

A TOUCH OF GLASS

Newsletter of the Creative Glass Guild of Queensland December 2017 Edition

Seasons Greetings!

Here we are, another year down at the Guild, and what a year it's been!

The renovation of our kitchen to create a new multi-functional space including a dining area has been well received, despite our having to close up shop for a few weeks in August.

Let's continue to keep the area clean and fresh for the benefit of all members and visitors.

New glass shelving

After the kitchen renovation and internal painting, our other major project completed in 2017 was new shelving in the glass room. Members have acknowledged how much easier and safer it is now to access our glass stocks.

We enjoyed a good rollup for our Guild Christmas Party, where around 40 members and partners shared gossip, good tidings and a drink or two to celebrate the Festive Season.

Membership changes

Next year brings some significant changes to our current membership process, which were approved at our most recent members' general meeting. These changes, which will include a joining fee for new (and lapsed) members, are outlined on page 4 of this issue.

I have mentioned before that one of the big problems facing the Guild is a decreased number of volunteers servicing an increasing number of Guild members, which now total around 130.

2018. In the meantime, watch out for a separate email seeking volunteers to assist with various maintenance tasks, including our annual stocktake in January.



Around 40 members and friends enjoyed the Guild's annual Christmas party. Pictured (L-R) are party-goers Chris Bell, Mary Rampton and Ian Dymock.

In addition to a call to members for more assistance, we have taken deliberate measures to respond to the situation to service Members Only, which will apply to shop sales and the use of all in-house Guild facilities.

Date claimers

Our final shop and members' project day was Saturday 16 December, and we will resume activities on Saturday 28 January

Finally, thank you to everyone who contributed to an enjoyable, if sometimes challenging year. We could not operate without our tutors, volunteers and most importantly, our loyal members.

I wish all members, family and friends of the Guild a wonderful Christmas, and may all your creative endeavours in 2018 be successful and satisfying.

All the best, Lyndall

Ravenna makes mosaic memories

One of my life-long ambitions has been to participate in the intensive mosaics course run by world class mosaicist and teacher, Luciana Notturmi, at the Ravenna School of Mosaic Art (Scuola Mosaico) in northern Italy.

The course came highly recommended, as Guild members Chris Bell, Di Holland and Kate Ritchie all attended this course last year.

In addition to Lyndall and myself, (Amy) other participants came from all over the world including England, the USA, Germany and other European countries.



Scuola Mosaica host and tutor, Luciana Notturmi, shares the 'Ravenna Method' with participants of her course, which included Guild members Amy Siebold and Lyndall Davies in the September 2017 intake.



Amy tries out the double reverse technique, pressing the tesserae into a temporary binder of slaked lime.

Luciana was ably assisted by Luca and several other mosaic artists who were working in her studio on commissions (including repairs for many of the ancient mosaics) and other mosaics which were available for sale.

Apparently Ravenna artists repair many of the ancient mosaics that

used glass from ancient Ravenna, because the 'recipes' to make the colours have been closely guarded and handed down locally throughout the centuries.

Old receipts best match

Repairs completed with new glass made from these old recipes are the best match for the ancient mosaics.

Lyndall and I each completed two mosaics using two different methods and a variety of materials, but mostly Venetian Smalti glass.

We had to cut all of our materials in the traditional way, using a hammer and hardie, which was very frustrating for me. I created quite a lot of 'frit' as I was trying to cut tiny squares out of glass bricks or bars that I kept shattering.

The Ravenna Method

The first mosaic we did was a copy of an ancient mosaic using the 'Ravenna Method', which uses

the double reverse technique, where the tesserae is pressed into a temporary binder (slaked lime, in our case) which is later washed off.

After we cut and placed all of our pieces, we glued a piece of cheesecloth on top with very smelly, traditional, boiled horse-hoof glue. Once dry, it's very hard and holds together all of your pieces as you wash the lime off the back and then press the mosaic into its final substrate.

Later, using water and some elbow grease, we dissolved the glue, removed the cheesecloth, and voila! - we all looked like real artists!

The second mosaic we did directly onto the cement adhesive. This was a one-day project of a modern design that we selected ourselves. Because it dries very fast, you put down only one section of the cement and pattern at a time.

Story cont next page...

Cont from page 2

I wanted to make a window with flowers on the balcony, similar to the beautiful one Chris did when she was there. This allowed me to use other materials besides Smalti -- some granite, brick, etc. -- which was a relief because I had such a hard time cutting the Smalti.

Although it's not quite finished (it still needs the background painted) it is at least recognisable -- but not nearly as pretty as Chris's, I don't think! Well, maybe in my next life...

Two people in our class did portraits -- a different stream but taught simultaneously within the course outline.

The portrait students brought photos, and one of the tricks they showed is scanning the photo and using a software package to reduce the number of colours to 4 or 5 (in the case of a black and white photo).

This gets you to the level of detail you need to use for a face that, when seen from a distance, looks quite realistic.

Although I really enjoyed the course, it was actually quite stressful to try to complete two pieces in such a short time, despite the fact that the tutors and assistants would cut up material and even do a section of your work while we were off at lunch!



Above: Lyndall gets some personalised instruction from resident mosaic artist Luca to produce her modern floral mosaic arrangement (below).



Walking around the pretty town of Ravenna was also eye-opening in a number of ways.

Of course, there were mosaics everywhere and many houses had mosaic signs with flowers on them and the words 'Ravenna - Citta Amica Delle Donne'. When we asked about this, we were told it was a civic movement that started in protest to an incident of violence against women.

So the sign means something like 'Ravenna, the City Friendly to Women'. It was certainly friendly to us, and we would recommend the Ravenna course to all mosaic enthusiasts.

Best wishes, Amy Siebold



Pictured above is Amy's Tuscan window complete with flower boxes, where she uses a combination of smalti, granite, brick etc, which were cut using a traditional hammer and hardie—no small feat with the tiny shapes required.

Fresh approach to membership

A number of new initiatives will be introduced in 2018 to streamline the process of becoming a new member of the Guild, or renewing your current membership.

In 2018, annual membership will remain at a very reasonable \$95.00. What is new is that a joining fee of \$50.00 for new (and lapsed) members will be introduced.

In addition, existing members will be transferred to a quarterly timeframe for renewal, rather than the current monthly processing, which is proving time-consuming for our volunteers.

The first Memberships to be rolled into a three monthly period will be those whose dues fall in February, March and April.

You will be notified with a reminder notice when your membership is due. Payment is to be made within 2 months and 1 day of the due date prior to the last day of April, in the above example, so as not to disadvantage any member as a result of this changeover.

If membership is not received by the last day of the quarter, membership will be considered lapsed and new membership will need to be applied for. This incurs the joining fee to be paid in addition to the annual fee.

In order to continue to enjoy the benefits of membership, members are asked to be vigilant in paying their dues on time.

For those participating in the Guild's beginners' courses, a 3 month period of membership with full benefits will be offered at the completion of the course to allow students to 'try before they buy'.

If a student wishes to take up this trial offer, they pay only the \$50.00 joining fee. After the 3 month trial, they may choose to commence a 12 month membership and pay the annual fee (\$95.00).

No lapse may occur between the end of the trial and payment of the annual fee.

This offer is available only to participants in beginners' courses, and is not applicable to workshop or intermediate course attendees.

New focus on members only

As part of its review of the Guild's membership process, your Committee, with the support of members attending the November General Meeting, has decided to discontinue services provided to non-members, apart from students who enrol in beginners' courses and some workshops.

This new policy will apply to the sale of all glass, tools and accessories, the use of Guild facilities and equipment, unless under a hire agreement, and the sale or tender offers of excess Guild stock and equipment.

The decision to service only Guild members is based on concerns for the safety of non-members, particularly in the glass room, and simplifying pricing (members' price only) to significantly reduce time spent on goods receipting and stock pricing.

This policy will not apply to attendance at 'Beadmaker Buddy-Ups', where a nominal fee is collected from non-members, or to special sales events to dispose of excess stock.

Volunteer and Committee discounts to be removed

In a move to minimise confusion and simplify the workload for Guild volunteers, discounts for glass and supplies previously offered to volunteers and committee members have been removed.

From 2018, Guild price lists will reflect a single price for Members Only.

A new system of compensating volunteers will be introduced, using the attendance registers to record their time spent at the Guild in genuine volunteer work eg Saturday shop, treasurer duties, painting, maintenance, some tutoring (if provided at no cost), order supplies etc.

Voluntary work for our annual Exhibition is not included in this scheme.

The Management Committee will record time spent on voluntary work each month, and match volunteer hours against a prescribed scale.

At the end of the year, the Committee will acknowledge the contribution of individual volunteers with a monetary 'bonus' which can then be used toward membership or materials – but not for courses.

Your Committee believes that the introduction of a single price policy, together with a revised volunteer compensation scheme, will prove to be fair and efficient for all.

Published by the Creative Glass Guild of Queensland

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Website:
www.creativeglassguild.com.au

Workshop/Sales:
Saturdays, 9.00am-midday

General meetings: Bi-monthly on first Monday of the month at 7.00 pm (Notice will be emailed to members).

Management Meetings: Alternate months or earlier if required

Catherine completes mosaic masterpiece

In August this year, our mosaic tutor, Catherine Conaty, completed the largest body of mosaic work that she has ever undertaken.

In an endeavour that spanned nearly two years, Catherine designed, created and installed 36 panels of mosaic to cover the front fence of a five acre property in the suburb of Capalaba.

Every panel (each up to 2.4 metres long or wide) was created completely by herself, between tutoring duties, moving house and other work demands.

Organic design panels

Catherine explains: "Each panel was an organic design, where I played around with colours and flow. The mirror swirls create an interesting look, especially at night time when car headlights make them sparkle.

"I hand cut every single tile and piece of stained glass, then glued them to fibreglass mesh sheets in my studio at home. I then transported them (3 panels at a time) to Capalaba and installed them on site."



Pictured are the colourful panels that make up Catherine's mosaic fence. The organic design reflects different colours, patterns and flows. The mirror swirls are a special treat at night time, when they sparkle in the passing headlights.



"Finally, I grouted the panels, and sealed them with a penetrating sealer to ensure longevity. It was a big, big job!"

Catherine says the project created a challenging but very enjoyable process.

"So many people have given me lovely feedback. While I was installing the panels, random

strangers in cars would pull over to the side of the road just to tell me how much they like to drive past the fence!

"It is quite heart-warming to make something on such a huge scale that brings joy to others."

The fence is located at 16 Degen Road Capalaba, if you ever want to do a drive-by.

Church of colourful mosaics

One of the most popular tourist 'attractions' in St Petersburg, Russia, is the Church of Saviour on the Spilled Blood, so called because Emperor Alexander II was mortally wounded inside the church in 1881.

Also known as the Church of the Resurrection of Christ, the building (pictured right) features very colourful onion domes and outside decorations that everyone will recognise.

The flamboyant exterior of the building is matched only by a riot of colour of mosaics inside, which fill everything – walls, arches, ceiling, altar, crevices and cornices.

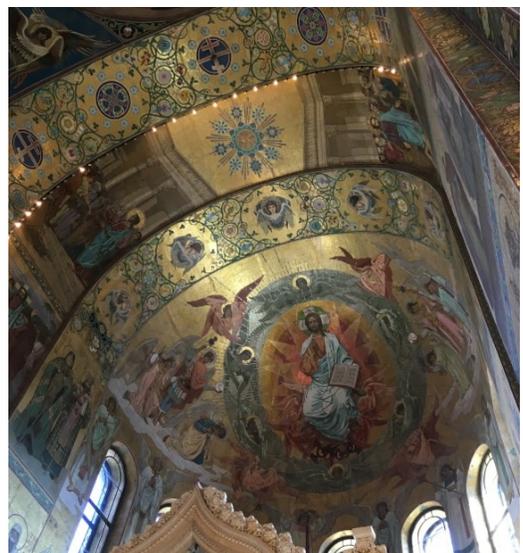
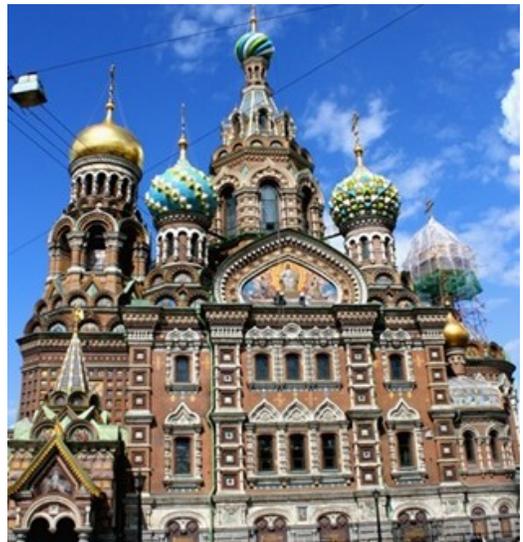
It's worth noting that these mosaics (done in the very early 1900s) aren't nearly as fine as the ancient ones (2nd-3rd century BC through 6th century or so) that you will find in towns such as Ravenna in Italy.

However, that said, when you first look at the walls in the Church of the Spilled Blood, you would think they are painted. In fact, although I had seen it several times before, I did not remember that the walls were done entirely in mosaics.

No surface is left bare of embellishment, as you can see in the photo of the church's internal dome on the right.

It's not one of the world's most beautiful churches, but it's worth a visit to St Petersburg's Church of Saviour on the Spilled Blood if you're into brilliant mosaics.

Amy Siebold



The Guild recently received a Christmas Card with the following note from Mary Rampton, wife of Guild stalwart, Graham Rampton, who we sadly lost earlier this year.

Dear Members of the Glass Guild,

Thank you so much for your care and concern for Graham during his illness, and thank you also to those of you who were able to come to his funeral. It was comforting to see and have you there.

Also, a big thank you for the beautiful basket of flowers you sent.

We took them to the cemetery and they lasted for ages.

Graham loved and enjoyed his years at the Glass Guild, doing his leadlight etc. He especially enjoyed his Mondays there with his mates, and of course, the cuppa and fruit cake. You have a great group there. Keep up the good work.

Graham was such a good, kind and humble person, a gentleman with a cheeky grin and a cheery sense of humour.

We love him so much and will miss him forever.

Love, Mary Rampton



Being smart with smalti

Want to learn using smalti or to take mosaics from flat to the dimensional?

The Guild is hosting an internationally acknowledged artist, Marian Shapiro, at the end of May 2018.

Marian is possibly Australia's premier smalti artist and is offering two popular courses – *Working with Smalti* and *Bend, Fold and Undulate* which leads *Into the Third Dimension*.

As a contemporary artist, Marian is fascinated by the creative tension of using ancient techniques and traditional materials to make modern art.

Her pieces are often inspired by the materials she uses, and by



the contrasts that can be achieved by mixing different textures in the same piece: eg. the roughness of marble against the smoothness of glass, or the density of colour in smalti against the softness of unglazed ceramic.

She also focuses on the way in which colour itself can lend movement and dimension to an artwork.

Courses are suitable for people wanting to try smalti, and enhance their practice by making three dimensional pieces.

You are hearing about these courses early in this busy Christmas period, so don't delay in taking up the early bird offer.

Marian has advertised through her own networks as well, and we don't want Guild members to miss out! Maybe this is the solution for that late Christmas present?

Details and enrolments are at <http://creativeglassguild.com.au/shapiro-workshops/>

Lamps magnifique

And now for something completely different!

Guild member Emma Golder has created two unique bedside table lamps with a little bit of French flair.

After Emma purchased the ornate gold lamp bases during a trip to France earlier this year, she was left with the challenge of creating an exceptional lamp design that complemented the bases.

Her resulting circular pattern comprises 25 small rectangular leadlight panels of mottled green Uroborus glass, topped and bottomed with strips of decorative brass ribbon... an elegant addition to the interior of Emma's 19th century heritage-listed New Farm home.



Getting familiar with Sagrada Familia

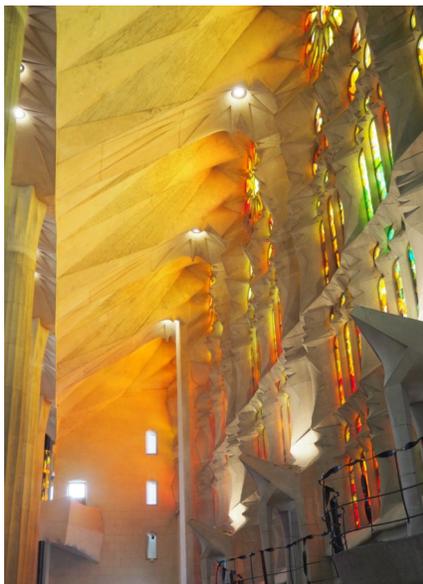
It was the weekend of Spain's La Merce Festival and the city of Barcelona was in full party mode.

I watched parades, free concerts, fireworks and danced in the streets with tens of thousands of others. It was my birthday weekend and it was just like the whole city was partying with me.

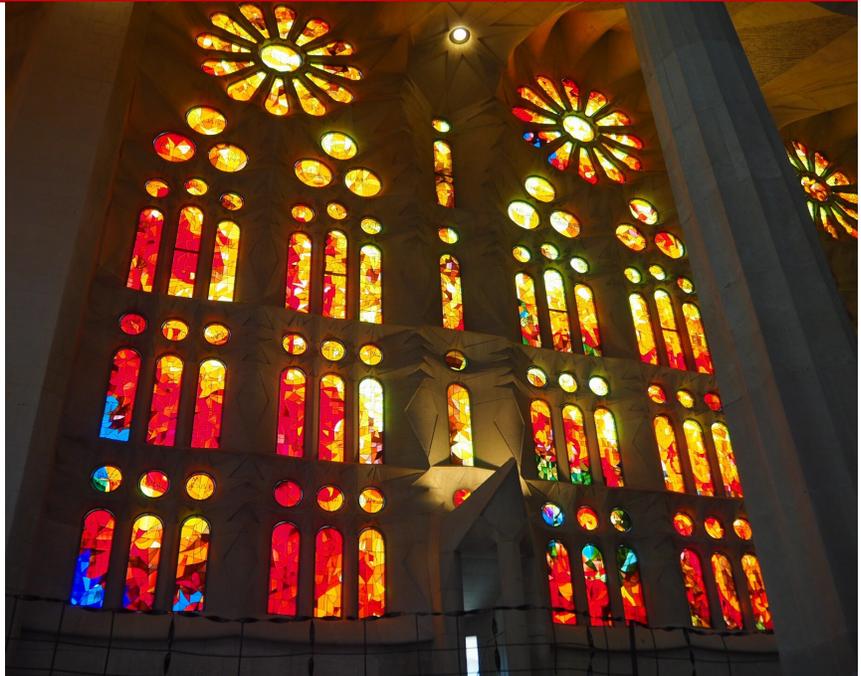
The highlight was a visit to the Sagrada Familia, the largest unfinished Roman Catholic church in the world.

Despite not being completed, it still lives up to all the hype. The first stone was laid in 1882 under the architect Francisco de Villar who lasted for one year.

Then Antoni Gaudi spent 43 years devoted to seeing the Sagrada Familia finished. He died in 1926 and construction continues today. It's hoped that the building will be finished by 2026, with decorative elements to be finished by 2032.



The windows of Sagrada Familia are specially designed to promote a kaleidoscope of colour inside.



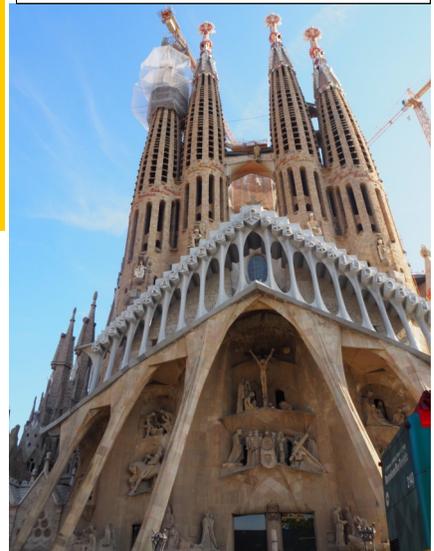
Christine Bell got to live a lifelong dream in September with a visit to the city of Barcelona. Here's her story...

It's an enormous building with the surface area being 4500 square metres.

Best of all, it is an extraordinary display of architecture. This building is mythical and magical all at the same time. The outside of the building has 12 belltowers, sculptures and mosaics.

The Central Nave has been designed to resemble a forest. The windows are modern and colourful and fill the interior with light. The stunning ceiling has to be seen to be believed.

Pictured: Sagrada Familia in all its glory, with its towering spires and brilliant sunlight spilling into the interior through the stunning glass windows. It's not finished, but this architectural wonder is a must-see for anyone visiting Spain and Barcelona.



Put Barcelona on your bucket list. It's worth it. If you happen to find yourself there on the La Merce festival weekend, I hope you get a chance to dance in the streets like I did.

Best wishes, Chris Bell

Splendour of the glass on show

The beauty and splendour of glass were on display throughout November at Toowong Library.

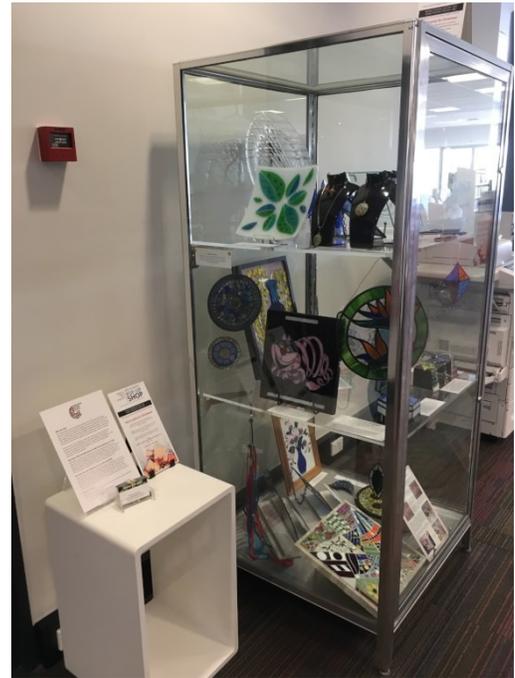
A small display of works by Guild members and tutors aimed to promote the Guild's activities, and its participation in the Brisbane Visual Arts Community (BVAC) Pop-Up Shop on the weekend of December 2-3.

Most Brisbane City Council libraries have display cabinets which they offer to non-profit and non-commercial organisations who wish to promote their activities. The first opportunity for the Guild to participate was June last year when we did a large display at Fairfield Library to promote the Exhibition.

Toowong library staff passed on some lovely comments and even asked to purchase several items as wedding gifts!

We are scheduled to do a much larger display at Toowong Library during the month of June 2018 to promote our Annual Exhibition, which is on 21-22 July next year.

We will be asking members to loan items for this display, so if you want to show off your glass artwork, let Amy Siebold know. And be sure to start working on your "Poetry & Song" theme piece so it's ready for our July 2018 Exhibition!



Display cabinets provided by Brisbane City Council libraries provide ideal opportunities to display the Guild's creations and promote our activities to the community.

How we popped-up shop

As a member of Brisbane Visual Arts Community (BVAC), the Guild participated in one of their twice-yearly Pop-Up Shops in early December.

The Pop-Up Shop was located at the Mt Coot-tha Auditorium -- the very same as our Exhibition -- and the weekend was well run and well attended.

Catja White, Vicki Beldan, Catherine Conaty, Amy Seibold and the Guild all had works for sale, and we were pleased to achieve almost \$2,000 worth of sales between us.



For this initial trial, we invited all of the artists who had items for sale at the Exhibition to participate on a first-in-best-dressed basis -- and based on their willingness to man our booth on a very warm December weekend.

Guild member Gim See also volunteered her time to help us out on Saturday afternoon and got to see a fantastic "recycled / upcycled" fashion show put on by several of the BVAC member groups.

This was a great opportunity for the artists involved to sell their glass works in the Christmas buying period without the heavy work load involved with putting on our own Exhibition.

There were probably a dozen other organisations involved, all selling high-quality, locally hand-crafted items, including papercraft, knitting and felting, ceramics, leatherwork, etc. Our own Graham Heath was selling his fused and slumped works as part of Ipswich Inspirations, another group to which he belongs.

If you are interested in selling items at the next BVAC Pop-Up Shop, please let me know. It is scheduled for Sat-Sun 28-29 April 2018. We've already expressed our general interest to BVAC, but will need your participation to make it a success.

Regards, Amy Siebold



Pictured: Guild members happy at work and play (clockwise from above): Jenny puts the finishing touches to her poppy panel; Kevin and John share a drink and a laugh at the Christmas party; Margaret shows off her leadlight work-in-progress; Solvej, Denise and Gabby join in the fun at the Christmas function, and Emmy and Rob proudly display their copperfoil hummingbirds at the completion of the final beginners' leadlight class for 2017.

