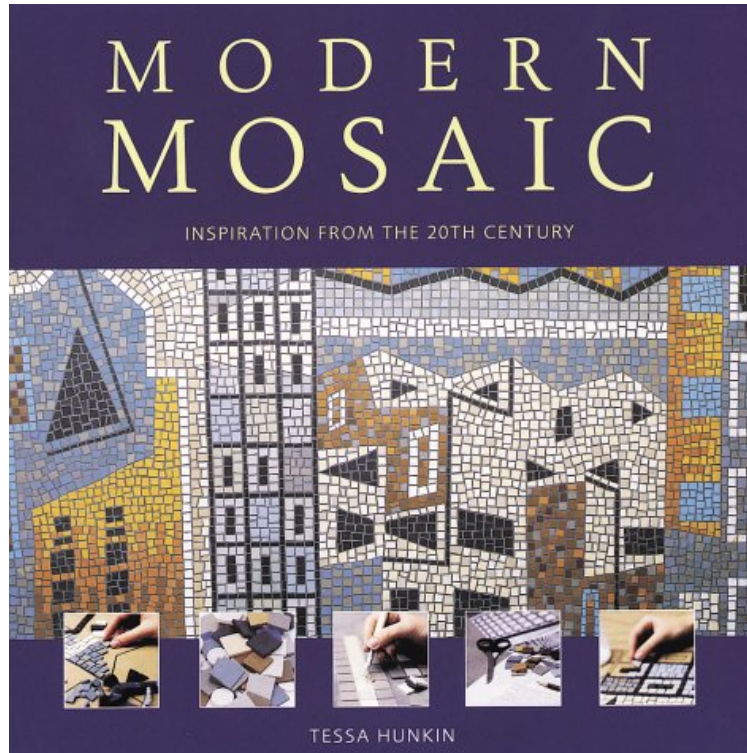


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Modern Mosaic: Inspiration from the 20th Century

Tessa Hunkin

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Tessa Hunkin : Modern Mosaic: Inspiration from the 20th Century before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Modern Mosaic: Inspiration from the 20th Century:

Mosaic is a medium of glorious expression, endurance, and timeless beauty. In *Modern Mosaic*, Elaine Goodwin inspires readers to pick up a fragment of stone or glass and start an exhilarating journey of exploration and expression. Readers will marvel at the outstanding mosaic styles featured from around the world. The art deco of New York City, Gaudi's surreal creations, Hundertwasser, and more. *Modern Mosaic* features: A short history of mosaic including art nouveau, public art and private expression How to set up a workspace: equipment, tools, and adhesives Materials: glass, gold, found objects, ceramic, and more Design: inspiration, drawing, images, symbolism Projects: 15 projects with step-by-step instructions and photographs Gallery: inspiring work from leading mosaic artists from around the world

All the information you need to learn about the art and even do it yourself... lessons in art history and philosophy and step-by-step directions on specific projects. (Jan Landon Kansas City Star 2003-09-21) Enticing book that is part coffee table fare and part how-to... will inspire master crafters and intrigue beginners. (Sally Birks Everett Herald 2003-10-09) Comprehensive and well-photographed. (Milwaukee Journal Sentinel 2003-05-04) Colorfully illustrates how to

successfully meld a timeless art for into contemporary do-it-yourself masterpieces. (Jennifer Lee Calgary Sun 2003-05-10) Extravagantly photographed book ... inspiring work interwoven with design lessons and chat on tools, materials and techniques. (Jamie Lee Pricer Palm Springs Desert Sun 2003-06-14) Takes readers on an enriching jaunt through history. (Phoenix Home and Garden) A history lecture, a gallery tour and an art class all in one... All the tools, from inspiration to practical tips on grout and glaze, to start your own mosaic projects. (Cathy LeFebvre Country Comfort)

About the Author Tessa Hunkin is an internationally-recognized mosaic artist whose work can be seen in galleries, homes, restaurants, cathedrals, and mosques around the world. She also restores mosaics in buildings throughout Europe, teaches mosaic techniques and is the author of three books. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

Introduction Mosaic is an art form associated more with antiquity than with the modern age, but there is a continuous historical tradition that can be traced from Classical Greece to the present day. Its popularity has sometimes faltered over the centuries but there has been a marked revival of interest in recent years. This book concentrates on 20th-century developments and their relationship to movements in the mainstream of painting and sculpture. As well as describing modern mosaics and other works that have relevance to mosaic design, the book also contains all the technical information you need to make your own mosaics following a series of step-by-step projects. Mosaics, unlike works executed in paint or fresco, have an inherent durability, and numerous examples have survived. The earliest known mosaics were made from pebbles, and the illustration below shows a floor made in Gordium (Asia Minor) in the eighth century B.C. Although it is one of the very old mosaic pavements in existence, the freely executed interlocking patterns have a remarkably modern look. The historical tradition Mosaic developed across the Roman Empire as a popular method of decorating floors and a distinctive style emerged that combined patterns with representational panels. This approach incorporated many stylistic variations. The mosaics of Rome itself and its northern empire favored patterns based on geometry, while the North African border designs are more organic, based on plants and other natural forms. The representational panels usual show figures and animals set against a plain, neutral background so as to read clearly on the horizontal floor plane. Pictorial panels from the Eastern Roman Empire, however, are often structured around a realistic background, with elements of perspective and depth that create a curious confusion when viewed from a standing position. The decorative borders would usually be laid in situ but, as the representational centerpieces became increasingly elaborate, they were made off-site in the workshop. Known as "emblema," these panels sometimes achieved an extraordinarily high level of realism. Many examples of such panels, showing theatrical scenes, were found in Pompeii. The Vatican Museum houses a collection of these very fine pieces, sometimes made using very minute tesserae. Illustrated above is an example from Hellenistic Alexandria that shows a seated dog, executed in hyper-real detail, that strikes our modern eyes as having an almost photographic quality. This striking contrast between illusionistic and decorative designs in classical mosaic becomes less significant in Byzantine and medieval examples. The transition from late Roman to early Christian was a continuous process, and the very earliest Christian mosaics, such as those in Santa Costanza in Rome, dating from the fourth century A.D., look very like contemporary pagan mosaic. Classical motifs of cherubs and vines are depicted against a pale background in the traditional Roman way. By the sixth century AD., however, the great church mosaics of Ravenna had acquired a distinctive style. The faces are still executed with a realism that is close in style to the paintings on mummy casings found in Roman Egypt, and there are likenesses of contemporary bishops and courtiers. The compositions however, have become very stylized, and the backgrounds and draperies are treated in a flat, decorative way. Champions of the classical world have interpreted this as a decline into a more primitive form of picture-making, influenced increasingly by local popular traditions as the civilizing power of the Roman Empire began to fail. It is a transformation, however, that can equally be read in terms of the expression of a new, revolutionary view of the world. The early Christians had suffered terrible persecutions in the real world, and their faith had survived by encouraging its followers to concentrate on a spiritual inner world and its continuation after death. In this context, accurate representations of the real world were completely irrelevant and the purpose of Christian art was to convey the glory of the invisible world of the spirit. Byzantine artists used techniques from traditional popular art because they wanted to make their message popular, but they also employed a sophisticated vocabulary of sumptuous materials and color, combined with dramatic stylization. Meaning and execution are fused into a single, powerful didactic purpose. The face of the Pantokrator at Daphni, Attica, is idealized but not sentimentalized, the exaggerated features (the piercing eyes and elongated nose) communicating an awe-inspiring strength and resolve. The development of mosaic in the Middle Ages was largely confined to Italy, where craft skills were handed down from generation to generation. In Northern Europe other forms of decoration were invented, and it is believed that early stained glass was made from melting down the tesserae of ruined ancient mosaics. As medieval Christian art developed it became more decorative and less naturalistic, a process that can clearly be seen in the Italian mosaics of the Middle Ages. The late 13th-century Coronation of the Virgin by Gaddo Gaddi in Florence Cathedral is an example from the very end of the medieval period. A small work mounted over a doorway, it is easily missed among the more famous splendors of Florence but it reveals an astonishing balance between genuinely expressive representation and a sensuous display of pattern and stylized form. The surface is interwoven with gold, which links all the different patterns together, and the animals representing the evangelists are flattened to form shapes that interlock in the design. Admiration for these formal

characteristics, however, betrays a distinctly modern sensibility. In Chapter 2, the achievement of a similar balance is discussed in the context of Matisse's work, and many other modern artists, including Roger Fry and Picasso, turned to medieval and Byzantine art as a source of inspiration for expressive stylization. In its own time, the work of the Italian painter Gaddi and his contemporaries including Cimabue, in Pisa, Padua, and Florence, marked the final flourishing of the medieval tradition. By the end of the 14th century there was even some confusion as to the meaning of the word mosaic. Due to a shortage of qualified craftsmen, the repair to the damaged mosaics in St. Mark's basilica, Venice, caused by a fire in 1419, was very much impeded. Not only had fresco taken over as the dominant technique for decorating church walls, but a cultural revolution had also taken place. The Italian Renaissance signaled a return to classical values and a fascination with accurate depictions of the real world. Illusionism, achieved through developing the laws of perspective, was to dominate the visual arts until the 19th century. Painting and sculpture were art forms that lent themselves to this kind of realism and were distinguished as fine arts, in a superior category to the decorative arts. Mosaics continued to be made in Italy but their aim was to imitate oil painting and some of the 18th-century examples, for example in St. Peter's in Rome, do so with extraordinary, if slightly pointless, technical facility. The history of mosaic, from the Renaissance on, becomes a small part of the broader histories of fine art and architecture. Although mosaic itself became increasingly marginalized when it eventually made its brief reappearance in the mainstream at the start of the 20th century it was as part of a revival of decorative art in general. Craft and the salvation of industrial society By the mid- 19th century the enormous optimism in the guaranteed fruits of industrial progress was beginning to fade. British manufacturing, despite its head start, was undermined by foreign competition partly because its products were poorly designed. Henry Cole who was responsible for the Great Exhibition of 1851 which displayed wares from all over the world, aimed to educate a new generation of designers who