



Society of American Mosaic Artists

PO Box 624
Ligonier, PA 15658-0624
Phone: 866-902-SAMA
Fax: 724-238-3973
info@americanmosaics.org
www.AmericanMosaics.org

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Contact: Gwyn Kaitis (815) 919-2576
groland@americanmosaics.org

Mosaic Arts International 2010 Celebrates the Year's Best

Chicago, December 9, 2009-The Society of American Mosaic Artists (SAMA) urges you to make plans now to discover all that is contemporary, compelling, and breathtakingly beautiful at Mosaic Arts International 2010, its annual juried exhibition of members' outstanding work. This year's MAI exhibition will take place in Chicago during March and April, to coincide with American Mosaic Summit, SAMA's yearly conference in the same city. (For conference information, visit www.americanmosaics.org.) The Smith Museum of Stained Glass at Navy Pier will host the show, and over 80,000 visitors are expected to attend during its run, March 1-April 30.

Karen Ami, SAMA president and exhibition chair, notes that "MAI has become the most competitive mosaic arts exhibition in the U.S. This year's show will inspire and excite those who are familiar with mosaic as well as those seeing contemporary mosaic art for the first time." More than 250 artists in eight countries submitted entries, and a panel of three jurors deliberated over a five-day period, ultimately selecting 48 pieces for exhibition. Three categories of work are represented in the show: 26 mosaics in two-dimensional format, seven in three-dimensional format, and 15 in the architectural category.

A total of \$5,000 in cash awards (higher than any other mosaics competition worldwide) will be presented to artists at a gala celebration during the American Mosaic Summit March 17-21. Best in Show honors will go to John Sollinger for *Radiance*. Diana Stevens will collect the Best 2-D prize for *Indian Madonna*, and Kate Jessup will receive the Best 3-D prize for *Cedar Stump*. Dianne Sonnenberg will pick up a prize for Best Architectural Installation for her monumental work, *Ocean(egg)graphy*.

Juror's Choice awards will go to Michael J. Kruzich for *Corinthian*, to Connie Chantilis for *Grotto*, and to Ilana Shafir for *Temples*. The eighth



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prize, the highly coveted Members' Choice award, will be announced at the conclusion of the SAMA conference.

Jurors for MAI 2010 included esteemed British mosaicist Oliver Budd, president of the British Association for Modern Mosaic (BAMM); Juan Chavez, a noted public artist and faculty member at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago; and Janet Kozachek, an Orangeburg, South Carolina artist and arts educator and a founding member and president emeritus of SAMA. Budd noted that he found the work to be of "consistently high quality" and was "really swayed by some of the fantastic abstract work." Kozachek also praised the field and reflected on the agonizing yet uplifting process of sorting through "so many incredible pieces of art."

For more details on the prize-winning mosaics, please see the SAMA website, www.americanmosaics.org. In March, a gorgeous color catalog of the exhibition will be available for purchase from the SAMA online store.

The Society of American Mosaic Artists is a non-profit organization dedicated to educating, inspiring, and promoting excellence in fine mosaic art. It is a vibrant and growing group with more than 1,200 members. SAMA is celebrating its tenth anniversary this year and will stage the world's largest mosaics education event at its conference March 17–21, 2010 at the Palmer House Hilton in downtown Chicago. For more information on membership and conference registration, please visit www.americanmosaics.org.

Please contact Public Relations Committee Chair, Gwyn Kaitis to obtain high resolution images for your publication. (815) 919-2576; groland@americanmosaics.org