stained glass, smalti

glass mosaic, 24 kt gold glass mosaic, 2019–20

This main panel, created by the first group of eighteen artists, features a rich green smalti gradient from dark to light symbolizing hope. The panel includes fused, glass leaves with etched names of each of the individuals who perished in the shooting.

Susan is a mosaic artist, graphic designer and the owner of Vintage Mosaic which started in Mexico City in 1994. Since then, she has worked with vintage smalti glass mosaic in public works as well as personal commissions. She is currently co-president of the Austin Mosaic Guild and a member of the Society of American Mosaic Artists.



20. Amos 5:24

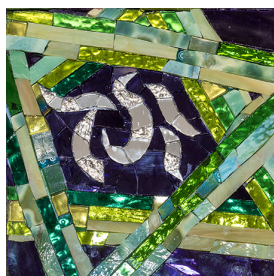
Dianne Sonnenberg, Austin, TX

Hand cut Jerusalem stone, smalti mosaic, 2019

This piece is inspired by a handwritten message left at the Tree of Life Synagogue memorial by sixth-grader Cooper D. The continuous power and strength of the flow of water is an inspirational image for us all. We can envision it carrying us onward toward peace and

healing. Water is life.

Dianne Sonnenberg is an internationally recognized mosaic artist based in Austin, TX and Ontario, Canada. She has an extensive background with client commissions, community and international exhibits, large-scale works, and original mosaic design work. Her artwork has won numerous awards, including Best Architectural Mosaic at the 2010 MAI Exhibition in Chicago, IL. Dianne is founding member for the Austin Mosaic Guild and is a member of the Society of American Mosaic Artists.



21. Remember

Carol Shelkin, Havertown, PA

Stained glass, mirrored glass, 2019

We should “Never Forget” and always “Remember” the lives lost and when we are able, celebrate every person whose life was taken too soon on this dark day. This tile, in Hebrew, reminds us to “Remember” and hold in our hearts their memories and know

these losses were not in vain. We can make this world better because of them. How? Teach our children to see others as human beings and never allow this to happen again. The Magen David (Star of David) is a universally recognized symbol of the Jewish identity. I look at the shape of the star, with points reaching north, south, east, and west with the middle—the hexagram—providing the spiritual support and healing worldwide.

Carol travels widely giving mosaic workshops across the country and abroad. She is the recipient of many honors and awards for her original work.



22. Love Sets You Free

Viviana Valiente, Katy, TX

Smalti mosaic, gold smalti, mixed media, 2021

Life it doesn't start when we are born, neither get over when you die.

Eleven birds representing eleven souls that were called by God as a proof of faith and learning that love is everywhere, anytime from you to everybody's hearts.

Viviana Valiente is a Chilean architect, artist, author, teacher and mother of four young children.

In 2015 she relocated to Texas. Her love for art started during college, designing and experimenting in the beginning with textiles that allowed her to write her first book *Weaving for your Soul* in 2012, but after 2014 she decided to change media from yarns to glass. Her versatility and constant curiosity of learning makes her integrate new techniques into her work and to discover and further develop her knowledge of mosaic art. She gravitates toward designing textures using diverse materials, such as stones, fiber, glass, beads, and antique artifacts, opening a door to an immense world full of ideas. She truly believes that art is an essential tool of self-knowledge and expression.



23. Everlasting

Joan Schwartz

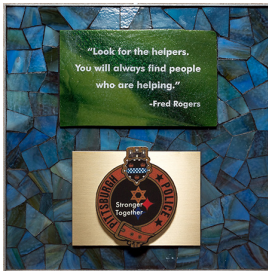
Huntington Woods, MI

Gold smalti glass and blue smalti glass, 2019

I was extremely honored to be asked to be included in this extraordinarily important show. My piece represents the circle of life. The Hebrew word for life, CHAI, is illuminated in blue smalti glass against a gold smalti glass background. Life is never-ending, and the small blue seeds symbolize *Everlasting* life.

I am self-taught, and art has always been a major part of my life. My journey into non-traditional mosaics began over fifteen years ago. I incorporate handmade pieces, all types of glass, ceramic, beads, wood, metal, and other repurposed materials. Each work demonstrates my attention to detail in the design elements, color choices and selection

of *tesserae* (tiles). My love for travel and mosaics has enabled me to study with the top instructors in the United States and abroad. I am a board member of the Society of American Mosaic Artists and have been juried into Mosaic Arts International exhibitions four times. In 2020, I recorded my first mosaic video for Mosaic Arts Online.
joanschwartz@me.com



24. In Honor of First Responders

Lysa Lurie, Minneapolis, MN

Stained glass, fused, etched glass, mixed media, 2019

Mr. Rogers, the famous children's television personality from Squirrel Hill tells that his mother used to explain that during a tragedy, one must look for the helpers. "Where there are helpers coming from the sides, there is hope". This tile honors all the first responders who show up at our most difficult moments—those moments experienced both individually and as a community. These men and women run towards the danger—their only goal that of saving lives. And indeed, in the wake of this (yet another) senseless shooting there were countless stories of brave and selfless helpers.

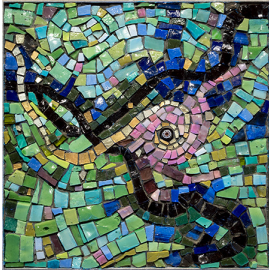
I am honored and humbled to be working on this important collaboration with a group of exceptionally talented artists. This memorial will honor the lives and spirit of those lost in the synagogue tragedy in Pittsburgh, as well as all of those so deeply affected by this unimaginable act.

It is my hope that this artwork conveys a sense of hope and comfort—a visual reminder that out of great tragedy can come slivers of light that guide our way towards healing.

Our artwork sends a message of love, strength and unity, and a reminder that no matter where you live as a Jewish person today, you are not alone.

Lysa Lurie is an interior designer in Minneapolis. She has spoken out over the years at various public events to address the issues of antisemitism.

This tile was created in conjunction with Heather Kruger.



25. Flow

Lynn Bridge, Austin, TX

Smalti mosaic, gold smalti, 2019

The design suggests a map of the location of Tree of Life, but the swirls and flowing lines represent a map of the life-long impact each victim had on their family and community. That impact, like a river, flows through time, and never really goes away; it pours into the larger ocean of life. I have practiced the art of seeing and interpreting all of my life; however, I came to the practice of mosaic-making about fifteen to twenty years ago when I dipped my toe into a class at Laguna Gloria Art Museum. I had previously graduated with an emphasis in painting and drawing from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago shortly after the dinosaurs roamed.



26. Let It Be Your Light Out of the Darkness

Lee Berman, Bellingham, MA

Stained glass, 24K gold smalti, fused glass, 2021

These broken bits of stained glass, when bound together, illustrate one of the most basic traditions of Jewish life and the power of Jewish ritual and tradition in the darkest of days. Out of darkness there shines a light that brings us together as a people. Our first mitzvah (commandment) as Sabbath approaches is to kindle lights to honor and enjoy Shabbat. What makes that image so evocative, so powerful and eternal? The first creation was light, so it seems appropriate to kindle lights at the start of Shabbat in commemoration of that first light that creates a spiritual glow within the home.

Medieval author and rabbi Rashi explains that “...without light there can be no peace, because (people) will constantly stumble...in the dark.” Light is referred to as peace, because it gives us the ability to distinguish between different things, and thus to perceive the uniqueness of every person. When we have light, we can recognize the sublime qualities inherent in each other and in this way, we have peace.

Although we light two flames, the glow created is unified into one. The light helps us to see the beauty within each other. And I pray it will help others to see the beauty within all of us.

(Excerpts from Rhona Lewis, *The Meaning Behind the Flames*)

Lee studied Studio Art at Framingham State University where she completed two internships at the Danforth Museum teaching children's art classes. After spending years studying abstract painting, mixed media collage, jewelry design, and stained glass, she discovered mixed media mosaics. Lee says, "I fell in love with the texture, dimension and challenge of creating a piece of art from shattered bits of china, pottery, stone and glass." Lee now creates in her home studio and Cheryl Cohen's Art Center in Holliston, where, as a studio assistant, she enjoys inspiring and encouraging others to tap into their creative spirit. She is a member of the Society of American Mosaic Artists (SAMA) and New England Mosaic Society (NEMS). While co-chair of the NEMS Exhibitions Committee she curated the NEMS members shows at Post Road Art Center, Marlborough, MA and Wedeman Gallery at Lasell University, Newton MA. Most recently, she exhibited in juried exhibitions at the Somerville Museum, Post Road Art Center (recipient of the People's Choice Award), Ashland Library, Wedeman Gallery at Lasell University and Sculpture in the Orchard at Park Hill Orchard. She contributed pieces to public art projects at Ronald McDonald House, Portsmouth ME, Pulse Diversity Mural, Orlando FL, Karen Edlund Memorial, and The Ruins Project, PA: The Gear Project.

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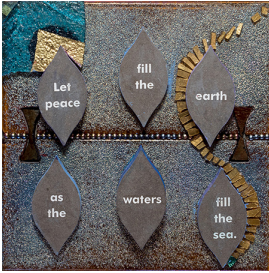
27. Olive Branch

Judy Hardwick, Austin, TX

Fused glass, stained glass, smalti mosaic, 2019

This tile was made with stained glass and is a symbol of peace. I am relatively new to mosaic art, but I feel so lucky to have found a home in the mosaic community of Austin. It has been my honor and privilege to participate in this project with my fellow mosaicists. It has truly been a labor of love. My heart goes out to the Tree of Life community, along with my hope of healing.

Judy Hardwick is a mosaic artist who lives in Austin, TX. She is a member of the Austin Mosaic Guild.



28. Amos 5:24

Susan Ribnick, Austin, TX

Gold smalti, etched porcelain leaves,
Oceanside mineral glass base, 2019

This tile was inspired by a handwritten note left by a child, Cooper D. at the Tree of Life memorial site. The words of this verse are as meaningful today as they were when they were written. I was moved by the images on the national news in November of 2018, of people, young and old, who felt the need to do something in response to this tragedy. That impulse is what drove this project into being. There are times in which doing nothing is not an option and this was one of them. If this project can be the catalyst for conversation and action then we will have accomplished what we set out to do. We hope this project reflects hope and overshadows darkness.

Susan is a graphic designer and the owner of Vintage Mosaic which started in Mexico City in 1994. Since then, she has worked with vintage smalti glass mosaic in public works as well as personal commissions. She is currently co-president of the Austin Mosaic Guild and a member of the Society of American Mosaic Artists.



29. Hamsa

Ginette Jordan, Austin, TX

Stained glass, mixed media, 2019

Ginette Suissa Jordan was born in Casablanca, Morocco. Her mosaics feature the hand of Fatima, also known as 'Hamsa', the symbol of protection and strength. Her tile represents protection, peace, and harmony. It was created with mixed media, stained glass and 18Kt gold tiles and jewelry pieces. Ginette is also a renowned chef who has taught authentic Moroccan cuisine at many culinary schools. Ginette has displayed and sold work in galleries and in exhibits. She has been a member of the Austin Mosaic Guild since 2012.



30. *Shalom*

Marion Stoutner, Austin, TX

Stained glass, mixed media, 2019

In a word to those who mourn the tragedy at the Tree of Life Synagogue, the word 'shalom' is rich with meaning. "Hello" to those who join them; "goodbye" to those who have been taken; and "peace" as the way to a brighter future and a "wholeness" of spirit and purpose. Marion is a member of the Austin Mosaic Guild and has contributed to other community mosaic projects.



31. *Whimsical Tree of Life*

Sharon Arffa, Austin, TX

Smalti, millifiore, black pebbles,
and stringers, 2021

I was inspired by the drawing of a child named Jarrod E. of Pittsburgh, PA, who created artwork for the Tree of Life Windscreen project (<https://www.treeoflifepgh.org/heartstogether>). The whimsical tree of life rendered by Jarrod caught my eye as it seemed to be full of sympathy, hope, and passion.

Sharon Arffa has spent most of her life in Pittsburgh, and like other native Pittsburghers was saddened by the atrocious assault on the Tree of Life. She is a psychologist and an artist and is happy to contribute to this wonderful and meaningful project!

Sharon was a mosaic artist from 1995 to 2000 and returned to mosaics three years ago. She is also a colored pencil artist and has earned a certificate in botanical art from Phipps Conservatory in Pittsburgh. She has had pieces accepted for regional, national and international juried exhibitions, as well as numerous one woman and two and three person shows.

arffasharon@gmail.com



32. Tree of Life Synagogue Logo

Teresa White, Bothell, WA

Stained glass, silver beads,
mixed media, 2019

I wanted to create an interpretation of the Tree of Life Synagogue's logo. The mosaic represents a tree symbolizing strength, resiliency and commitment. My intention is to show compassion and support to the community and honor the congregants who are no longer with us. I'm sincerely honored to have been able to contribute to this beautiful representation of kindness, acceptance and hope. May this memorial be an everlasting tribute to those who that lost their lives.

I've enjoyed some form of artistic creation for several years as a way of creating balance and providing beauty to the world. In challenging times, mosaics have offered me an opportunity to heal and move beyond life's struggles and make a positive contribution to my surroundings.

A favorite quote of mine: "We're all just walking each other home." – Ram Dass

<https://www.shorelakesarts.org/team/teresa-white>



33. Connected Hearts

Phyllis Akmal, Austin, TX

Stained glass, ceramic mosaic,
mixed media, 2019

Let us find wonder in and inspiration from our differences. Let us use those differences to better understand ourselves and know that our hearts are connected by our common humanity. The style of this piece was inspired by the Moorish and Sephardic use of geometric art in their places of worship. This tile was created with stained glass and ceramic tile. Phyllis teaches mosaic workshops at the Austin School of Mosaic Art.



34. Hope

Linda Biggers, Broadalbin, NY

Stained glass, gold smalti mosaic, mixed media, 2021

I chose the image of a heart and the word hope for this mosaic. The heart representing spiritual healing is overlaid with the word (in Hebrew) Hope. Jewel toned, iridescent blues were used to represent healing and wisdom. I want this mosaic to represent a positive, hopeful outlook for a future encompassed by tolerance, respect and peace.

As long as I can remember, art has been an important part of my life. As a child, I spent every spare minute drawing or painting. For years, I dabbled in photography, painting, sculpture and a huge variety of crafts and worked as a graphic designer for eighteen years. In 1998, I discovered eggshell and mixed media mosaic. Mosaic became my medium of choice. With the use of glass, eggshell, natural stone and slate, I am able to create works with the color and intense drama that I enjoy. I love texture, brilliant colors and creating pieces that will evoke feelings and emotions in the viewer. I am an active participant in local art shows in Albany, Saratoga and the Adirondacks regions. My work can be seen at www.eggshellmosaicart.com and art shows and galleries in Fulton, Saratoga, and Schenectady Counties.

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35. Skyline of Pittsburgh

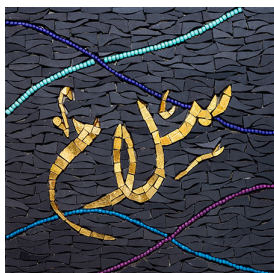
Shelley Jaffe, Royal Oak, MI

Smalti gold, mixed media, 2021

I have been making mosaics for the last several years. This particular project hit very close to home. My husband Jack grew up in Pittsburgh. I have been there more than a hundred times, visiting relatives and friends. I chose to make a skyline of downtown Pittsburgh, showing the river, one of many bridges, with mountains in the background. I also incorporated the word 'strength' in Hebrew. After the shooting at the Tree of Life, "Pittsburgh Strong" and "Stronger than Hate" were seen everywhere, on t-shirts, billboards, and storefronts.

My husband was a friend from kindergarten through high school with one of the deceased on that day, Irving Younger. He had also attended many B'nei Mitzvah (coming of age ritual) at the Tree of Life and had several friends who belonged there. He chose to say Kaddish (ancient prayer recited for the dead) for his old friend Irving for the year following the shooting.

shellyjaffe@mac.com



36. Salaam

Heather Kruger, Austin, TX

Cut porcelain, gold smalti,
glass beads, 2019

The message of this tile, the Arabic word for ‘Shalom’ is that of peace. Heather is a mosaic artist, instructor and the founder of the Austin School of Mosaic Art. She is a member of the Society of American Mosaic Artists. Heather is also the artist who created the Alef Lamed mosaic on display outside the sanctuary of Congregation Agudas Achim in Austin, TX.



37. Reaching Out for Connection

Carol Krentzman, Natick, MA

Smalti, glass mosaic, mixed media, 2021

Through all the social turmoil, upheaval, renewal, and successes of the last few years, it continues to be abundantly apparent that people of all races and skin tones have the same goals and desires for themselves and their families. We are all important members of the human race, sharing universal feelings, wishes and dreams. My mosaic illustrates our mutual drive to celebrate similarities and hopes for the future.

Carol Krentzman is passionate about mosaics, where process and creativity combine as thousands of broken pieces are joined together to create a whole new artwork. Carol assembles her mosaics in her home studio in Natick, MA. Since 2000 her focus has been on creating large public art stained-glass panels, as well as indoor and outdoor mosaics. Her large mosaics are fabricated, often with the help of many community volunteers and other artists, using multi-colored stained-glass pieces, beads, glass tiles, stones, individually made fused glass and clay elements, and a variety of broken tiles and pottery.

www.carolkrentzman.com

TO BE INCLUDED IN FUTURE EXHIBITIONS:



Remembrance

Nira Chorev, Brookline, MA

Mixed media

As a mixed media artist who explores memory and the present, I understand the importance and power of the Tree of Life Project as an Israeli, a Jew, and a mother. This project will be a unique artistic way to show the families, the community, and the world that coming together as a group of artists is the most beautiful way to preserve their memories, a unique way using color. In this piece, playing with the simplicity of the objects I chose an olive tree, sky, water, and glass mosaics, combining these elements gave me the ability to see the light that comes through glass. For me, this represents Hope—even as the work allows viewers to remember the names of the profound and unnecessary loss of eleven individual lives.

It is a great honor that Susan Ribnick of the Austin Mosaic Guild invited me to take part in the Tree of Life Project, to commemorate the victims who were murdered because they were Jews and prayed at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh.

Nira Chorev was born in the United States to Israeli parents who came to study at Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Over the years, the artist has lived in both Israel and the United States. She studied at the School of the Museum of Fine Art in Boston.

<https://nirachorev.wordpress.com>



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513.487.3231 or awheeler@huc.edu