

MAKING HISTORY IN SARDINIA



Julie Richey is a Dallas-based artist who has been making mosaics for more than 25 years. Her projects include commissions for residential, commercial, sacred and public art environments. In addition to teaching selected workshops, she offers curated art and food tours to Italy plus Mosaics in Mexico workshops at Casa de Las Ranas in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico.

The second annual Sardinia Contemporary Mosaics Symposium was held in the Sardinian town of Ploaghe, Italy from 28th July to 15th August. Twelve artists from seven countries and the US territory of Puerto Rico created mosaics on the theme, Sardus Pater Babai; warrior-deity of Sardinia.

The event was organized by mosaicist Giulio Menossi of Udine, Italy and his longtime friends Fabiano Salvador and Antonia Masala. After the success of the Clauiano Mosaics International Symposium in 2015, Giulio dreamed of taking the concept even farther. Once Fabiano and Antonia introduced him to the ex-convent and he saw how perfect the space would be for a similar event, the dream of Ploaghe as a mosaic destination took shape. 2016 saw Ploaghe's first mosaic symposium which established strong support among city officials and residents alike.



Angela Zimek works on the final element of her mosaic *The Many Lives of Sardus Pater*
Photo: Julie Richey



The symposium group enjoys an evening wine tasting at Tenuta Asinara on the coast.
Photo: Ayelet Sela

To help the artists understand the significant history and pervasive roots of the Sardus Pater, organisers treated them to a daylong excursion to two UNESCO sites in the central and southern areas of the island. Guided tours of the Nuragic settlement Santa Cristina and the Carthaginian-Roman temple of Antas were a fascinating introduction to the symposium theme.

Monday, 31st July was the first workday, and things never slowed down, as a record-breaking heat wave settled on the island for a week, although the artists did pause for prosecco in the afternoons. Working outdoors in the Ex-Convento of the Capuchin order, the artists pressed on with their mosaic labours, chasing shade and keeping a great sense of humour.

A major benefit this year was the support of a single sponsor, who provided funds but also wished to keep the mosaic collection intact as a gift to the city. After the first symposium, sponsors were given the option of retaining the artwork, and many did choose to keep the Dea Madre-themed mosaics. Together with select works from 2016, the 2017 Sardinia Contemporary Mosaics collection will have a permanent home in Ploaghe.



Mariella Eduviges Gatto and her sculpture *Resitere*. Photo Mia Tavonatti

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2017 Participating Artists:

Ayelet Sela
Israel

Fernanda Jatón
Argentina

Guillermina Gomez
Argentina

Julie Kearley Dilling
USA

Julie Richey
USA

Mariella Eduviges Gatto
Argentina

Mia Tavonatti
USA

Neslihan Zabci Erdal
Turkey

Olga Goulandris
Greece

Vanessa Rivera, Puerto
Rico

Yumie Wakatsuki
Japan

Angela Zimek
Austria

Giulio Menossi was very pleased with the results of this year's symposium, which he said presented *"a very challenging theme for the artists to interpret."* *"Each symposium is like the voyage of a ship,"* he explained. *"We set out together on a journey, encountering perhaps storms and rough seas, challenges to overcome. But in the end, the clouds part and we reach our destination safely and successfully."*



Visitors to the final exhibition admire Mia Tavonatti's sculpture *Crown of Glory*.
Photo Mia Tavonatti

Ploaghe's Mayor Carlo Sotgiu observed that the achievement has promoted the art of mosaic in a place where it was previously an unfamiliar medium. Judging from the symposium's daily visitors from the entire region of northern Sardinia and the enthusiastic crowd at the gala reception, the Sardinia Contemporary Mosaics Symposium will enjoy widespread support in Ploaghe for years to come.



Symposium artists, organisers and volunteers celebrate the conclusion of the event.
Photo: Antioco Usai

Artists enjoyed a final celebration together on 15th August during the annual Ferragosto holiday in Ploaghe, which featured a parade of the candelaria, music and folk dancers from around the world.

On a Personal Note

This is my second mosaic symposium with Maestro Menossi. The first was in Udine/Clauiano, the chair themed event in 2015. I eagerly accepted the Sardinia 2017 invitation for several reasons. It was a chance to visit a part of Italy I'd never seen in 30+ years of visiting my favourite country. But more important to me was the opportunity to create a significant piece in an "incubator-style" environment.



Giulio Menossi demonstrates his 'dynamic andamento' process on Julie Richey's sculpture in progress.
Photo Nico Salis

I see my work for the symposia as collaborations rather than solo acts. Applying the given theme is only a start; while each artist brings her unique techniques and style to the work, it's also a developmental environment akin to a workshop. Each time I participate, I learn from Giulio and take away invaluable experiences that enrich my studio production in countless ways. For that I'm grateful.

Julie Richey
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