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The Annual Mosaic Arts International Exhibition Series (MAI), invigorates a new perspective of mosaic art in numerous contexts and celebrates established as well as emerging artists working in the medium today. The 54 selected works reflect the multiplicity of the mosaic medium and its endless applications. The series is comprised of separate juried exhibits featuring the best in contemporary fine art, architectural, community, & site-specific mosaics from SAMA's diverse international membership.

The Fine Art and Architectural & Site-Specific exhibition segments were juried as two separate pools by 2021 Jurors, Julia Lang-Shapiro, Director of Media, Visual and Performing Arts for Long Beach Public Schools and Anabella Wewer, graphic designer and internationally exhibited mosaic artist.

As a result of the COVID-10 pandemic, SAMA cancelled the 2020 exhibition and is presenting the 2021 exhibition as a virtual experience scheduled to debut Wednesday, February 10, 2021. Attendees of the Virtual American Mosaic Summit, SAMA's first live-streamed conference event were treated to a pre-debut review of the work where the following awards were announced.

Mosaic Arts International 2021 Awards

Jacki Gran was awarded Best in Show for Fire Within

Michael Kruzich was awarded Best Technical Achievement for Trittico del Pacifico

Donna Van Hooser was awarded the Contemporary Innovation Award for Violet

Bonnie Cohen was awarded Best Architectural Mosaic for Connect

Ann Wydeven was awarded Best Community Mosaic for La Casa de Esperanza Charter School

Yulia Hanansen was awarded a Juror's Choice Award by Julia Lang-Shapiro for Light as a Wave as a Particle

Barbara Uhlenbruch was awarded a Juror's Choice Award by Anabella Wewer for Goodbye Old Life

Fifty-four total works were selected including works from artists from throughout the United States, Australia, Canada, Greece, Spain and the United Kingdom. The fully interactive exhibition is on view at mosaicartsinternational.americanmosaics.org. The virtual exhibition was designed by SAMA Executive Director, Dawnmarie Zimmerman and provides an intimate

viewing experience with large images and statements from each artist. The Architectural & Site-Specific Mosaic segment entries feature videos of each installation providing a comprehensive perspective of these large-scale works.

Juror, Julia Lang-Shapiro commented regarding her My Juror's Choice Award selection is the triptych *Light as a Wave as a Particle* created by Yulia Hanansen. "The use of color creates such dynamic movement and depth in the piece. The panels are an undulating ocean of technicolor smalti glass, showcasing the myriad of values found in the color spectrum. This piece stood out to me from the first moment I saw it."

Anabella Wewer found the process of jurying a mosaic art exhibition challenging her definition of mosaic and fine art. "Our main directive was to judge each work as a fine art mosaic. This proved difficult, as I was faced with works that go against what I think of as mosaic, which is not anything made up of pieces and assembled together. Assemblage and collage are more apt descriptors of that, and separate disciplines. Depending on materials, some works more accurately fall further into other categories, making it easier to define what mosaic isn't than what it is. Innovation and experimentation, to me, is not about redefining what mosaic is, but rather what mosaic can do; to push the techniques and materials into new ground without losing the very definition of this ancient art form."

Many of the works in the Fine Art segment are available for sale. The exhibition will remain on view through the exhibition website indefinitely. Zimmerman looks forward to staging exhibitions with museum, art center and gallery partners in 2022. "Artists who use this medium spend countless hours producing work that is best presented in person for viewers to experience the aspects of texture, color, reflectivity and intricacy of design that is possible with mosaic." The 2020 Mosaic Arts International exhibition was planned for Tucson, Arizona for May, 2020 and was cancelled in March. "We have worked to create an intimate digital experience wherein viewers receive large juicy images and longer more in-depth statements from artists, to create a connection with the viewer. It is a very dynamic and intuitive user experience that easy to navigate and accessible on all devices."

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