

SHORT COURSE DETAILS

S4D07679 MOSAICS – RE-USE AND REMAKE OUR VISUAL HISTORY

Tutor: EMMA BIGGS

Dates: 4 DAYS SUNDAY 4 MARCH – THURSDAY 8 MARCH

ABOUT YOUR COURSE:

Reinterpret historic mosaics as you analyse their conceptual content and visual realisation. Based around a series of lectures looking at Roman, Byzantine and Medieval mosaics, you will leave with a series of samples to inspire future projects.

The aim of this course is to stimulate ideas for further practical mosaic work, reading, or research outside the course. It is unusual, in being both a making course (we will make mosaics and discuss how and why various techniques are used) and a theory course (we will be thinking about the ideas involved in mosaic making in the past and how they may apply to someone working in mosaic today).

It might be deceptively easy to think that the ideas and belief systems of the art of the past are so different from our everyday experience that it doesn't have much to offer us now, except perhaps as a vast sampler of mosaic techniques. In this course we will touch on technique, but the main focus will be on the value historical examples – as seen in Venice, Rome and Istanbul -- have for the contemporary art of mosaic – still thriving in Ravenna. We will look at the use artists alive and working today have made of historical works. For some of them, technique may be faultless and for others, just a way of getting across an important and pressing message. How might you make use of historical mosaic in your own work? It's full of surprises, jokes, mistakes, absurdities, and sometimes, sublime beauty. The message though, is the main thing. The aim of this course is to look at and analyse what was going on in the art of the past and to think about what the passage of time has done to those original intentions, so that these fascinating examples make more sense, and it becomes easier to see what use they may have for us today, whether as a mosaic maker, or simply as an interested observer.

On the first night there will be a general introduction to the course. Each morning there will include a visual presentation following which we will talk about the relevance of what we have seen, to the project or issue each participant has in mind. (Please note, anything made during the course is more likely to be an exercise than a completed work.) If you sign up, you must be prepared to share ideas, and take feedback from your fellow participants. The rest of the day (and the evenings too, if you wish) will be spent mosaic making – in other words, putting these ideas and thoughts into practice.

LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE/ADVANCED

For those who have taken a related course or have some existing skills, and for more experienced practitioners who want to expand skills. The focus is on working towards independent practise.

ABOUT YOUR TUTOR:

Emma Biggs has worked with mosaic for over 25 years. She shows her work internationally and has won awards for her architectural projects. She has written a number of books on the subject. With her partner Matthew Collings she also makes collaborative paintings.

TIMETABLE:

Arrival day: Sunday 4 March

From 4.00pm Arrival for residential students
6.45pm Non-residential students please arrive by 6.45pm for welcome chat and dinner

Arrival day continued: Sunday 4 March

7.00pm	Dinner
8.00pm – 9.00pm	First teaching session – attendance is an essential part of the course. General introduction and discussion about what each participant wants to get out of the course. If you have come with ideas and images, please bring them to this session.

Other days: Monday 5 March – Wednesday 7 March

9.15am	Morning classes start. There will be a presentation each morning, either at this time, or after the coffee break.
10.30am	Coffee
11.00am	Morning classes continue
12.45pm	Lunch
2.00pm	Afternoon classes: Practical work in the studio
3.30pm	Tea
4.00pm	Afternoon classes continue: Practical work in the studio
5.00pm	Classes finish
From 6.30pm	Dinner
8.00pm	Evening working

Departure day: Thursday 8 March

(Residential students to vacate rooms by 10am)

9.15am	Morning classes start:
10.30am	Coffee
11.00am	Morning classes continue
12.45pm	Lunch
2.00pm	Afternoon classes
3.00pm	Classes finish
3.30pm	Tea then departure

REQUIRED PREPARATION:

Please bring some materials, ideas and inspiration. Bring an idea that you wish to develop.

MATERIALS FOR YOUR COURSE:

We have a generously stocked craft shop, which opens daily from 8.30am–2pm.

For any materials you need to purchase from the shop, we suggest you do so during the first morning of your course, after having discussed with your tutor.

Available from the Tutor:

A range of mosaic materials, supplied at cost, but do bring your own if you have something particular in mind.

Available from the Shop:

Charcoal
Paper and pencils
Small glue brush
Wooden trays (as supports for mosaics): prices from £6 – £15 according to size

Please bring any of the above, if you have them, and in addition:

Hammers and hardies are supplied for your use by the College but you may wish to bring your own tile nippers (see below) as the ones they supply aren't the highest quality

Materials which you think may be of interest or use

Plastic containers for mixing grout and to hold mosaic pieces (e.g. yoghurt pots)

Tile nippers – side tile nippers with a spring

Please bring continued:

Mixing tools – bring old spoons, spatulas or a palette knife if you have them (though the College Shop sells some basic supplies like these)

A jam jar

Packing materials for any work you wish to transport intact – old newspapers can be supplied by the College

Apron/overalls

Barrier cream or rubber gloves

Watercolour type paintbrush

The College will provide a lightweight face mask (essential) and protective glasses.

HEALTH AND SAFETY:

The tutor instructs students in health and safety issues relevant to this course. Students may work unsupervised on agreed projects once they have satisfied the tutor as to their competence. There may be restrictions on the equipment available to students in the tutor's absence. All Personal Protection Equipment, apart from footwear, is provided by the College.