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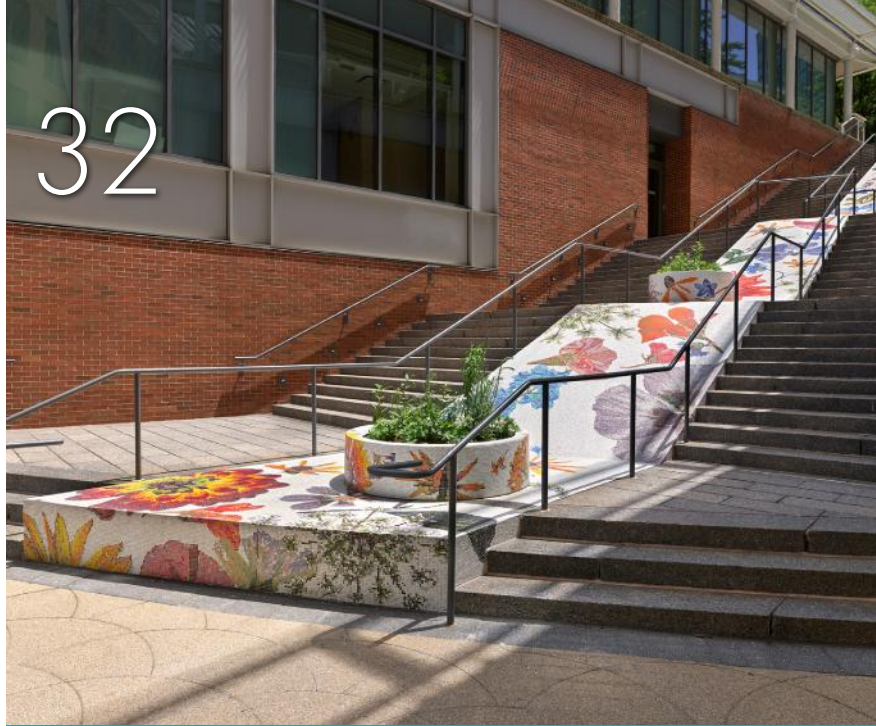
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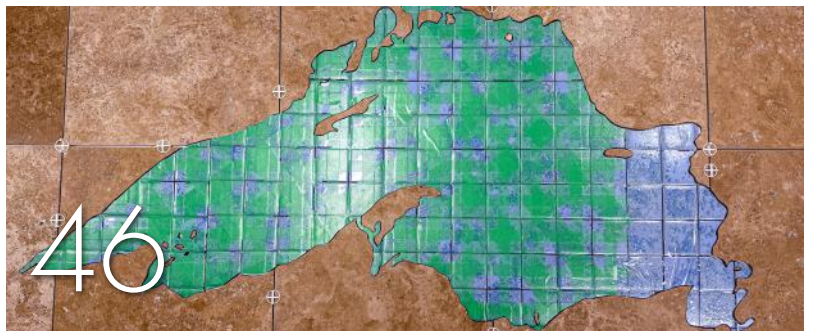
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TileLetter

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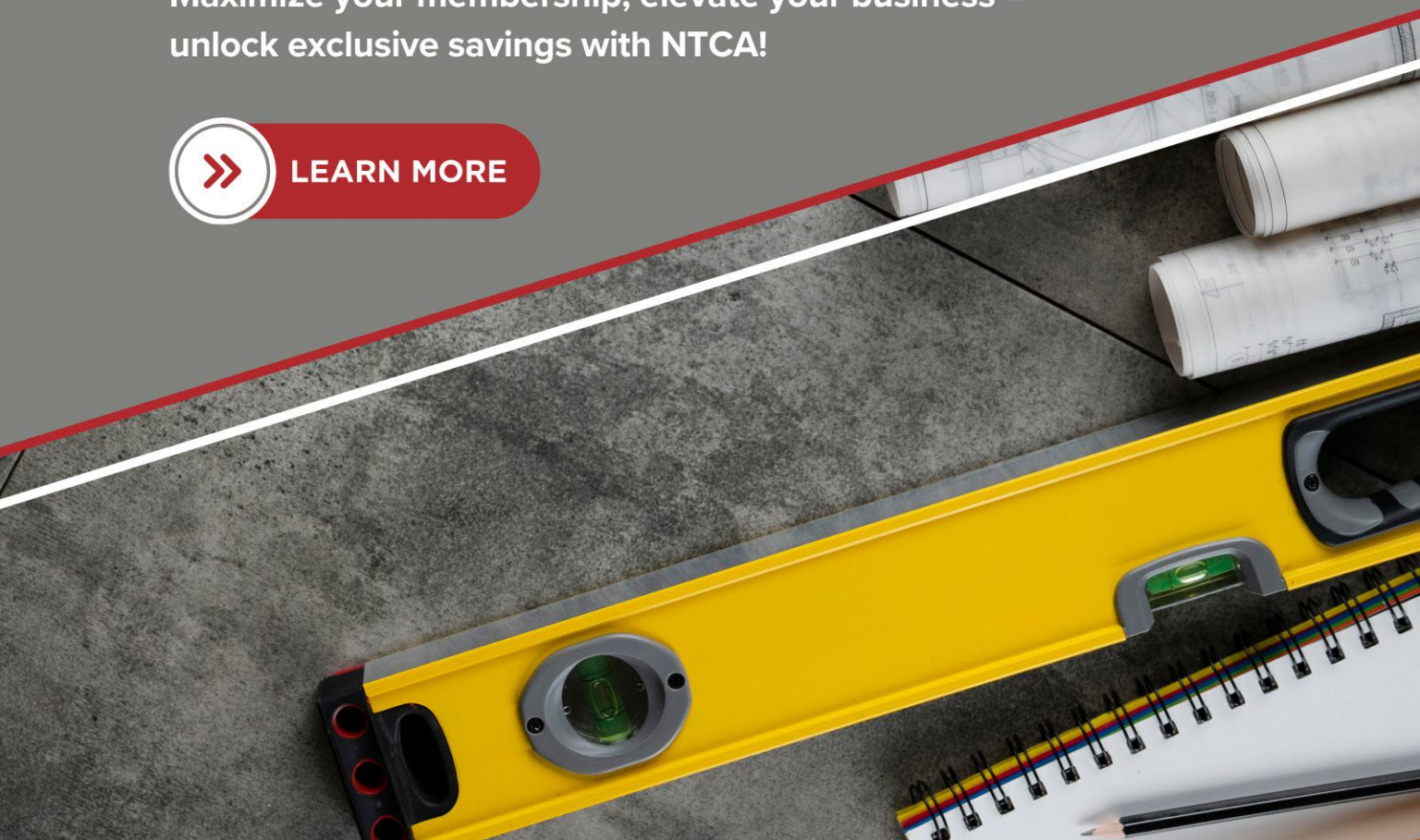


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Anthony Oliver



Robb Roderick



Alex Smith

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AUGUST

- 4 Emser Tile – Sacramento, CA
- 10 Floor & Decor – Bakersfield, CA
- 11 Daltile – Ontario, CA
- 11 Daltile – Lakewood, WA
- 12 The Masonry Center – Spokane, WA
- 13 Emser Tile – Phoenix, AZ
- 13 Daltile – Missoula, MT
- 18 Daltile – Ogden, UT
- 18 Daltile – Cranberry Township, PA
- 19 Floor & Decor – Bethel Park, PA
- 20 The Tile Shop – Nashville, TN
- 20 Daltile – Bedford Heights, OH

- 25 The Masonry Center – Boise, ID
- 25 Daltile – Wilmington, DE
- 26 Daltile – Fort Myers, FL
- 27 The Masonry Center – Missoula, MT
- 27 Floor & Decor – Fort Lauderdale, FL

SEPTEMBER

- 1 Floor & Decor – Mt Vernon, NY
- 8 Avalon Flooring – Cherry Hill, NJ
- 8 Daltile – Brooklyn, NY
- 9 Daltile – Mt. Vernon, NY
- 10 Daltile – Stoughton, MA
- 15 James Hardie – Dallas, TX

- 15 Floor & Decor – Paramus, NJ
- 15 Floor & Decor – Fresno, CA
- 16 Daltile – Torrance, CA
- 17 Arizona Tile – San Diego, CA
- 22 Emser Tile – Dallas, TX
- 22 Daltile – South Bend, IN
- 24 MSI – Milwaukee, WI
- 28 Floor & Decor – Shererville, IN
- 29 Hamilton Parker – Cincinnati, OH
- 29 Louisville Tile – West Chester, OH
- 30 Hamilton Parker – Columbus, OH
- 30 Louisville Tile – Louisville, KY

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- 6 Floor & Decor – Happy Valley, OR
- 6 Daltile – Lenexa, KS
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- 20 Floor & Decor – Lombard, IL
- 20 Floor & Decor – Denver, CO
- 27 Floor & Decor – Gaithersburg, MD
- 27 Uzin Utz – Waco, TX

SEPTEMBER

- 3 BPI – Houston, TX
- 3 Floor & Decor – East Brunswick, NJ
- 10 BPI – Memphis, TN
- 10 Floor & Decor – Hyannis, MA
- 17 Floor & Decor – Lafayette, LA
- 17 Floor & Decor – Moorestown, NJ
- 24 Crossville Studios – Houston, TX
- 24 Floor & Decor – Greenville, SC
- 29 Floor & Decor – Danbury, CT



NTCA maintains an ongoing list of training events through an interactive map on its website. Check it out by scanning.



**Dates are subject to change*

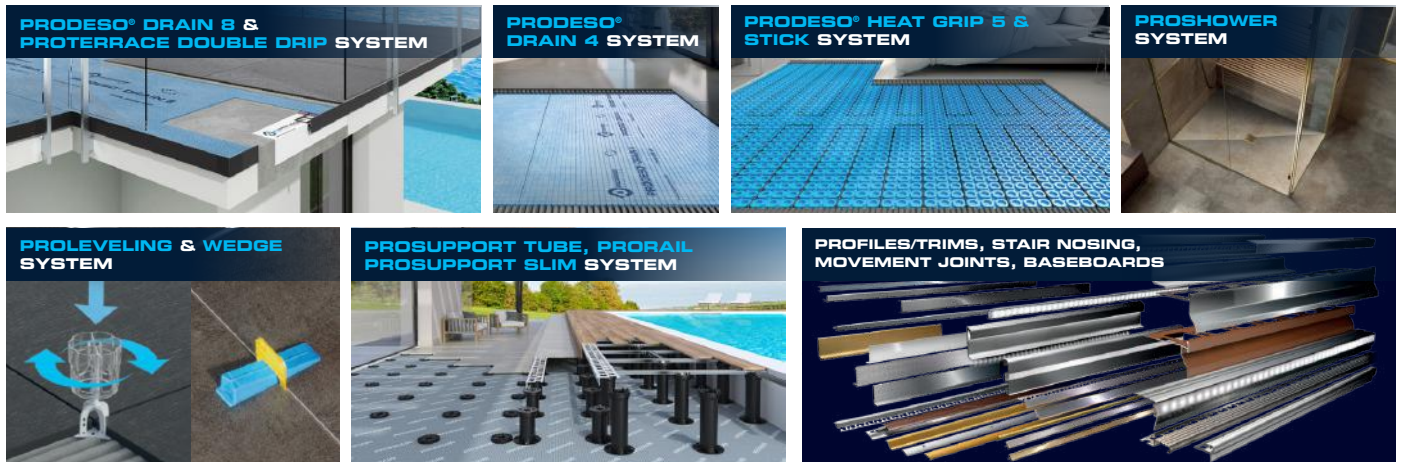
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ARTISAN Craftsmanship

BRINGING BEAUTY TO THE WORLD



Lesley Goddin

"Your craft needs not just your effort to thrive, but the entirety of your heart."

— MICHAEL BASSEY JOHNSON, *SIPS AND LITTLE PORTIONS*

Welcome to the Artisan issue of *TileLetter*—and to the swelter season. Hope you can keep cool by kicking back in the shade with a cold beverage and this month's *TileLetter*, which shines a light on the artistic dimension of tile craftsmanship.

Bart Bettiga's One-to-One interview with Karim Motawi, the new Executive Director of Development for the Tile Heritage Foundation, explores how intertwined the various segments of the industry are—from handmade tile to installation—and how the Foundation is looking to support and celebrate them all.

Our Business story continues the theme of connection with a recap of a Coverings panel featuring four accomplished artisan women who came together to explore their individual specialties and the connections linking history, craftsmanship, artistry, and installation. Discover their contributions to this interdependent industry web.

Our Maker story focuses on cultivating the next generation of A&D professionals. NTCA staff and members joined with CTEF and industry sponsors to undertake a project with students in the School of Architecture at the University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV). Thirteen students built furniture, designed mosaics to adorn it, learned how to cut, install and grout—all in three months, in time to display at the Coverings Lounge. What did they make and what did they learn? Flip over to our Maker story to find out.

In our Technical story, we are treated to a personal tale by NTCA's former Training Director Mark Heinlein. He shares his experience creating an inlay for his sauna floor. Learn about what went well, what didn't and why in his story. Then check out our Ask the Experts article about ensuring success when installing handmade tile.

In our Gallery section, marvel at tile projects that span the spectrum, from an award-winning 100-year-old home

renovation, to a mosaic install at the historic Macy's in Chicago, to a mosaic tribute to veterans, to a playful kitchen backsplash, each putting a fresh spin on craftsmanship.

Trace NTCA Member and Ambassador Lucas Hendrickson's trajectory in the industry from a teen tile helper to the Owner of Northwest Artisan Tile Company in Auburn, Wash. An intensely creative craftsman, Hendrickson was put on a path to custom mosaic work by the Artisans Revolution in Tile (A.R.T.) training in 2023, which has added a new dimension to his tile contracting business. Meet him in our Member story.

In our News section, we bring you information on artisan events around the country—from Albuquerque to Pennsylvania to Nashville to Dallas—with A.R.T. training and alumni figuring prominently in several of these reports.

LATICRETE collaborated with robotic mosaic company Artaic to create a multi-story mosaic staircase mural in Boston designed by artist Carly Glovinski. This project graces our cover and demonstrates the power of creativity and collaboration.

NTCA President Rod Owen underscores the artisan status of every professional tile setter and emphasizes the importance of ongoing learning to enable them to both bring a client's vision to life and have it endure the test of time.

As you page through this issue, take pride in your status as a member of this time-honored legacy of creativity, artistry, and craftsmanship. Keep making the world a beautiful place!

God bless,

Lesley
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Rod Owen

ARTISAN Craftsmanship

THE ARTISAN MINDSET

This month's *TileLetter* theme is Artisan, and when many people hear that word, they immediately think of intricate mosaics, custom installations, and highly specialized craftsmanship. Those are certainly examples of artistry in our trade, and this edition celebrates that unique sector of our industry. But I believe the definition of artisan is much broader.

In my opinion, every professional tile setter is an artisan.

Whether you're installing a simple commercial restroom, a large-format tile floor, a residential shower, or a one-of-a-kind mosaic, you're taking an architect's, designer's, or owner's vision and bringing it to life. You're transforming drawings on paper into something tangible that people will see, touch, and experience for years to come. That requires skill, precision, creativity, and pride in workmanship.

An artisan isn't defined solely by the complexity of the design. An artisan is defined by their commitment to the craft.

The best tile setters I've known throughout my career shared a common trait: they never stopped learning. They knew what worked but remained open to better methods, new tools, different perspectives, and more efficient processes. They understood that mastery isn't a destination, it's a lifelong pursuit.

That's one of the reasons I continue encouraging company leaders to get involved and attend industry events. Yes, networking can help grow your business, but the real value often comes from the knowledge that gets shared. Learning from the successes and failures of others can accelerate both your personal and professional growth.

Along those lines, I encourage qualified contractors to learn more about NTCA's Five-Star Accredited Program. If you believe your organization operates among the top tier of contractors in our industry, consider exploring the

application process. The next NTCA Five-Star Accredited Summer Meeting will be held in July 2027 in Park City, Utah, providing another opportunity to learn from some of the industry's best. If you'd like to attend next year's meeting, now is a good time to begin the application process. For more information, scan the NTCA Five-Star Accredited Program QR code at right or contact Jeremy Sax at jeremy@tile-assn.com.



And while we're talking about industry involvement, don't forget to make plans to attend Tile Solutions Plus 2026 at the Loews Miami Beach Hotel November 1-3. In my opinion, TSP never disappoints.

On a personal note, by the time you're reading this, my wife and I will have become grandparents. Our oldest son and daughter-in-law are expecting a baby boy, due on August 8th. I'm excited to become "G-Paw," a title I selected for myself, but I'm also a little perplexed. My mind tells me I'm not old enough to have grandchildren, but the math says otherwise.

That realization serves as a reminder that time moves faster than we think. To those of you earlier in your careers, set goals, pursue them intentionally, and keep learning. Tomorrow arrives sooner than you realize.

Continue honing your craft, investing in your growth, and embracing the artisan mindset.

As always,
Educate for Excellence.

Rod Owen
NTCA President
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ARTISAN WOMEN

REFLECT CREATIVITY AND CONNECTION AMONG INDUSTRY SECTORS

By Lesley Goddin,
Editorial Director
and Senior Writer

TileLetter Editorial Director Lesley Goddin moderates the “Women Talking: Connecting History, Artistry & Industry” panel at Coverings 2026. Panelists include (L to R): Sheila Menzies, Katia McGuirk, Angie Ré, and Jan Hohn, representing different artisan sectors of the industry. Photo: Andru Eron

At this year’s Coverings show, four accomplished artisan women from across the tile industry came together for a panel exploring their individual specialties and the deep connections linking history, craftsmanship, artistry, and installation. I had the privilege of moderating the “Women Talking: Connecting History, Artistry & Industry” discussion, using the concept of Indra’s Net as a guiding metaphor. In this infinite web, each intersection of strands supports a jewel, which reflects all others. Within the tile industry every role, from preservation to production to installation, is interdependent, each contributing to a larger, unified whole.

The “jewels” sparkling on the panel included: Sheila Menzies, Co-Founder of the Tile Heritage Foundation; Katia McGuirk, Executive Director of TileWorks of Bucks County; Angie Ré, Founder of Unique Mosaics, LLC; and Jan Hohn, Owner of Hohn & Hohn, Inc. Together, their experiences illustrated how the industry thrives on collaboration, shared knowledge, and respect for both tradition and innovation.

Sheila Menzies

TILE HERITAGE FOUNDATION



Sheila Menzies, with Tile Heritage Foundation Co-Founder Joseph Taylor at TileFest in 2025 (top left photo), staffing the Tile Heritage booth with TileWorks’ Cassandra Emswiler Burd (L) and Katia McGuirk (R) at a past Coverings (top middle photo), and her many explorations of tile making and ceramic tile projects.



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Menzies opened the conversation by recounting the origins of Tile Heritage Foundation, which she co-founded in 1987 with Joseph Taylor. At that time, she explained, there was no coordinated effort to preserve the history of American tile. Recognizing this gap, they stepped in as “guardians” of the industry’s legacy. Over the decades, the Foundation has grown into a vital resource, safeguarding archives and fostering awareness of tile’s cultural and artistic significance.

Today, the organization is evolving to meet contemporary needs. Here are some of the changes instituted within the last year:

- Relocating the bulk of its archives to the Tile Council of North America (TCNA) campus in Clemson, S.C., which will improve access for researchers, professionals, and the A&D community
- A redesigned website with expanded digital reach

- Additional board members to better represent the diversity of the industry
- The hiring of industry veteran Karim Motawi as Executive Director of Development to spearhead growth

At Coverings, the Foundation launched the National Tile Installation Registry. This platform allows both historic and contemporary tile installations to be publicly documented, creating a living record of the craft.

“These changes are an invitation to engage in more partnerships,” Menzies said. “We would like more people—installers, artists, manufacturers—to see themselves as contributors and to value themselves within the industry. They can have a sense of validation that is mirrored back for them by opening files at the Foundation.”



Katia McGuirk

TILEWORKS OF BUCKS COUNTY



Katia McGuirk at TileWorks of Bucks County/Moravian Pottery, working with clay and making tile. She’s also a 2020 Artistic CID award winner as KatiaTiles, and a longtime Tile Heritage Foundation board member.

As Executive Director of TileWorks of Bucks County, McGuirk oversees a National Historic Landmark in Doylestown, Pa., that functions as both a working

factory and a museum. The facility continues traditions established by Henry Chapman Mercer, an archaeologist-turned-tilemaker who built the factory



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around 1911-12. Mercer's work, including extensive installations in the Pennsylvania State Capitol, reflected his belief in the dignity of labor and the value of handcrafted artistry at a time when industrialization threatened to overshadow it.

McGuirk noted that Mercer's concerns remain relevant today, particularly in the context of emerging technologies like artificial intelligence. "Different technology, same question: what do we lose when we forget how to make things?" she asked.

At TileWorks, the answer lies in maintaining a balance between preservation and progress, just as its mission bridges artistry and industry. Modern updates, such as gas-fired kilns, coexist with traditional glazes, molds, and handcrafted tile.

Education and community engagement are central to

this mission. TileWorks hosts events ranging from music festivals to hands-on workshops and holiday events, inviting the public to experience tilemaking firsthand.

TileFest, an annual event co-sponsored by the Tile Heritage Foundation (of which McGuirk is a board member) and held the third weekend of May, exemplifies this approach. It brings together tile makers, artists, collectors, designers, and the "tile curious," blending marketplace activity with storytelling and learning. For the past few years, artisan tile setters who have completed the Artisans Revolution in Tile (A.R.T.) training program have fabricated a mosaic with power tools at the fest, wowing visitors with what can be done with tile. At TileFest, people come for the tile and leave inspired and with a sense of belonging.



Angie Ré

UNIQUE MOSAICS, LLC



Angie Ré's creative contributions span a range of styles, from logos to complex murals. She shares her skills each year with a small class. Through her participation in the NTCA Technical Committee, she was instrumental in getting the "Pre-mounting Chapter" included in the NTCA Reference Manual.

Ré's journey highlights the transformation of artistry into a thriving business. Based in South Salt Lake, Utah, she creates award-winning custom mosaics from glass, stone, and ceramic. Her work spans styles from traditional Byzantine techniques to contemporary

geometric designs, tailored to clients' specific visions.

Ré began her career as a "starving artist," working at her kitchen table with basic tools while juggling multiple jobs. Over time, she developed her skills and built a reputation for high-quality, intricate work.

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Today, she collaborates with designers, homeowners, and architects, translating ideas into detailed mosaic compositions. Her process involves not only artistic interpretation but also technical decision-making, from material selection to tile flow and installation methods.

A key aspect of Ré's contribution to the industry is her involvement in education and standards. Frustrated early on by a lack of resources for fledgling mosaicists, she helped develop guidance for mosaicists through her work with the NTCA Technical Committee. In collaboration with other experts, she contributed to an *NTCA Reference Manual* chapter on pre-mounting techniques, which allows complex mosaics to be assembled off-site and installed more efficiently as a unit. Pre-mounting reduces errors, saves time,

and makes sophisticated designs more accessible for artisan tile setters and those working on traditional projects.

Adhering to industry standards is important to Ré. Whether creating or installing mosaics, she integrates best practices to ensure durability and quality. "I like to use proper national standards for tile installation when I am installing, whether I am building a pre-mounted mosaic or if I am installing it on-site," Ré said.

Each fall, Ré carves out a weekend to share her expertise with a small class in her studio, but this December 7-11, she will instead teach a mural-building class at a location hosted by Mike Manus in Belize.



Jan Hohn

HOHN & HOHN



Jan Hohn of award-winning Hohn & Hohn, Inc. is shown at the Artisans Revolution in Tile (A.R.T.) training in 2024 and with the 2024 NTCA Five-Star Project of the Year for Residential Artisan Achievement of Excellence Award for Collaboration in Tile, together with presenter Becky Serbin and tile maker/collaborator Josh Blanc of Clay Squared to Infinity (bottom third photo), whose handmade tiles are shown at the right.

Hohn brought the discussion full circle by emphasizing the critical role of installation. As an award-winning contractor with more than three decades of experience, she understands that even the most beautifully crafted tile depends on proper installation to achieve its full potential. Hohn & Hohn, Inc., based in St. Paul, Minn., has built its reputation largely through word of mouth, reflecting the trust it has earned within its community.

Hohn has achieved several milestones in a traditionally male-dominated field. She was the first female NTCA member to attain the Certified Tile Installer credential (#211) and the first woman to serve on the NTCA Technical Committee. She is an NTCA Five-Star Accredited Contractor, a designation that recognizes exceptional craftsmanship and adherence to rigorous standards and positions her as a resource for other professionals who seek guidance. She

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also serves as the Community Outreach Chair for NTCA's Women in Tile group.

Hohn appreciates the uniqueness of handmade tile but acknowledges its challenges. Variations in color, shape, and texture require careful planning and patience. To address this, she creates full mock-ups before installation, allowing her to balance color distribution and anticipate potential issues. While imperfections are inherent in handmade materials, she views them as part of their charm.

"When you put handmade tiles together on a backsplash, a hearth, a shower, a bathroom, you're creating art," she said. "It's a one-of-a-kind installation. There's never going to be another installation like it."

Hohn is currently developing a comprehensive guidebook on installing handmade tile, building on her previous handmade-tile tip sheet in the *NTCA Reference Manual*. Her goal is to provide practical insights that help installers navigate the complexities of working with artisanal materials while maintaining high standards of quality.



Sheila Menzies



Katia McGuirk



Angie Ré



Jan Hohn

During the panel's question-and-answer session, an audience member with a background in mechanical engineering expressed appreciation for the discussion's focus on creativity. She noted that technical fields often overlook artistic expression, and she found inspiration in the panelists' ability to integrate both. This observation underscored the central theme of the conversation: the tile industry thrives at the intersection of technical precision and creative vision. **TL**

Watch the full panel discussion here:



STRENGTHENING THE TRADES



Keith Carlson

Co-Founder



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JOSE SALGADO
Chicago, IL



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ONE to ONE



KARIM MOTAWI

Executive Director of Development,
Tile Heritage Foundation



Preserving the
Tile Heritage Foundation:

A
CONVERSATION
WITH EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR OF
DEVELOPMENT
KARIM MOTAWI



*In the One-to-One column, NTCA
Executive Director Bart Bettiga interviews
industry leaders about pertinent topics.*

Ceramic tile has graced the walls and floors of buildings for thousands of years, from ancient Persian palaces to contemporary American homes. Yet despite this rich legacy, the history of America's tile industry—and the craftspeople who shaped it—risks fading into obscurity. That's where the Tile Heritage Foundation comes in, and under the leadership of newly-appointed Executive Director of Development Karim Motawi, the organization is embarking on an ambitious mission to preserve, protect, and promote this vital heritage.

NTCA supports the mission and goals that Tile Heritage Foundation (THF) has established. Lesley Goddin, Editorial Director and Senior Writer of *TileLetter*, and I are both on the THF Board of Directors and have committed our time and energy to help strengthen the Foundation's messaging and strategy. We look forward to sharing more of this information as it develops.

This article captures Motawi's vision for where he hopes to lead the Foundation now and in the future.



The Tile Heritage Foundation was established in 1987 by Joe Taylor and Sheila Menzies, both pictured here.

A foundation built on passion

The Tile Heritage Foundation was established in 1987 by Joe Taylor and Sheila Menzies, visionaries who recognized the importance of documenting and preserving the history of American tile manufacturing. For nearly four decades, they have painstakingly assembled an extensive archive of decorative ceramic tiles, company catalogs, and documents from defunct tile companies—a treasure trove of industry knowledge that might otherwise have been lost to time.

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“Our mission is threefold,” Motawi explained. “We preserve the history of the tile industry, we protect significant tile installations, and we promote tile making, installing, and all facets of the American tile industry.” This comprehensive approach reflects a deep understanding that tile heritage is not merely about looking backward, but about using the past to energize the present and future.

Motawi’s appointment as Executive Director of Development—with plans to assume the full executive director role next year—marks a pivotal moment for the Foundation. A tile artist and entrepreneur himself, Motawi founded Motawi Tile Works with his sister in the early 1990s and spent 18 years building the business before moving on to other ventures in the tile industry.

His personal connection to the Foundation runs deep. Taylor and Menzies helped him secure his first showroom customer when he was just starting, and he participated in their tile symposiums, which fostered a vibrant

community of small tile makers. “It was an easy decision for me,” Motawi said of joining the Foundation. “It’s been such an important part of my early career that I had to join and continue the mission and help position it for the next 40 years.”

A new home, a digital future

One of Motawi’s first major initiatives has been relocating the Foundation’s archives from California to the headquarters of the Tile Council of North America (TCNA) near Clemson University in South Carolina. This move was essential to ensure the long-term preservation and accessibility of the collection, which includes invaluable historical documents and tile samples.

But preservation is only half the battle. The real innovation lies in digitization. Motawi is spearheading the creation of the National Tile Installation Registry, a groundbreaking web and mobile application that will bring tile history into the digital age.



The Tile Heritage Foundation’s collections are being relocated from Healdsburg, Calif., to a designated campus at the Tile Council of North America’s South Carolina campus near Clemson University.



Tile Heritage Foundation collections include 4,200 different individual tiles as well as thousands of books and catalogs, plus periodicals, select archives of historic manufacturers, tile artists, ceramists and contractors, and architectural renderings.

NTCA Total Health & Wellness Benefits Program

The National Tile Contractors Association (NTCA) provides exclusive, cost-saving programs designed to support the success and growth of tile professionals nationwide. Among the many valuable benefits available to NTCA members is the NTCA Total Health & Wellness Benefits Program. This comprehensive program is dedicated to promoting the well-being of our members and their teams. Discover how NTCA can enhance your business and help you thrive!

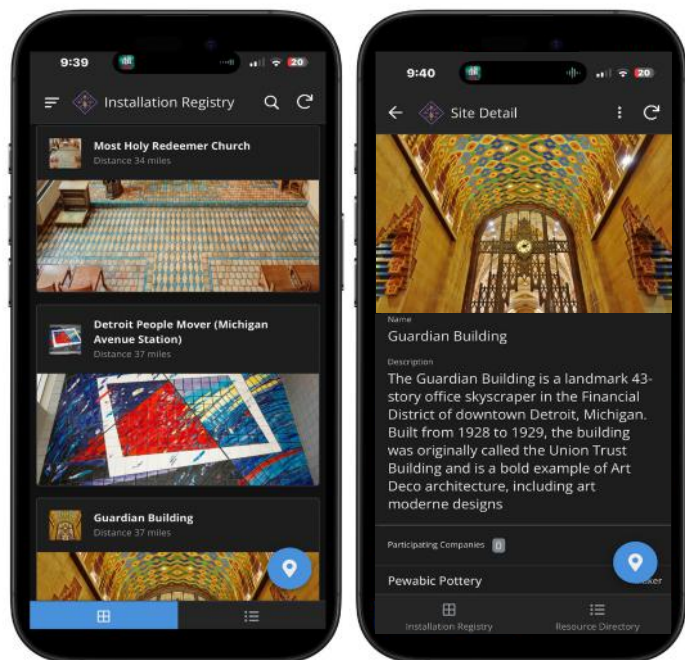
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Meridio

The National Tile Installation Registry: connecting past and present

The Registry is intended as far more than a simple database. It will be a location-aware tool that allows users to discover significant ceramic tile installations—both historic and contemporary—in their area. Currently in development, it will be accessible under the Programs tab on tileheritage.org, and a mobile app also is in the works. Once it's live, you'll see nearby tile sites with detailed information about the companies, architects, designers, and installers involved in each project.

"It's meant to really connect people," Motawi said. "You see what's possible, and that's what's exciting for me—sharing these wonderful historic sites so a client can say, 'That's beautiful. I want that or something like that.'"



These are examples of what you may find in the National Tile Installation Registry once it's live.

National Tile Installation Registry Provisional Criteria

Currently in development, the National Tile Installation Registry sites are locations featuring architectural tile or mosaics that embody artistic, cultural, or industrial significance. The site may be historic or contemporary, and international sites are eligible for inclusion. Permanent museum collections and displays of historic tile may also be included in the Registry.

Here's a look at what will be considered for inclusion in the Registry. To be eligible, a site must meet one or more of the following criteria, as determined by the National Tile Installation Registry Selection Committee. The committee will be composed of Tile Heritage Foundation staff, board members, and members of the ceramic tile and mosaic communities. Tile Heritage Foundation members at the \$250 level will be eligible to submit projects for consideration in the Registry.

Provisional Criteria

- Represents a masterful architectural installation of ceramic tile or mosaic art
- Demonstrates superior installation craftsmanship and design
- Is an exceptional example of a cultural tile-making tradition or mosaic technique
- Illustrates a dramatic or important advancement in artistic or industrial tile making or use
- Is a significant permanent museum tile collection



Stay tuned to tileheritage.org for more information about the Registry as it becomes available.

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■ ONE-TO-ONE

This inspiration-to-action pipeline is central to the registry's value proposition. When a homeowner, designer, or architect sees a stunning tile installation, they'll be able to immediately identify the professionals responsible and connect with them. For installers and tile companies, the Registry will be a powerful marketing tool—a permanent record of their best work in a prestigious, industry-sanctioned platform.

The Registry will also serve as a directory of active tile makers, installers, architects, and retailers. It will be location-aware, so a designer in Miami won't be overwhelmed with options from Seattle. Instead, they'll discover local talent capable of executing similar projects.

Building industry support

Of course, none of this is possible without funding. Motawi is candid about the challenge; the Foundation cannot rely solely on the handful of large U.S. tile manufacturers or small art-tile makers. Instead, it needs support from across the entire industry—contractors, distributors, retailers, and enthusiasts. But why should these businesses invest? The answer lies in demonstrating tangible value. Motawi shared a powerful example: a tile installer who was stationed overseas as a Marine saw a stunning tile installation in an Italian cathedral and was so inspired that he eventually made it his career. Fifteen years later, he's still installing tile.

"This proves to me that our goal of sharing this historic tile work can inspire people not only to use it, but also to join our trade," Motawi said.

Beyond the National Tile Installation Registry: a broader vision

While the Registry is the Foundation's flagship initiative, Motawi's vision extends far beyond a digital database. He's planning traveling exhibitions that would showcase the Foundation's tile collections in airports, hospitals, and museums. He's developing a tile identification tool to help people identify and source historic tiles. And he's reviving the tradition of tile symposiums—regional gatherings where installers, makers, architects, and designers come together to tour historic and contemporary sites, share knowledge, and build community.

The Foundation also plans to collaborate with the Ceramic Tile Education Foundation to strengthen training, certification, and industry awareness. This synergy could create specialized installation teams capable of handling artistic tile projects—work that commands premium prices and attracts passionate craftspeople.

A prime example of this model in action is TileFest in Doylestown, Pa. What began as a Tile Heritage



This year's TileFest in Doylestown, Pa., brought together a growing presence from all industry segments: tile makers, contractors and installers from six different states, studios, setting-material manufacturers, and associations, exponentially increasing the opportunities to connect, partner and strengthen the industry. Here's just a sampling of the assembled industry melange, at a massive dinner sponsored by Ron Nash and LATICRETE.

Foundation Symposium 25 years ago has evolved into a thriving annual event that draws tile professionals and enthusiasts from across the region.

Looking forward

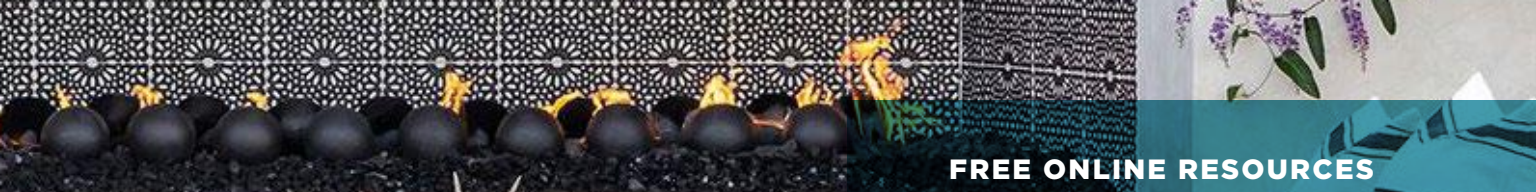
As Motawi takes the helm of the Tile Heritage Foundation, he carries with him both the legacy of Joe Taylor and Sheila Menzies and a clear-eyed vision for the future. His goal is to prove that supporting the Foundation isn't merely a charitable act—it's an investment in the industry's vitality.

"This is our industry and we need to support it," Motawi said. "Not just the historic part, but we need to support it today. Our goal is really the three pillars: preserve the history, protect the tile sites themselves, and promote the makers, installers and designers who are making it happen today."

With the National Tile Installation Registry as its centerpiece, the Tile Heritage Foundation is poised to transform how the industry understands, celebrates, and builds upon its rich past. In doing so, it's not just preserving history—it's actively shaping the future of American tile. **TL**

Scan for more information.





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LATICRETE partners with Glovinski and Artaic **FOR THREE-STORY MOSAIC MURAL AT BOSTON'S SEAPORT SQUARE**





To support Artaic's 12" x 12" tile sheets, crews applied a skim coat of LATAPOXY® 300 Adhesive to ensure a completely smooth surface, exceptional grab, and zero vertical slip.

Artist Carly Glovinski has always been inspired by the fleeting beauty of nature. So when financial services firm Fidelity commissioned her to create a massive, three-story mural for Boston's Seaport Square, Glovinski didn't just paint a design; she grew it.

The project began with flowers Glovinski grew herself, pressing them to preserve their true shape, and using that as the inspiration to create a series of paintings. Instead of attempting to physically preserve the fragile plants, she recreated them in watercolor-like layers of acrylic paint on translucent paper, capturing their color, softness, and fleeting quality.

From paint to tile

Transforming a public space into a large-scale work of art required a nimble approach that accounted for the installation's complexity and the precision required to execute it successfully.

Once the art itself was finalized, the paintings needed to be transformed into a format that could be applied to an outdoor installation designed to stand the test of time. To do so, Boston-based tile manufacturer Artaic digitally mapped and pixelated Glovinski's paintings, converting them into thousands of tiny sections, each assigned a specific color.

The vision became a reality when Artaic paired its digital tools and tile-making technology to create a mosaic with 37 glass colors depicting flowers such as pansies, daffodils, irises, cosmos, and dahlias across thousands of small tiles.

At the heart of the installation were construction materials hand-picked to support a comprehensive tile job—one that featured sloped surfaces and complex angles. The project team knew they needed high-performance materials, and found their solution in durable, high-strength adhesives and grouts that combine sag and stain resistance with excellent workability and long-term color consistency.

LATICRETE's technical expertise, support, and solutions would prove to be instrumental in enabling crews to meet aggressive timelines and bring a local artist's vision to life through an outdoor mural designed to serve the community for decades.



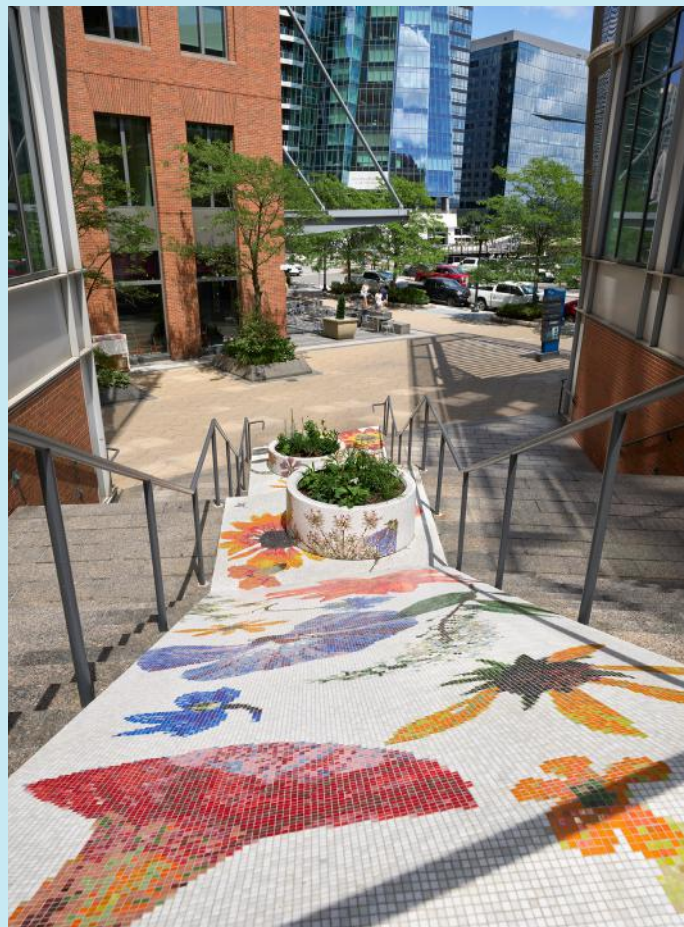
Inspired by the fleeting beauty of nature, artist Carly Glovinski pressed flowers she grew herself and captured them in delicate watercolor paintings. Her art was then transformed by Boston-based Artaic into thousands of vibrant glass tiles and set using high-performance LATICRETE installation solutions for the busy Boston Seaport.

Vitreous glass, complex angles, and coastal environment test the materials

Inspired by Glovinski's pressed flower paintings, the three-story mosaic needed to preserve the softness, movement, and layered detail of her original artwork while adapting it to a highly complex architectural environment. But there were challenges.

Vitreous glass mosaic: The weight and density of Artaic's 1/2" vitreous glass mosaic sheets created major installation challenges across the mural's vertical and sloped surfaces. To prevent the intricate floral imagery and carefully-mapped grid from slipping, sagging, or shifting out of alignment before the adhesive could set, the installation demanded a specialized bonding solution.

Sloped surfaces and complex angles: Glovinski envisioned the design wrapping vertically over the top surface of the



Boston-based mosaic design and fabrication studio Artaic digitally translated Glovinski's pressed flower paintings into a cascading mosaic design, brought to life with a LATICRETE installation system engineered for precision setting, adhesion, and lasting performance.



SPECTRALOCK® PRO Premium Grout from LATICRETE was specified to help preserve the Opelske mosaic's visual integrity by delivering long-term color consistency and stain resistance across the intricate glass tile design.

stairs, which included level and sloped planes. Bringing this concept to life required on-site ingenuity and hand-built sections, supported by LATICRETE installation solutions that provided great workability along with the bond strength needed for the mosaic. The project's uneven surfaces and angles required Artaic's engineering team to carefully design and fabricate each section for a precise fit. Working across shifting elevations, tight transitions, and non-uniform substrates added complexity, as each panel needed to be digitally mapped and adjusted in real time to maintain alignment and continuity throughout the installation.

Climate and seaside location: The Boston Seaport location exposes the mural to constant exposure from salt air, wind, moisture, and year-round coastal weather. These conditions can accelerate deterioration and test the long-term bond strength of tile installations. To withstand the waterfront environment, the installation required tile grouts



Designed for heavy-duty exterior exposure, LATASIL™ provided the high-performance flexibility needed to handle expansion and contraction along changing elevations.

and adhesives engineered for superior durability, chemical resistance, and long-term adhesion. In addition, the project was completed from May through July, while peak summer heat added strain to installation and field conditions.

LATICRETE system meets all challenges

Artaic's 1/2" vitreous glass was chosen for the intricate design due to its vibrant color, brilliance, and durability. Despite the mural's scale and complexity, the tile installation had to be executed on an aggressive less-than-two-week timeline. To meet this demand, LATICRETE provided comprehensive technical support and recommended a high-performance epoxy system, a specialized bonding solution engineered for challenging substrates.

The installation began with crews grinding down the existing granite slab surface to correct imperfections and create a roughened profile for optimal bonding. Crews then



The team specified high-performance LATICRETE installation systems—advanced epoxy grouts and polymer-modified adhesives—designed specifically to combat coastal conditions.

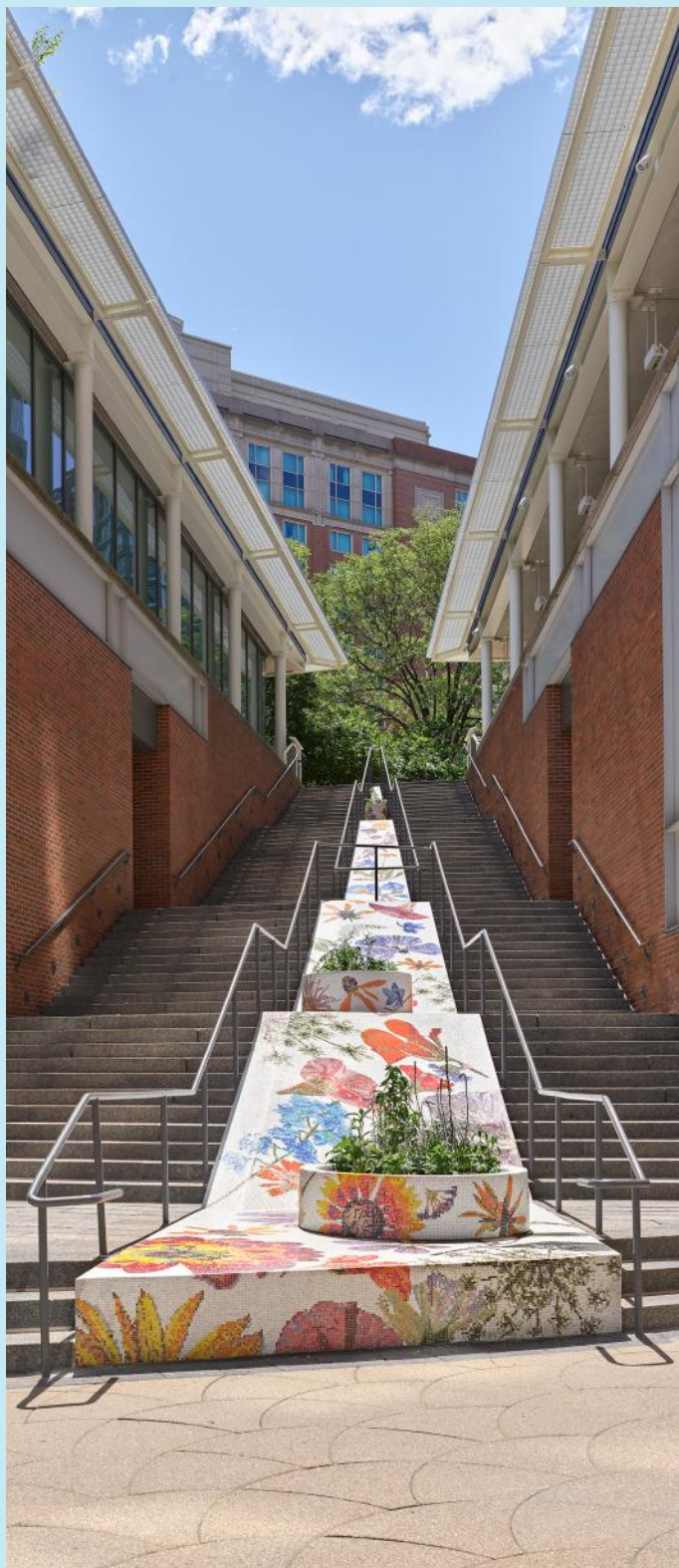
applied a skim coat of LATAPOXY® 300 Adhesive to smooth out the prepared substrate. Because Artaic's 12" x 12" tile sheets feature 1/2" vitreous glass squares, the installation required an adhesive with exceptional grab, zero vertical slip, and a rapid cure time.

To avoid any chance of efflorescence negatively affecting the floral design, the installation team was advised to use SPECTRALOCK® PRO Premium Grout for the mosaic tile joints and LATASIL™ 100% silicone sealant for the perimeter joints. Traditional cement-based grouts are highly susceptible to efflorescence—unsightly, powdery salt deposits that migrate to the surface. This LATICRETE-

recommended combination eliminated that risk while delivering the high bond strength and durability required.

Even with its high performance and chemical resistance, the adhesive is watercleanable, making it a more approachable, installer-friendly solution that simplifies application and cleanup, particularly important for detailed mosaic work.

"Low temperatures and strong winds off of the Boston Harbor sped up material behavior and shortened installation windows," said Peter McKeon of LATICRETE. "That made fast, consistent, and predictable curing essential to keeping installation efficient without compromising quality, reliability, or long-term durability."



In Boston's Seaport Square, Glovinski, Artaic, and LATICRETE have transformed the Westport Stairs into a vibrant garden passage that connects Westport Park to the harbor.

LATAPOXY® 300 Adhesive conforms to ANSI A118.3 and ISO 13007 with an R2 classification, possesses a Health Product Declaration (HPD), and is UL GREENGUARD certified for low VOC emissions.

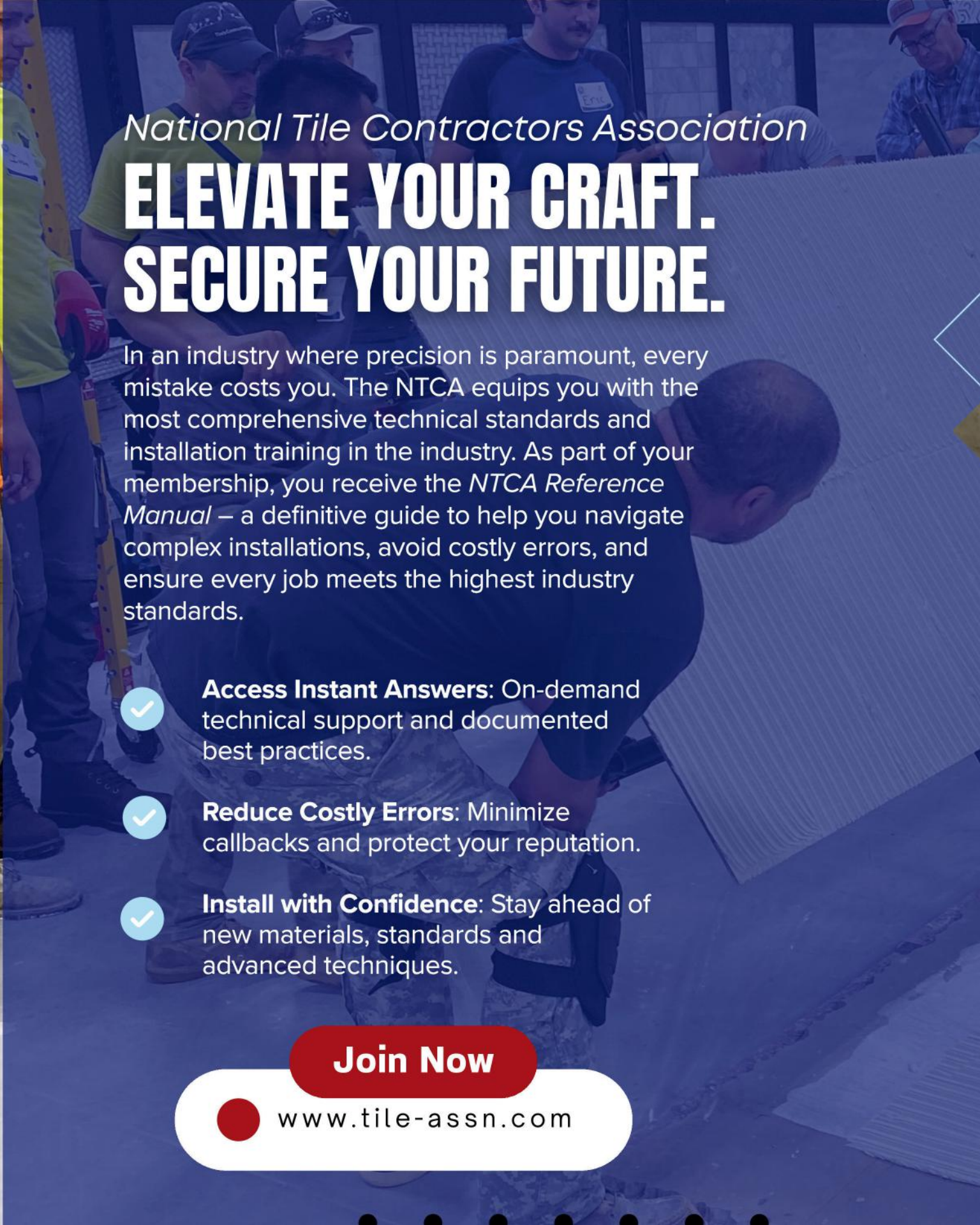
The project team also specified SPECTRALOCK® PRO Premium Grout to help preserve the Opelske mosaic's visual integrity by delivering long-term color consistency and stain resistance across the intricate glass tiles. In the outdoor, moisture-prone seaport environment, its epoxy formulation resists cracking, shrinking, discoloration, and its antimicrobial properties help inhibit the growth of stain-causing mold and mildew, keeping joints clean and colors vibrant. Its durability helps to ensure the delicate floral imagery and nuanced palette of the mosaic remain sharp and cohesive, supporting the artistic intent of Glovinski's pressed flower design while reducing long-term maintenance needs for the mural. The grout also supported a more sustainable installation, also backed by an HPD and UL GREENGUARD certification.

"I've been working with LATICRETE products for more than 25 years, particularly for my outdoor projects," said Branco Perego, CEO of Nationwide Tile, the Lowell, Mass.-based installation company. "Thanks to the expertise and guidance of the LATICRETE team, we selected a complete epoxy system for a durable, visually striking work of art engineered to last for years."

"Loving up" Seaport Square

In Boston's Seaport Square, Glovinski, Artaic, and LATICRETE have transformed the Westport Stairs into a vibrant garden passage that connects Westport Park to the harbor. Once a simple transition space, it now blooms with native plants like violets and columbines in circular tiled planters, layered with the floral-rich Artaic mosaic, engineered and installed to withstand the demands of a busy waterfront environment. The result softens the waterfront hardscape and brings a burst of seasonal color into a fast-moving urban district.

Officially unveiled in August 2025, Glovinski's mural is dubbed "Opelske." On Glovinski's website, she explains this Norwegian word means "to love up...and cherish something into health and vigor," borrowed from Celia Thaxter's *An Island Garden*. The Opelske mural demonstrates how technical expertise, advanced installation systems, and skilled craftsmanship can successfully transform a delicate artistic concept into a permanent large-scale public work of art. **TL**



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Hendrickson, with (l. to r.) wife Melanie, who also contributes to Northwest Artisan Tile Company projects, and daughters Joyce and Lily.

By Lesley Goddin, Editorial Director and Senior Writer

"I've come to see this trade as more than just installation. It's a responsibility to do things the right way and to leave something behind that lasts."

– LUCAS HENDRICKSON, NORTHWEST ARTISAN TILE COMPANY

first met Lucas Hendrickson in 2023 at the inaugural Artisans Revolution in Tile (A.R.T.) training in Milwaukee. A preternaturally creative person who built a foundation of hands-on experience in his teens working with his uncle, Hendrickson took a detour as a sushi chef for 10 years.

He returned to the trade with Sticks and Stone Tile and Flooring in Auburn, Wash., near Seattle, expanding into large-scale commercial work before transitioning into full-service residential remodeling. Rebranded several years ago as Northwest Artisan Tile Company (www.nwatco.com), his company is imbued with skills and inspiration from the A.R.T. training. His vision, drive, artistry, and dedication to the craft were evident in that first class, and continue to inform his work.

Hendrickson's standards-based company employs "a combination of technical discipline and genuine ownership of every project," he said. "I hold myself to a higher standard than most clients expect, both in execution and in jobsite conditions."

Currently, 70% of projects are residential, with a focus on high-end remodels, custom bathrooms, and full-service renovations, and 30% of projects are commercial tile

work. These encompass new construction, restaurants, public/commercial projects, and installations at locations such as Pike Place Market and Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, along with forensic tile inspections.

The company prioritizes cleanliness and protection of the home, often using full containment systems with air scrubbers and negative airflow to control dust. "We follow ANSI standards, TCNA guidelines, and manufacturer recommendations closely, and we don't cut corners or bury problems," he said.

He's passionate about his work—and he's clear on his priorities: he's a husband and father first. He works with his wife Melanie on custom mosaic projects, building this part of the business together and modeling collaborative craftsmanship and hard work for their daughters, Joy and Lily. Their custom mosaic work spans large-scale installations, medallions, and artistic features integrated into functional spaces.

Hendrickson is driven by a strong sense of responsibility and integrity: "doing the work correctly whether anyone is watching or not," he explained. "That mindset, combined with a willingness to revisit details until they are right, is what consistently sets our work apart," he noted. "I also



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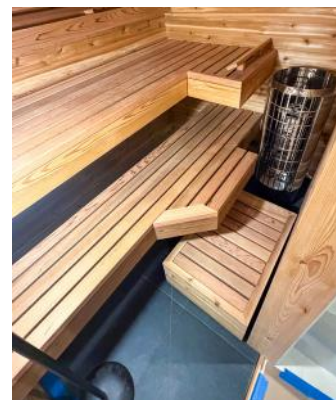
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MAPEI's extensive Profiles and Trims collection offers over 4,500 high-quality, durable pieces designed to enhance any project. With a wide variety of styles, shapes, and sizes — from classic to contemporary — this line empowers architects, designers, and builders to achieve tailored, cohesive designs. Each profile and trim features color-complementary options that seamlessly integrate with diverse palettes, ensuring perfect harmony, whether you're creating subtle accents or bold statements.

Beyond aesthetics, the collection delivers unmatched versatility. From finishing edges and creating smooth transitions to framing doorways and adding visual interest to walls, MAPEI's Profiles and Trims are ideal for residential, commercial, and industrial applications. This comprehensive lineup supports endless creative possibilities, helping projects achieve a polished, professional look with ease. For more information, scan.



This custom bathroom remodel in Issaquah, Wash., features extensive custom tile work, heated flooring, a heated shower pan and bench, a clawfoot tub, floating toilet, and handmade vanity. Despite a complex layout with 598 individually cut shower-pan tiles, precise craftsmanship and close collaboration between Hendrickson, the homeowner and his father created a cohesive, high-performance space.

take pride in the fact that many of our clients become long-term relationships, not just one-time projects."

NTCA: education, connection, opportunities

Hendrickson joined NTCA in 2022, and currently serves as a Washington State NTCA Ambassador, helping promote standards and education within the trade. "When I attended my first NTCA workshop, I saw that they were the authority representing the standards I wanted to align with," he said.

NTCA membership introduced Hendrickson to manufacturers, top-level installers, and advanced training, providing a path to refine his work and develop a greater understanding of tile systems as a whole. "It's been one of the most important decisions I've made in my career," he said.

Along with technical knowledge, NTCA has opened doors to relationships, opportunities and connections with highly skilled installers that enhance not only his business but his family's quality of life.

"There's a clear connection between joining the NTCA and the growth I've experienced," he said. "It's also a rare environment where people genuinely help each other

WHAT THEY SAY...



Struzik joined NTCA, valuing the education it offers as well as workshops, online resources, and networking with other members. "And of course the vouchers are always a bonus!" he says. Membership helps him stay up to date on education, new product features, "and who's the best and brightest in the industry, pushing boundaries with what's feasible with tile," he said.

*Nick Struzik, Owner,
Sovereign Tile & Stone
Magnolia, Texas*

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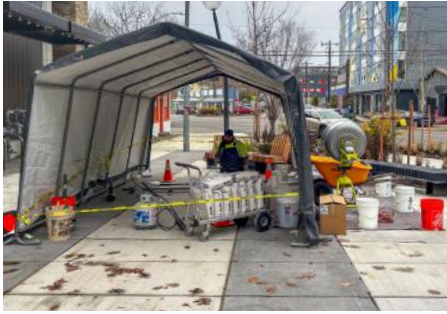
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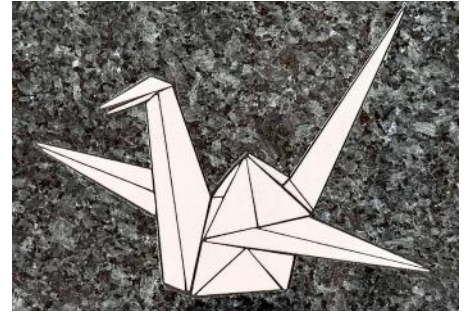
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Installation of five large exterior mosaic murals based on artwork from a local artist at Grand Street Commons in Seattle required battling weather exposure, cold temperatures, water intrusion, and jobsite instability. Hendrickson built temporary enclosures, used heaters and moisture control methods, and adapted installation techniques to maintain progress and complete the project under difficult conditions



Hendrickson crafted this mosaic origami crane as a wedding gift for his brother-in-law.



Two custom hand-cut mosaic installations for the same client included a medallion at Pike Place Market and a larger installation at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. Both required precise templating and fabrication for pre-built spaces. Careful pre-planning, placeholders, and controlled fabrication ensured accurate installation, durability, and uninterrupted construction. The Pike Place piece is especially meaningful to Hendrickson because his children helped create it, and it will be preserved by the Historical Society.



This bird niche was designed, fabricated, and installed for an off-grid cabin in North Bend, Wash.

improve instead of competing against each other, and that's been a big part of why I value it."

His next step is to become a Certified Tile Installer. Having completed the CTI written portion, he's eyeing an opportunity to take the hands-on exam soon.

The A.R.T. difference

The A.R.T. training program is centered around helping experienced installers incorporate custom, artisan-level work into their business, blending design, craftsmanship, and real-world installation. It changed how Hendrickson viewed tile, especially the artistic side of the trade, and it helped him expand his capabilities and vision.

Learning to take an idea and translate it into something tangible through templating, material selection, cutting techniques, and installation methods that meet industry standards helped bridge the gap between technical installation and true craftsmanship for Hendrickson. "It gave me the confidence to pursue more custom and artistic projects, and integrate that level of detail into everyday installations," he said.

Challenges and joys

Managing communication, leads, and project flow while still being actively in the field is a challenge for Hendrickson, since he isn't currently using a formal CRM system. His goal is to build better systems and structures for greater consistency. This is key since 2026 brings continued demand for high-end residential work and custom installations, "especially as more clients begin to value long-term performance and craftsmanship over shortcuts," he said.

Hendrickson enjoys the variety each project brings: new customers, new environments, and new challenges, which keep the work engaging and constantly evolving.

"There's also something timeless about working with stone and tile," he said. "It's one of the oldest forms of craftsmanship and art, and there's a purity to it that I deeply respect. It's a trade where you can continue to grow no matter how long you've been doing it.

"At the end of the day, it's honest, physical work that lets you step back and see what you've built, and that's something I take a lot of pride in." **TL**

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KEEPING IT REAL: TACKLING A MOSAIC INSET PROJECT

By Mark Heinlein,
Contributor



In my years as NTCA's Training Department Director, Trainer and CTEF CTI Evaluator, I often said, "There ain't nothin' easy or simple about tile." Now I also say, "Tile insets are no joke." In this article, I am sharing my recent experience creating a mosaic inset.

Camp Driftwood

Camp Driftwood is my family's property on the shore of Lake Superior in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

We enjoy the Finnish sauna tradition and recently constructed one at our camp.

Like most saunas, ours consists of a hot room designed to manage intense steam vapor and lots of water usage. The wet area has a tiled floor and a properly waterproofed and sloped drain system designed to survive heavy usage in a demanding environment.

The adjoining dry area is a changing room with an electrically-heated tiled floor. It features 18" x 18" x 9/16"-thick builder-grade travertine for the field and a handmade mosaic inset cut from 3" x 3" x 3/16"-thick porcelain tiles. Considerations for installing this floor included:

- Disparity between mosaic and field tile thickness
- Pre-mounting the mosaic
- Support for small mosaic and small stone pieces over a heated floor in an uncoupling membrane
- Substrate deflection and flatness
- Extreme seasonal and operational temperature variations in the subfloor and tile layers
- Final installation flatness and appearance

In the shop

The project started in the shop, where I magnified a detailed digital image of Lake Superior to the desired dimensions of approximately 32" x 60", then projected and traced the image onto heavy paper.

I cut the traced image using sharp X-Acto knives, preserving as much detail as possible. I selected and laid

out the field tiles from which the inset was cut, which would serve as the shoreline of the design. I positioned the lake part of the template on the field tiles for best layout and traced the perimeter with permanent marker.



Field tile selection and markup.



Field tile, fully cut.

I used a Diamond Laser 7000 wet band saw to cut the travertine that formed the shoreline joint. I tuned the cuts using a variety of bit sizes mounted to my Inland grinders, and used sandpaper and files in the acute corners. I laid out the 3" x 3" porcelain mosaic tiles, then dry fit the field tile on top, adjusting for layout and marking the lake perimeter.

My wet band saw is too large for small mosaics, so I used my Inland DB100 wet band saw normally designed for glass. Taking my time, it worked well for the relatively thin 3/16" porcelain tile. I spiffed up the cuts using a variety of glass grinder bits, sandpaper and files, then removed any remaining mesh backing. When ready, I dry-fitted the mosaic lake inside the shoreline field.

Everything was going to plan, but things went downhill fast.

Before starting this project, I re-read the pre-mounting section in the *NTCA Reference Manual* to decide which method to use. I chose face taping and pre-mounting to backerboard. Then I spoke with my mosaic mentors, Angie Ré, Lee Callewaert and Joshua Nordstrom, to learn what face tape they used, and ordered a roll of 12"-wide tape from EMI Specialty Papers and Tapes.

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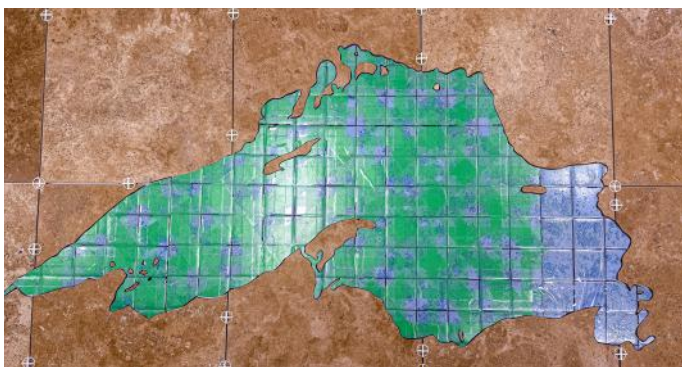
Mosaic layout and markup.

Face taping gone wrong

I made a big mistake by trying to apply the tape across the entire mosaic—by myself. It did not go well. I ended up with crooked, bunched-up tiles and a giant mess to recover from. It was a nightmare.

I was frustrated, so I walked away for a couple of days, then came back to unstick the tiles without breaking them. I removed the tape and relocated and realigned every mosaic piece. This time, I face taped using strips of Alpha G-Tape, then cut the mosaic into eight manageable sections that I dry-fitted into the lakeshore field.

After many hours, it all fit together again. I then laid the mosaic on top of 1/8" wedi board to pre-mount the mosaic, make up for tile height differences, and support small tiles over an uncoupling membrane. I traced the perimeter and cut the board using a jigsaw and thin-kerf, fine-toothed blades.



Mosaic and field dry-fit together in the shop.

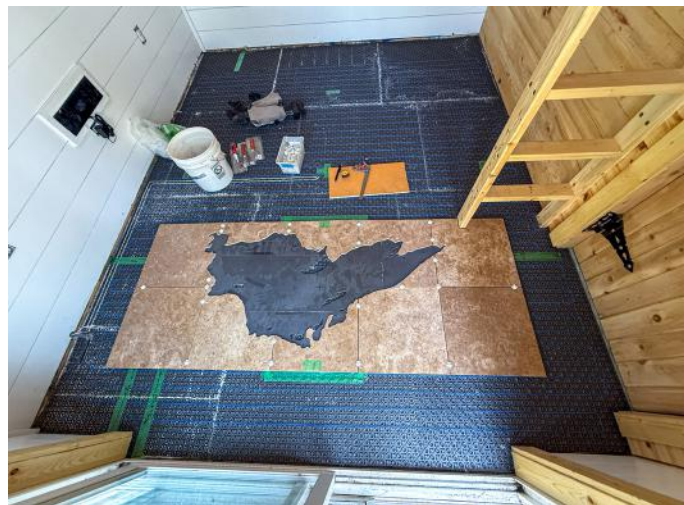
Finally, I numbered and packaged the mosaic sections and individual field tiles for transport to the project site.

On-site

I constructed the substructure and substrate to conform to TCNA F-250 (Stone), using oriented strand

board (OSB) rather than exterior glue plywood (EGP) as the substrate layer. Design deflection was greater than or at least $L/720$. The substrate was made flat by sanding high spots and patching low spots to less than 1/16" in 24" and 1/16" in 10'.

I installed Suntouch Heat Matrix uncoupling membrane, cable and probes, then set the travertine field, beginning with the pre-cut shoreline tiles, and allowed it to cure.



The dry-fitted field tile.

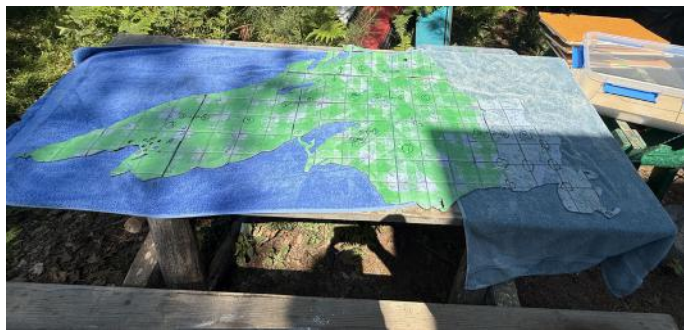
Don't rush the process!

My next planned step was to pre-mount the mosaic sections to the 1/8" backer board and allow them to cure. I was running short on time and was concerned about a high relief of the mosaic against the field, so I decided to stray from the plan and tossed aside all of the best expert advice published in the *NTCA Reference Manual*. Instead, I chose to set the 1/8" backer into the field, then set the mosaic sections on it. You think I would have known better.

Gauge troweling bond coat to set the 1/8" board went fine.



Field tile installed along with wedi backer and mosaic section dry-fit to check height.



Mosaic sections laid out for setting

Then, I screeded the bond coat for the face-taped sections of mosaics. I had a very difficult time gauging a consistent layer of bond coat onto the substrate bound by the intricate shoreline and ensuring 100% coverage for the small pieces. When I thought the bond coat was good, I set the mosaic sections, pressing and tapping them with a float and beat-in block while checking for flatness.

But there was lippage, crooked joints, and mortar oozing out everywhere. It was a total mess. I cut through much of the face tape to make adjustments and allowed it to cure overnight.



Mosaic installed. Note bond coat oozing through joints under face tape



Mosaic cleaned and grouted. Note crooked joints and alignment

Next morning, I set to work pulling tape and cleaning mortar from grout joints. It took hours. I was disillusioned. Fortunately, I was my own client, but I am also my own worst critic. I was paying the price for rushing the process when I knew better.

Ultimately, the installation cleaned up well. I grouted the mosaic with Bostik's aquamarine blue urethane. I used an enhancing sealer on the stone and grouted the field to match the stone color.

Eventually, I completed all the other detail work in the room, and have learned not to stare at my mistakes in the mosaic.



The finished floor.

Lessons re-learned:

Next time I do an installation like this, I will:

- Stick to my plan
- Allow more time
- Don't get caught in a rush when doing fine detail work
- Follow the NTCA Reference Manual pre-mounting guidelines
- Order and apply an adhesive template to the surface of the mosaic tile
- Arrange for an assistant:
 - » During the application of adhesive template or sheet film on the mosaic
 - » For the final installation of the mosaic inset into the field

Tile is complex and can be very stressful. I am constantly challenging myself and learning—and I sure ain't perfect. Tiling for me is like taking the CTEF Certified Tile Installer (CTI) exam over and over again. I sometimes drive myself crazy with all the challenges I create for myself, but it's always worth the effort.

Knowledge, skill, ability, and experience are crucial factors determining the quality of performance. These are gained by putting yourself out there and trying. I encourage you to challenge yourself to a mosaic inset. If it doesn't come out perfectly, learn from the experience, then try again. I am glad I did it; you will be, too. **TL**

ASK THE EXPERTS

Ask the Experts Q&As are culled from member inquiries to NTCA's Technical Team. To become a member and make use of personal, targeted answers from NTCA's Technical Team to your installation questions, contact Jim Olson at jim@tile-assn.com.



MANUFACTURER RECOMMENDATIONS AND MOCKUPS ARE KEY TO SUCCESSFUL HANDMADE TILE INSTALLATION



QUESTION

I've been working with a new designer lately, which has its pros and cons, but I am excited to be installing some more colorful tiles in the near future.

On my upcoming project, I will be installing a handcrafted ceramic tile that has significant size variation, warpage, and inconsistent edges. How do I determine acceptable installation tolerances and manage owner expectations?

ANSWER

Thanks for reaching out. This sounds like a fun project to be involved with.

Handcrafted tile presents a unique challenge because many of the characteristics that make the product desirable—variation in size, thickness, color, texture, edge profile, and surface appearance—are often outside the tolerances established for manufactured tile products.

It is important to understand that true handcrafted tile typically does not meet the requirements of ANSI A137.1, the American National Standard Specifications for Ceramic Tile. Since the installation methods contained in the *TCNA Handbook* are developed around tile products that comply with ANSI A137.1,

Substrates for handmade tiles should still meet applicable industry requirements for flatness, structural suitability, and preparation. Proper mortar coverage, movement accommodation, and installation practices remain critical to the long-term performance of the installation.



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installers may find that some of the assumptions regarding tile sizing, warpage, and dimensional consistency do not apply when working with handcrafted materials.

For this reason, installers should rely heavily on the tile manufacturer's installation instructions and recommendations. Before installation begins, carefully review all available product literature and determine whether the manufacturer has specific requirements regarding grout joint width, layout, lippage expectations, mortar selection, or installation techniques.

In addition, consultation with the setting material and grout manufacturers is strongly recommended. Because handcrafted tile products can vary significantly from conventional tile, the mortar, grout, and installation methods should be reviewed to ensure compatibility with the specific product being installed.

One of the most valuable tools when working with handcrafted tile is a mockup. A representative sample allows the owner, designer, architect, and installer to evaluate the anticipated appearance of the finished

work, including grout joint variation, tile alignment, edge irregularities, and overall aesthetics. Obtaining approval of the mockup before installation can help establish realistic expectations and reduce the potential for disputes after the project is complete.

While handcrafted tile may fall outside the dimensional tolerances of ANSI A137.1, the performance requirements of the tile assembly do not change. Substrates should still meet applicable industry requirements for flatness, structural suitability, and preparation. Proper mortar coverage, movement accommodation, and installation practices remain critical to the long-term performance of the installation.

Ultimately, success with handcrafted tile is achieved through communication, planning, and documentation. By understanding the unique product characteristics, consulting with material manufacturers, and obtaining approval of representative mockups, installers can help ensure that the finished installation reflects the artistic intent of the tile while meeting the performance expectations. **TL**



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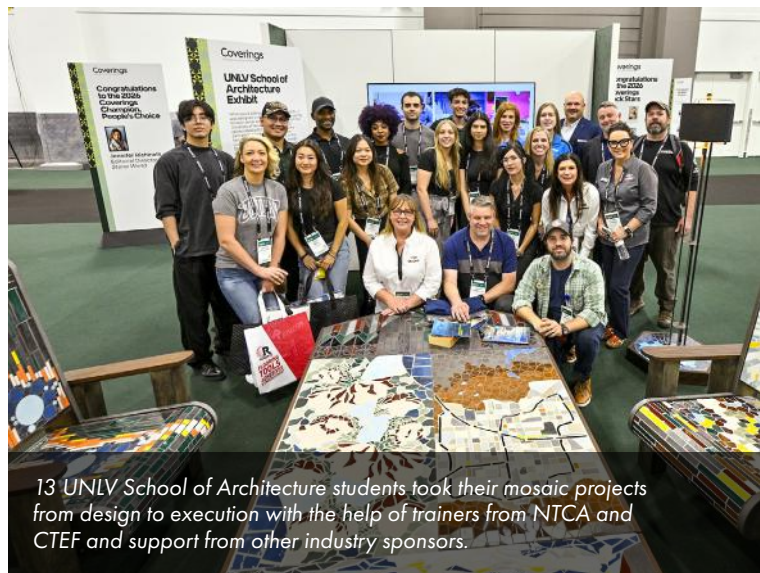
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Making TILE- INFORMED architects: **UNLV PROJECT AT COVERINGS**

By Lesley Goddin, Editorial Director and Senior Writer



13 UNLV School of Architecture students took their mosaic projects from design to execution with the help of trainers from NTCA and CTEF and support from other industry sponsors.

Usually this story features a tile maker in our industry, often focusing on studios and factories of handmade tile. This time around, we take a detour to the “making” of a new generation of professionals who will have a big impact on the specification of tile: architecture students.

For the second time since 2022, the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) School of Architecture (SoA) partnered with NTCA to produce mosaic structures to display at the Coverings Tile & Stone Expo. Thirteen students worked in teams to bring their creative visions to life at Coverings 2026, which was held in Vegas in early spring. The goal was to not only inspire creativity, but to imbue these students with real-world experience in realistic project design, fabrication, and installation that would serve as a springboard of knowledge when they graduated later in the year and embarked on their professional paths.

The training team

NTCA Training Team Director Matt Welner, together with NTCA Five-Star Contractor Jeff Occhipinti of Columbia River Tile and Stone/Evolution Mosaics and Executive Director Brad Denny of the Ceramic Tile Education Foundation (CTEF), worked with SoA Associate Professor Joshua Vermillion and Craft Studio Principal Paul Morrison to help train SoA students to design tables, lamps, and chairs.

Starting in January, Occhipinti worked with program instructors to introduce them and instruct them in using mosaic tools like snap cutters and nippers as well as the ring and wet saws. Welner adapted one of NTCA’s workshops called Tile Matters for the students to teach them about standards and the idiosyncrasies and intricacies of working with tile. Jamie Rich, Managing Director of Coverings, also addressed the students, explaining the project’s integration into the innovation and inspiration of the upcoming show. The group then took a field trip to nearby Arizona Tile to select materials for their designs, which Arizona Tile donated to the project.



Jeff Occhipinti (r.) guides student Sara Wang in the use of the ring saw, as SoA Craft Studio Principal Paul Morrison looks on.

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Ateeb Abidi works intently with the QEP cutter.

Occhipinti consulted with the students about the complexity of their designs before execution on furniture built by SoA's Morrison. The students had a chance to get their hands on ring saws and wet saws, as well as nippers and score-and-snap cutters. Sponsors, like Leslie Del Pozo from QEP and MAPEI's Mike DeMello, also stopped by to offer support and wisdom during the process.



Ryleigh Nance shapes tile for her design using QEP nippers.

UNLV student reception at Coverings

During the show, the structures were displayed in the Coverings Lounge, and a reception brought together students, instructors, support staff, and showgoers to learn about each team's vision and process. Here's what some of the teams had to say about their experience designing, fabricating, and installing the mosaics:



Ryleigh Nance and Amaya Seria crafted a neogothic window pattern.



Diane Flores and Brooklynne Jacobellis created a chair mosaic with a celestial theme and a colorful seat.



Sebastian Rubi Avila (pictured) and Ateeb Abidi incorporated circles and straight-cut terrazzo elements in their chair.

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The city of Las Vegas inspired Sara Wang and Amanda Montgomery to create a map mosaic, with UNLV prominently featured.



Miguel Castillo and Nerys Lee with their "flower in the river" mosaic.

- **Ryleigh Nance and Amaya Seria** created a neogothic window mosaic, bringing a historical perspective into their contemporary design. They both enjoyed cutting, shaping, and working with the machinery (not so much getting drenched at the wet and ring saws). Seria noted that three pieces were lost and had to be recut. Nance said the experience gave her "a lot more perspective on the labor," and Seria said it expanded her appreciation for materials beyond wood and concrete.
- Inspired by the theme of "Dark Academia," **Diane Flores and Brooklynne Jacobellis** took a celestial-body approach to their chair design, intertwining the sun and its rays with an abstracted landscape. Flores—who reveled in cutting the tile, waterspray, shards and all—said she learned how important it was to be sure each piece was in the right place before setting it with mortar. Jacobellis said the sheer amount of time needed to cut more than 800 pieces was a challenge, but she was thrilled to see the design on paper come to life in tile. Flores said Occhipinti, NTCA and trainers were supportive with instructions and feedback, "but let our creative vision drive the design."
- **Sebastian Rubi Avila** partnered with **Ateeb Abidi** to craft their circle-centric chair, incorporating simple geometric shapes into a complex design. Circles were

cut on a wet saw, starting with squares and slowly turning the pieces to achieve a circular shape. The design used over 700 pieces, and Rubi also enjoyed using hand tools to create the "terrazzo" part of the pattern.

- **Sara Wang and Amanda Montgomery** devised a map of Las Vegas, cut almost exclusively on a wet saw once the ring saw they were using broke. UNLV was central on the map, which also included Harry Reid Airport, Red Rock, the Strip, downtown, off-strip casinos, and both Lake Las Vegas and Lake Mead. Both students enjoyed cutting the pieces, watching the design come together, and experimenting with materiality.
- **Miguel Castillo and Nerys Lee** designed a "flower in the river" pattern that Castillo explained had a unique, organic look that evoked a mosaic and was abstract but still recognizable. The curves and irregular shapes were challenging to cut, especially the tiny pieces, as was sanding and polishing the tight corners. Lee appreciated the guidance with cutting and setting materials and the support from all the different sponsors.
- **Jason Michaelian and Aniello Riccio** created a Red Rock Canyon mosaic, inspired by Riccio's faith. It combines resurrection imagery with elements of the



A photo of nearby Red Rock Canyon inspired the mosaic design of Jason Michaelian and Aniello Riccio.



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Herb Gafney created both the sun- and moon-burst lamp base patterns.



Las Vegas landscape. The design had to be adapted due to supply challenges and to fit into the overall table composition with three other teams. “The full experience from design to execution taught me the necessity of communication and flexibility to meet deadlines in a collaborative space, while providing a glimpse into the required skills and complexities of working with tile,” Riccio said. He expressed profound thanks for the “patience and persistence of those that took the time to educate and help our class get to the finish line for the 2026 Coverings Convention.”

- **Herb Gafney**, a team of one, crafted two mosaic lamp bases.

Students unanimously said the hands-on experience gave them a more realistic view of what types of designs would be possible to create, how setting materials interact with the environment, and how to actually work with tile. In fact, Sara Wang took it a step further—she took tile home, got a wet saw and is making mosaic coasters!

Associate Professor Joshua Vermillion said he found the entire process rewarding, as students learned a lot in a short amount of time. “This fits within the ‘learning by doing’ model I try to use in my design studios,” he explained. Since some things can’t be learned or simulated in a classroom, he favors bringing students into the shop to make things, get their hands dirty, and meet and learn from industry experts.

“I’m really grateful to all of the industry partners,” he added. “They’re quite a community and helped so much with their time, expertise, and resources.”

This “community” included NTCA and CTEF, Arizona Tile, QEP Co., Inc., MAPEI Corporation, Freeman, Taffy Event Strategies for Coverings, and wedi Corporation. **TL**





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NTCA tile setters EMPLOY EXCELLENCE and CREATIVITY ACROSS DIVERSE SPECTRUM OF PROJECTS

By Lesley Goddin, Editorial Director and Senior Writer

This August, we tour through shining examples of tile craftsmanship and artistry demonstrated by NTCA Member Contractors. The projects span the spectrum, from an award-winning 100-year-old home renovation, to a mosaic install at the historic Macy's in Chicago, to a mosaic tribute to veterans, to a playful kitchen backsplash. Each project took a combination of traditional tile setting skills and specialized skills for working with artistic elements. What new dimensions in your tile work will you find today?

Tile Artistry in the West Hills

NTCA Five-Star Accredited Contractor Columbia River Tile & Stone won Residential Ceramic Tile Installation honors in the Coverings 2026 Installation & Design Awards (CID) in March for its Tile Artistry in the West Hills project. The scope of the project was immense: five bathrooms, three fireplaces, a wine room, a sauna, a dog wash, and an art studio—all under one roof.

This 1920s Colonial was transformed with handmade ceramics, custom unglazed porcelain mosaics, slim brick herringbone, glazed relief details, and quarry tile that imparted a unique identity to each space yet still created a coherent flow in the home. Jeff Occhinpinti's team included heated floors, standards-based flood-tested shower beds, and custom 1/8" mosaics with zero margin for error, and planned every layout to land a full tile exactly where the eye falls first. The team integrated precision, craftsmanship, careful execution of details, and technical excellence to breathe new life into a century-old home.



The scope of the project was immense: five bathrooms, three fireplaces, a wine room, a sauna, a dog wash, and an art studio—all under one roof.

Custom mosaic in historic Chicagoland landmark

When Chicago native Danielle Casali needed to install her “Gather & Hold” mosaic work at the renowned Macy’s at 111 N. State Street in Chicago in the historic Marshall Fields building, she sought out NTCA Member and longtime Ambassador Greg Twarog and his Unique 2 tile contracting company.

Casali used a 3D VR helmet to scale up her original sketchbook drawing to the desired 5’ x 11’ size on a 6’ x 12’ piece of paper. She and her team then free-cut the glass, mounted pieces onto one sheet of white mesh, and later cut them into 12 sheets for easy transport and installation.

Once on site, Unique 2 had two days to install the artwork in a confined space away from the pedestrians’ path to the escalators. Twarog, CTI #1302, and his lead, Joe Mitchell, leaned on their extensive training and field experience installing elevator flooring. They contained the area with a construction curtain and blockades, then set the first two rows of tile. Only then did they erect the one-stage rolling scaffolding to reach the full 12’ height of the install.

On site, Casali offered placement assistance while Mitchell and Twarog installed the sheets onto wedi backer, using MAPEI Adesilex-P10 Premium Glass/Tile Mortar for the strongest bond to the underlayment and best shear strength for the vertical surface. The team grouted with MAPEI UltracolorPlus FA since the fine aggregate sand is safe for glass and it has a fast-track cure time of three hours. Later in the same day, the install was fully prepared for the carpenters to follow behind to frame out the completed artwork with the black painted wood trim.

“It was an honor for Joe and me to be chosen to install such a beautiful handcrafted art piece that will be enjoyed by generations of shoppers and architecture enthusiasts for generations to come,” Twarog said. He proudly noted that his company’s work is located under the iconic 6,000-sq.-ft. mosaic ceiling made of over one million pieces of glass, designed by Louis Comfort Tiffany and completed in 1907.



Scaffolding was needed to reach the full 12’ height of the project.



Unique 2’s Joe Mitchell installs mosaic pieces while Casali offers placement assistance.



Greg Twarog from Unique 2 with the finished mosaic at Macy’s on State Street, Chicago. The violet and chrysanthemum are symbols of the state and city.



Artist Danielle Casali with her installed mosaic.

Supporting our veterans

USA Cares, Inc.'s mission is to provide post-9/11 military veterans, service members, and their families with financial assistance and post-service skills training to create a foundation for long-term stability. Its services improve the quality of life for veterans and their families and reduce potential factors that can contribute to veteran suicide.

NTCA Member Bobby Bell of Bobby Bell Floors in Louisville, Ky., saw these services in action when his father-in-law, a Vietnam vet, passed away. His uncle, Bill Roby, Sr., himself a Vietnam vet and Chair of the Executive Advisory Council for USA Cares, Inc., helped Bell's mother-in-law navigate survivor benefits, giving her hope and security.

Moved by this blessing, in December, Bell approached his uncle about creating a mosaic to be auctioned off for USA Cares' annual gala in July. Bell put his 2024 Artisans Revolution in Tile (A.R.T.) training to work designing the mosaic based on the organization's original logo, keeping as faithful as possible to the official design.

Others in the industry pitched in on the project. Robin Straub at Louisville Tile and Tiffany McGaw at The Tile Shop helped Bell with color selection and donated tile to the project. A.R.T. master craftsman and instructor Lee Callewaert helped Bell with technical aspects and finishing touches.

"Being accepted into the A.R.T. program has really changed my life in many ways," Bell said. He has also been a dedicated member of the TileFest contingent for the last two years. "I'm so happy and proud to be a part of the community."



Bell used the USA Cares original logo as the basis of his dog tag mosaic.



Bobby Bell (l.) with his uncle Bill Roby, Sr. and the mosaic Bell created for the USA Cares Gala in July. The mosaic was auctioned for \$1,000 to benefit USA Cares.

The flowers and the bees

NTCA Member and Ambassador Chris Resti of Crest Tile and Mosaic, Inc., in Hilton, N.Y., is an ace craftsman who approaches his calling with optimism, ingenuity, and standards-based precision. A graduate of the Artisans Revolution in Tile (A.R.T.) program, he is now a leading training assistant there and helps organize artisan-tilesetter-related events at Coverings and TileFest.

For a recent project, he was tasked by his clients to create a floral backyard scene inlaid into their kitchen backsplash, with four bees to represent each of their children. After Resti drew a variety of flowers, the clients picked their favorites and he sent them a digital rendering of the backsplash. Once the colors were finalized, Resti started material selection, which the clients also approved. Field tile was from The Home Depot, with tile for the mosaics from The Tile Shop and Floor & Decor.

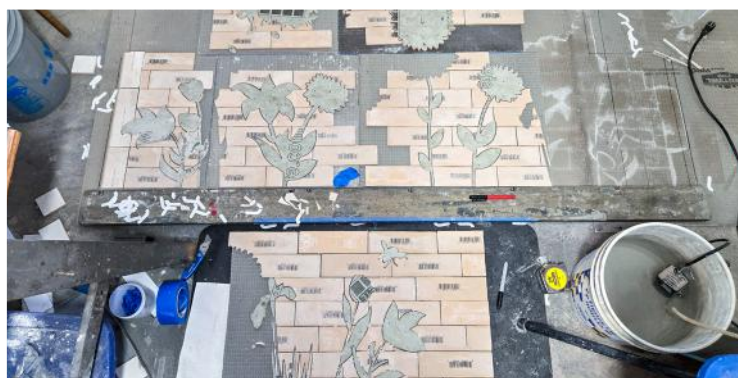
Resti began fabrication. “I made each piece, keeping the clients informed through the process,” he said. “I brought a few to their house to show them when I made a template for their main wall. I brought all of the tile home and fabricated the entire wall in my studio.”

Resti set the flowers on a LATICRETE sheet membrane with LATICRETE MULTIMAX Lite. He face-taped the field tile with mosaic tape to make installation more efficient, installing all tile with MULTIMAX Lite, and grouting with LATICRETE PERMACOLOR and color-matched LATASIL.

Resti’s creativity and attention to detail created a permanent garden with happy flowers and bees to delight his clients for a long time to come. **TL**



Resti created four bees in the backsplash, which represent the family’s four children.



Premounting the flower and bee shapes with the field tile made installing the project easier.



Resti’s creativity and attention to detail created a permanent garden with happy flowers and bees to delight his clients for a long time to come.



Resti’s template facilitated assembly.



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Florida Tile

The Pagosa porcelain tile collection pays homage to the region's storied travertine formations and mineral-rich springs. Each tile reflects soft veining, warm tonal shifts, and the organic textures of authentic travertine. Advanced digital printing technology merges with the 3D Plus finish for an authentic look and feel, with a matte finish available for the 12" x 24" and 24" x 48" formats. Mosaic decos and bullnose trim round out the collection.



MILE®stone

MILE®stone adds to its 2cm porcelain paver portfolio with two elegant marble-look visuals from the JEM collection: JEM Adagio White and Aria Gold. Made in the USA and offered in both 24" x 24" and 24" x 48" formats, these new additions bring elevated marble-inspired design to outdoor spaces while delivering the durability and performance of porcelain. The MILE®stone 2cm paver portfolio also includes carbon-neutral options, reflecting the B Corp-certified brand's ongoing commitment to sustainability and environmentally responsible design.

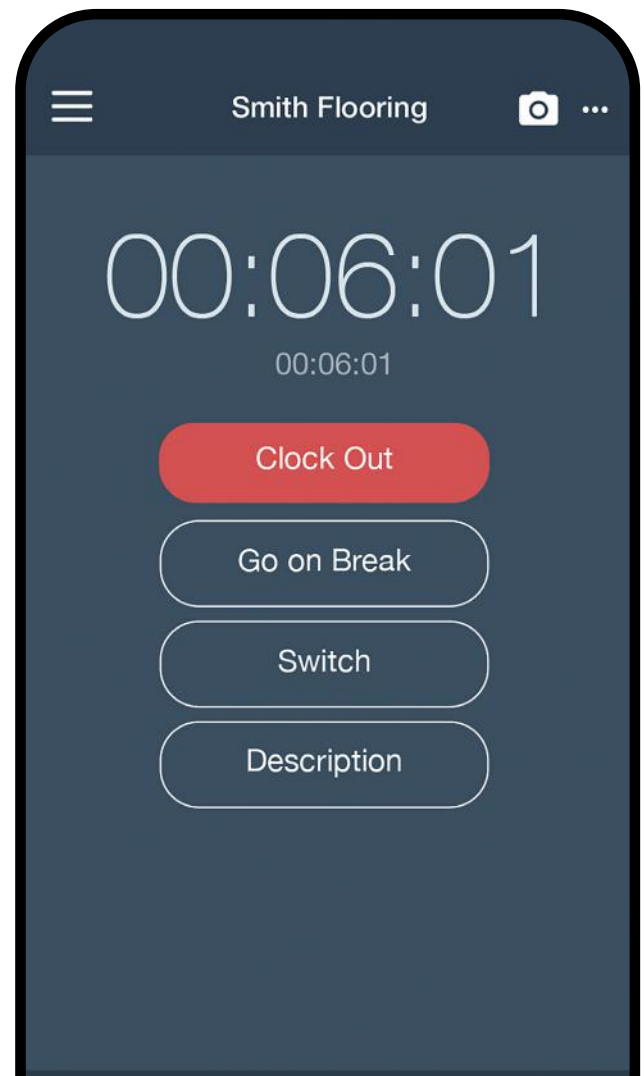
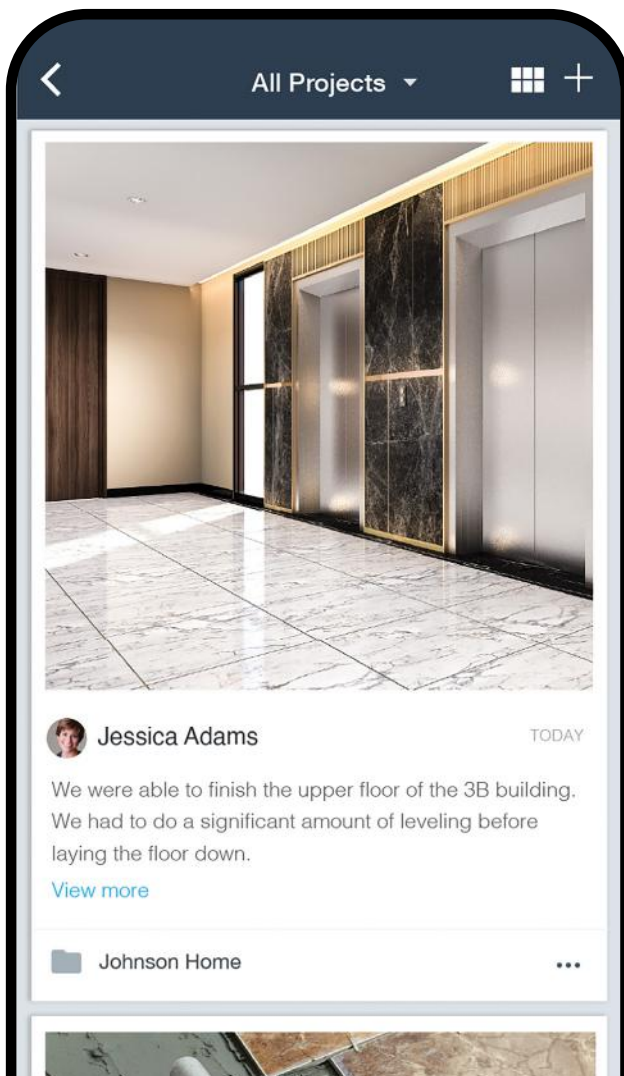
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Portobello America

The Cristallo porcelain collection is inspired by luminous quartzite and designed around the behavior of light. Translating fractured veining and crystalline depth into porcelain surfaces, the collection brings radiance, dimension, and refined clarity to contemporary interiors. It's available in matte, polished and soft finishes, with the Concavo sculpted relief. Offering integrated mosaics, multiple relief expressions, and a complete surface system approach, Cristallo is available in Bianco, Oro or Rose hues.



LANDMARK Ceramics

Poolscape Solutions is a complete porcelain system designed to elevate every pool environment, from decks and patios to steps, walls, and waterline details. With a wide range of looks, superior performance, and total design continuity between indoor and outdoor spaces, LANDMARK Ceramics offers architects and designers the ideal solution for contemporary, functional, and long-lasting pool projects. Poolscape Solutions provides a broad range of looks, including stone, quartz, slate, bluestone, limestone, marble, travertine, wood, concrete, mosaic, and terrazzo in pavers and grip tiles as well as coordinated porcelain tile, mosaics and veneers for vertical applications. Trim pieces for stairs, wall covers, steps and pool edges also coordinate perfectly with the pavers.





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ARTISAN NEWS



The A.R.T. group completed this mosaic of Fonthill Castle during TileFest this year at The Moravian Pottery and Tile Works in Doylestown, Pa.

All roads lead to TileFest

The third weekend of May, more than 1,000 visitors gathered at The Moravian Pottery and Tile Works in Doylestown, Pa., for the 26th TileFest, an event that brought together tile makers, historians, artists, industry professionals, and “the tile curious.”

Co-sponsored by TileWorks of Bucks County and Tile Heritage Foundation, with support from industry sponsors NTCA, LATICRETE, and Merola Tile, the festival featured



Part of the A.R.T. contingent, creating a mosaic at TileFest and educating festival goers about the possibilities of tile.

more than 62 exhibitors. While many came from the East Coast, first-time exhibitors traveled from across the United States and abroad. Among them were Ben Tyjeski of Milwaukee, Wis., Tim Carder of Stoke-on-Trent, UK, and Ksenia Pirvits of St. Petersburg, Russia.

Beyond the handmade tiles available for purchase, attendees enjoyed educational programs and demonstrations. Tile Heritage Foundation Executive Director of Development Karim Motawi talked about the organization’s growth and the creation of a new National Tile Installation Registry. A “Wild Clay” exhibit showcased work by TileWorks, Walnut St. Pottery, Mesa Lifestyle, and Poesia Pottery, highlighting wild clay’s connection to nature.

Additional attractions included student-created tiles inspired by Henry Mercer’s work, a clay-mixing demonstration using local clay and the 1903 Mascot auger machine, tours of the historic Metropolitan Steam Engine, primitive fire-pit firing demonstrations, and construction of a firebrick pizza oven.

Now in their fourth year at TileFest, alumni tile setters from the Artisans Revolution in Tile (A.R.T.) training program completed and installed a large mosaic of Fonthill Castle, Mercer’s home. The group hand-shaped commercial tile with ring and wet saws and incorporated Mercer tile into the design.

TileFest ‘26 offered an exquisite opportunity to bring together a growing number of attendees from every segment of the industry to meet and network, exponentially expanding the window for growth and connections across the industry.

Albuquerque hosts the CMA2 Conference and Mosaic Month

In March, Contemporary Mosaic Art2 (CMA2), a free worldwide community for mosaic artists of all skill levels, held its conference in Albuquerque, N.M. The event

featured workshops, lectures, vendors, a silent auction, and the "Calling Card" exhibit of miniature mosaics crafted in mint tins. Attendees also completed a community project: a mosaic of outstretched hands installed at the Albuquerque Sign Language Academy.

The conference theme was "Connecting Mosaic Artists: Building Community." Local speakers, including Vanessa Alvarado of Albuquerque Leadership in Mosaic Arts (ALMA), joined presenters from across the U.S. and abroad. Featured talks explored mosaic art as a sacred expression, the impact of public art, and strategies for building businesses within the mosaic community.



CMA2 2026 conference goers created this stunning mosaic as a community project. It was installed at the Albuquerque Sign Language Academy at the close of the conference.

Albuquerque expanded the celebration by declaring March a monthlong Mosaic Festival, with exhibits and activities throughout the city and surrounding communities. Highlights included the juried "Pieces of Us" exhibition at Gallery ABQ and "Piece/Peace Mosaic Month" at The Groove Artspace. Groove owner Erika Harding also launched a Youth Arts Program that trained teachers to introduce mosaic-making to 700 students in 17 schools. Floor & Decor donated materials to support the initiative.

Conference co-chair Shelley Beaumont of Healing Mosaics said one goal was to introduce mosaics to younger generations. She noted that mosaic work develops skills in "piece art," including thinking, planning, craftsmanship, tool use, and math. Young people, she added, can support themselves, attend "a trade school, and be an artist while doing that."

Albuquerque was selected partly because of ALMA's youth apprentice training program. Beaumont explained, "We made sure work by ALMA students was included on the tour so the community-based mosaic artists in the group could get an idea of how they can reach out to the young people in their regions."



The 2026 A.R.T. class. This year, a new class will learn the standards-based techniques of hand-shaping mosaics at the new CTEF headquarters in Nashville.

A.R.T. welcomes a new class in October 2026

In October, the Artisans Revolution in Tile (A.R.T.) training program will welcome its fourth class of experienced tile setters who want to elevate their craft by learning how to create hand-shaped mosaics. The program is the brainchild of Lee and Jane Callewaert of Dragonfly Tile and Joshua Nordstrom of Tierra Tile, with strong support from NTCA, LATICRETE, Tile Tools and Daltile.

Tile Artisan Training...A Revolution (aka A.R.T.) is an intensive four-day training program that equips experienced tile installers with the skills needed to design, create, and install custom hand-cut tile art. Participants explore the creative process, learn to identify opportunities for marketing artisan work, and gain hands-on experience with design methods, materials, tools, fabrication techniques, and standards-based installation practices.

To date, 46 have completed the program, which has catapulted them to new technical and artistic heights, exploring custom mosaic work for clients, personal artistic projects and public artworks, as well as a strong presence at the Artisan Showcase during Coverings and at TileFest. An intensely supportive community of artisan tile setters has expanded with the completion of each class.

The October 5-9 program will be held at the new CTEF headquarters in Nashville. The new class includes:

- David McGuirk, DLM Flooring, Vacaville, Calif.
- Nick Hofmann, Pokuna Tile LLC, Shelbyville, Ky., CTI #1627
- Rick Missi, Missi Construction, Prospect, Ky.
- Gracelyn Rael, Hawthorne Tile, Portland, Ore.
- Elly Warner, Hawthorne Tile, Portland, Ore.
- Wayne Shore, Shoreline Tile, Amesbury, Mass.
- Jesus Enrique Sanchez, Sanchez Tile, San Angelo, Texas, CTI#1819
- Elijah Enriquez, Enriquez Tile & Remodeling LLC, San Angelo, Texas

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- Robb Olson, Footprint Wood & Stone, Lakeville, Minn., CTI #1470
- Bob Shinn, Footprint Wood & Stone, Northfield, Minn.
- Dan Lambert, Lambert Tile & Stone, Inc., Eagle, Colo., CTI #478
- Timothy Hill, Hills Flooring, Long Bottom, Ohio
- Blaine Farber, Dustan Morgan Tile, Nevada City, Calif.
- Justin France, Fairweather Stoneworks and Northwest Artisan Tile Co., Monroe, Wash.
- Mike LoStocco, Columbia River Tile Stone, Milwaukie, Ore.
- Erik Trexel, Level Plane Tile and Stone, Portland, Ore.

In addition to financial support, NTCA also awards every attendee a free yearlong membership to NTCA or, if they are a member, a free membership next year. For more information, email dragonfly@gmail.com.

SAMA Conference set for March in Dallas

Get thee to Dallas March 3-7, 2027 for the 2027 American Mosaic Summit organized by the Society of American Mosaic Artists (SAMA). The immersive 3-4 day experience welcomes mosaic art enthusiasts, collectors and professional artists for an inspiring and educational program. In addition, the Mosaic Arts International 2027



The Society of American Artists is planning a conference next spring, with ongoing exhibit opportunities for mosaic artists.

exhibit will be on display from February 17-August 22, 2027 at the Museum of Biblical Art Dallas. Currently, Season VII of the One Hundred Moments Project is at the Pittsburgh Glass Corner Gallery in Pittsburgh, PA, through September 25, 2026 and in an online gallery through the end of September. This project is a collection of 6" x 6" mosaic panels to celebrate, educate and inspire excellence in mosaics.



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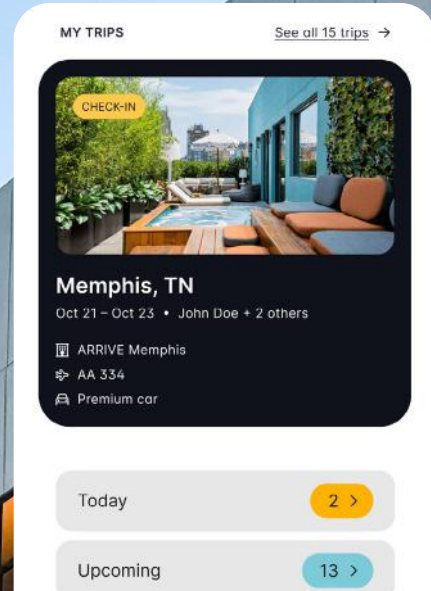
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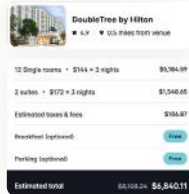
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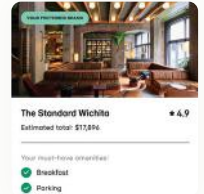
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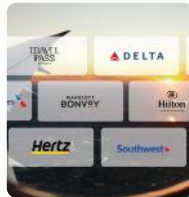
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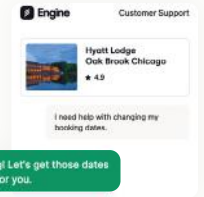
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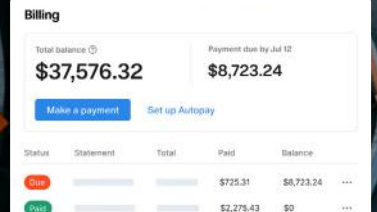
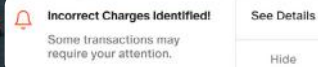
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