

MOSAIC ART NOW

2010 Edition



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Curator's Statement

Given that the history of mosaic art began more than 4,000 years ago and many works of mosaic art stand as some of the most enduring icons of art history, it is surprising just how many people today continue to think of mosaic making as the work of craftspeople rather

and, fortunately, excellent work was submitted in all techniques and styles. The artworks I chose to include exemplify a broad range of trends. Landscapes, figures, and pure abstractions were all worthy of inclusion. Flat works and objects in three-dimensions were both skillfully

Perhaps ironically—for a medium known for its functionality—very few of the mosaics submitted were meant to be used. One of these was selected, *Don't Cut Your Tongue on the Rhinestones*, a vintage cash drawer ornamented with myriad tiles and found objects. A jewelry box extraordinaire, its usability nevertheless plays a minor role; this object is truly purposed to make viewers smile.

participate in.

To be sure, most of us made mosaics as children, often using dried beans, cut paper, and other objects found around the house. Yet few of us have gone beyond these humble beginnings. Of the practitioners that have, even fewer have taken their craft to the level of art. All of the pieces included here were made by artists—ones who have added to the mosaic tradition and pushed its boundaries, each time making abundantly evident that the art form is alive and well.

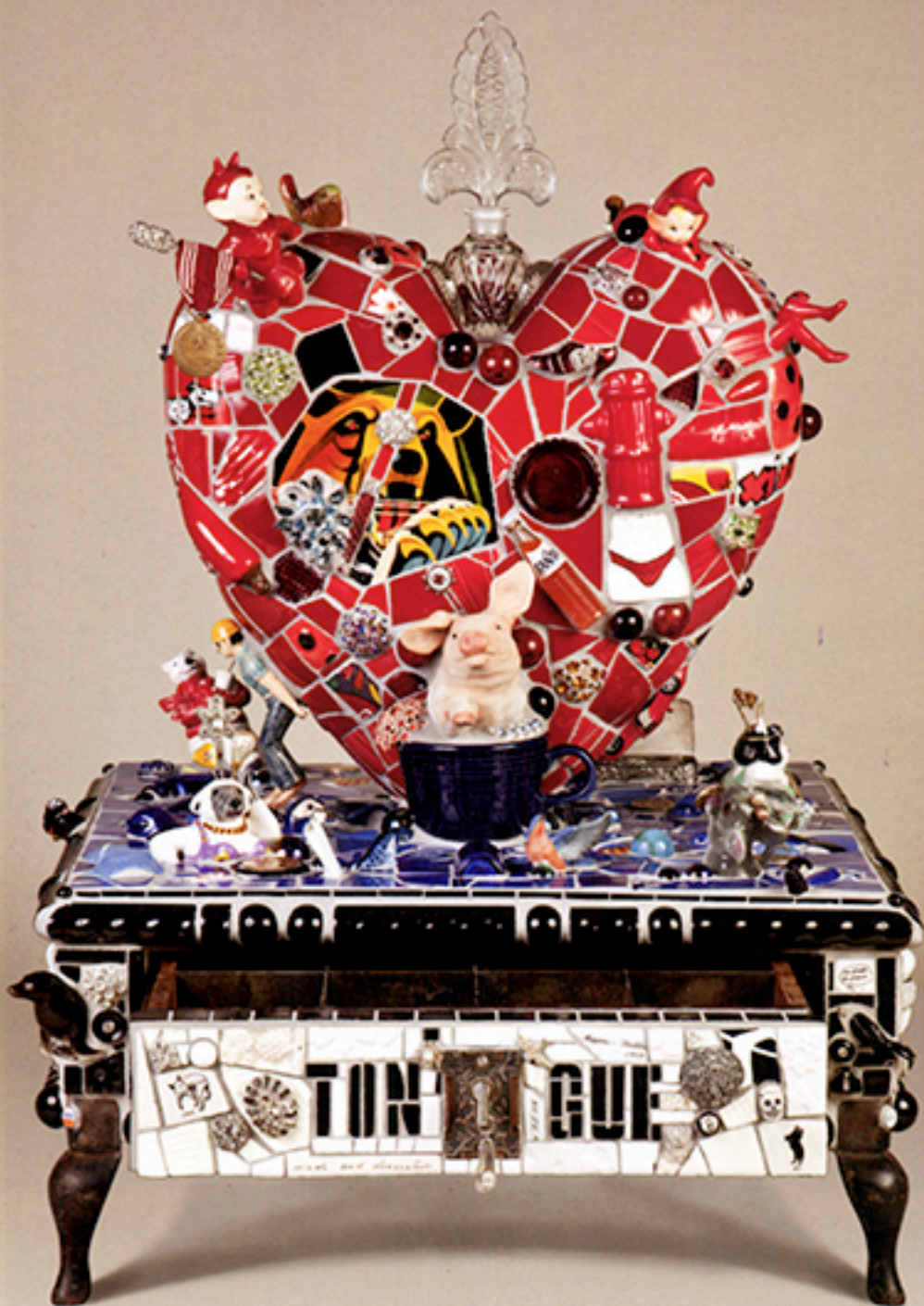
To create art, conception and execution are equally required. In other words, some artists have ideas; others have technique. Those that bring both to the fore and can do it consistently are the artists. The medium itself matters little. It is the mastery of that medium, regardless of genre or utility, that is important. This technical mastery is a necessity. Without it, the end result is compromised—no matter how good the idea.

As in the case of other traditional “craft” media such as glass, clay, and wood, mosaic artists have in recent decades begun to re-emerge in force internationally, which the beautiful diversity of production included here makes evident. As juror, it was my intent to try to show the breadth of global talent that submitted to this competition

society. *Spaghetti Western* appropriates kitsch by adapting and then embellishing a 1950s paint-by-number cowboy and bucking bronco. Surrounding this central image with ashtrays, belt buckles, toy guns, and spurs, the artist has created a pop icon that simultaneously oozes nostalgia and critiques consumer culture. *White Rabbit* also looks nostalgically at the past, but with a less cynical edge. With painstaking and gorgeous attention to detail, the artist turns to childhood literature to remind us of the frenzied pace of our own lives through that of the late-running hare.

All of the artists whose work is depicted were true to their medium and exploited its unique expressive potential, and all of them brought depth and diversity to their pieces by using tesserae in a range of materials, shapes, and sizes. The work titled *Ramblings* focuses on the rich beauty of the artist's materials, combining an infinitude of glass, semi-precious stones, millefiori, and smalti to create a lush abstraction that seems to have evolved organically and yet results in a remarkably cohesive whole. Others took advantage of their medium's ability to assume three dimensions by richly layering forms, as in the case of *Bull's Eye* and also *Notturmo*, both of which breach the picture plane into luscious sweeping forms and patterns. *Keep Me Warm* uses this same approach but with a more homespun

Jolino Beserra (USA)





Don't Cut Your Tongue on the Rhinestones

20 w x 20 d x 28 h inches. Vintage cash-drawer, carved packing foam for the heart, and cast iron feet from a small room heater. The surfaces are covered in ceramic tile, glass tiles, small bits, blue mirror, dish ware, bowls, mugs, mirrored bottle bottoms, figurines, miniature soda bottle, salt and pepper shakers, brooches, stick pins, medals, marbles, GM keys, tongue milagros, rhinestones and a perfume bottle. The removable stopper has red glass beads attached.

This mosaic is my statement about Temptation and the allure of all things shiny. My concept was to start with the "flaming heart" icon and create a functional piece of art around it. A small metal box in the back of the piece holds a button that opens the money draw with a BING. When you remove the glass "flame" at the top, you will find a rosary attached with a silver tongue milagro at the end of which sits a large rhinestone.

Photographer: Don Saban Photography