

Addicted To Glass

Mosaic art partners bring colorful joy to the world.

Suzanne Chessler | Contributing Writer



Midnight Enchantment



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Morning Has Spoken

Mosaic artists Morrine Maltzman and Jacqui Ridley have created a collaborative, partnership that has spawned a studio, workshops, commissioned public works and new materials and techniques, along with a wonderful friendship.

In their Pontiac studio, the work partners recently began developing moveable mosaics. One example has nine squares on a larger square so that onlookers can rearrange the smaller parts to show many different designs — an intentional nod to invite viewers to put their own finishing touches on the pair's glass-based projects.

"We call it 'art your way,'" Maltzman says. "It can start out as a realistic piece and become abstract, according to the changes. Some of the images are abstract to begin with, and we leave it to others to make many different patterns by manipulating 'Glimmer Glass Squares.'"

The three-dimensional designers started working together with the commercial name Glimmer Glass Mosaics in 2012. Already familiar with what each other was creating,

they became acquainted personally as members of Mosaic Artists of Michigan.

With their creative momentum, they incorporate fabric, metals, gems and other materials into multimedia visualizations. Inspired by quilt and embroidery patterns, they developed a resin technique that makes fabric look like glass, presenting colors innovatively.

Resin also is used to make and feature gems.

"Our mosaics are very intricate," Ridley says. "We cut all our pieces by hand. It can take us hours just to do a tiny square.

"Our realistic scenes have included boats in the water, houses and sunsets. We have done lots of different abstract designs. We're really about color. We love bright jewel tones."

Partnered Projects

The artists' first project together — after very different careers — was for Temple Israel. Maltzman, active with the temple, was asked to donate a mosaic to be offered

at an event, and she invited Ridley to work with her. They came up with a scene that showed an outdoor flower market.

Earlier, Ridley had done some commissions for the California Chabad synagogue where her sister, Terry Gladstone, is a member. She also has done commemorative pieces for local young people celebrating bat and bar mitzvahs.

"One of our first large commission pieces showed three-dimensional buildings of old and new Detroit and was made for Henry Ford Hospital," Ridley recalls. "We saw the buildings and took pictures so it's very accurate. We made the buildings out of wood and covered them with glass and other materials.

"Someone saw that and wanted us to show their home in the same kind of three-dimensional way. We did that by finding bricks that matched their house and cutting them into tiny pieces."

Other projects have included mosaics for the patient tower at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Pontiac and a jeweled heart mosaic for the C.S. Mott Children's Hospital in Ann Arbor.

The artists, in their 60s, divide up the work after idea exchanges on particular works.

Ridley, who lives in Oakland Township and majored in art at Wayne State University, detoured into owning Ridley's Bakery Cafe in Troy while her children were young. When ready to return to art, she studied mosaic styles through books and began with small projects.

Maltzman, a pianist who lives in West Bloomfield and still performs at Jewish communal events, became interested in mosaics while her son, Danny, was attending the University of Michigan. She learned of a mosaic class in Ann Arbor and enrolled.

As they worked together, Ridley and Maltzman came up with ideas to promote artistic expression in others. They started conducting workshops for emerging glass enthusiasts and included many varieties of the material, such as stained, recycled and

gem-like.

Their next workshop series will be held Oct. 19-20.

Participants will be using GlamGrout, developed by the artists. They came up with a nontoxic formula after Ridley realized she was allergic to commercial grout. Their line has 25 unique colors and soon will have public availability through their website.

Examples of their own projects regularly are displayed at the Half Day Cafe in Rochester Hills, which is owned by Chris Heeder, Ridley's husband. The artists welcome groups to observe their techniques and have had several busloads from Meer Apartments.

"Our building is an old industrial facility and was first used to make carriages in the early 1900s," Maltzman says. "It's now filled with artists, carpenters and metal workers. We use a lot of those people to help with specialized aspects of the mosaics."

Both women say they are addicted to glass and find that working together removes the lonely feeling some artists can experience regardless of medium. □

Their next workshop will be held 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday-Tuesday, Oct. 19-20, at Glimmer Glass Mosaics, 40 W. Howard, Pontiac. \$295. glimmerglassmosaics.com. (248) 709-1912.



Glimmer Glass Squares are moveable to let viewers recreate the image.