

Artist turns GLASS into works of art

artist

One of a kind certainly describes artist Victor Jorgensen.

His glass mosaics personify original style and he is a master of technique and design. Painting with glass is incredibly complex, but Jorgensen's mosaics

are so skillfully assembled they belie any evidence of the work involved. His mosaics are beautiful examples of a talented artist who knows exactly how paintings work within the context of a difficult medium.

Mosaics are defined as a design or picture made from small pieces of glass, tile or stones set in mortar. In a sense this is what Jorgensen does. He calls himself a mosaicist, but what he creates with glass goes well beyond a simple definition.

with mosaics and began getting interested in the art eight years ago when a few pieces of the Franciscan china he had inherited from his grandmother broke. He didn't want to throw it away so he incorporated the pieces into his early mosaics. After that he began to create more intricate designs with flea market items, but it was more than two years before he began concentrating on glass.

"I found myself moving to glass because it allowed me to do more," he explained. "Glass is of uniformed depth and with a lot more color choices, I could make two dimensional wall hangings. At first I didn't have the appropriate tools — I was cutting glass with tile cutters. Later, I found mosaic artists online and they were a source of learning and techniques. Then I developed my

technique and began using tools and materials from suppliers."

From that beginning, Jorgensen developed his style with glass. A piece may take 50 to 100 hours to complete. He starts with a preliminary sketch

and then a drawing of the figure. He makes decisions as he goes and does not use patterns, which means he does not know the size of glass pieces he might use. The glass is cut with a traditional cutter and sometimes pieces will not be quite right. It takes a lot more glass than you see on a piece. He has a large stock of shards that comes in handy when he needs a specific color.

Finding just the right colors takes an astute eye and it takes a lot of glass to match the colors to the design.

"It is worth it to me to hand-pick glass," he said. "A particular swirl might conjure up an image or color variations might suggest horizons

and atmosphere. I buy glass that appeals to me then I decide what I'm going to make with it. It's really important to not only pick beautiful colors, but also neutral tones like good grays, tans and browns. Bright colors do what they do because neutrals lets them be accents."

Jorgensen cuts sheets of vitreous glass to get the desired effect. He may look for whispiness in glass to use as sky or he uses color gradations to build color in a piece. Small shards could be grass or larger squares could be floor tiles. Variations in size add to the drama of the composition, but also must have naturalness and flow.

Once the glass is cut it is glued on a light-weight backer board and placed in a custom-made iron frame. A colored epoxy grout is added to lock the pieces together. Since colored grout is used, each portion is masked off so the grout applied matches only that particular glass color and does not overflow.

As with any painting, color is primary and Jorgensen must deal with light and shadows to make the painting work. Glass takes an unusual amount of planning and each element must be calculated to enhance the whole.

"With glass I have more flex-

ibility because one of the things that's peculiar to my style is that I have elongated curves," he said. "I try to lay the pieces in a way that indicates the type of material I'm portraying. Longer pieces are in arms and legs. When I do hair I do tiny curved pieces because that is a different texture than skin. I try to get a more cylindrical look with tree trunks with the shape and directions of the pieces. My backgrounds are totally horizontal so that there is a contrast to the subject. Horizontal is peaceful, while things diagonally have movement and are exciting."

Greek myths are a source of inspiration for Jorgensen and the

form also appeals to him and he works his mosaic magic into hair, clothes and contours that elevate the nuances of feminine charm.

Currently, Jorgensen is working on a commission with a crew headed by Brennan Hubble and Kent Houser on a large mural in a Ramona private resident. His main studio is in Napa Valley's Sebastopol, but while he is working locally he has a small studio in El Cajon. His works are in private collections, museums and galleries throughout the United States. One-third of his works are commissions. A large collection of his works are on display at Firefly Mosaics in Old Poway Village.

"Firefly Mosaics has some of the best imported glass in the country. It is the only place to find a line of glass called Smalti that has been in existence since Renaissance times. There is an explosion of people doing mosaics and there are classes everywhere, including Firefly."

Jorgensen says he likes the Greek myths because they speak to us today as they did

in the past. Yet his art is contemporary and his art style brings the mystique of the past to us in fresh, ingenious images. A trait that reveals the characteristics of a true artist.

The works of Victor Jorgensen are on display at Firefly Mosaics in Old Poway Village, 14015 Poway Road, Poway or visit his Web site at www.themosaicmaker.com.



Artist, Victor Jorgensen



The Swing



The Spring

This visionary constructs so much more than assembled squares. His innovative works are realistic glass scenes, portraits or figures that capture the essence of fine art. His pieces demand

folklore of the ancients certainly connect his art stories with his art form. His scenes are also tableaux of things people can relate to — birthdays, an anniversary, a picnic. A portrait of a man with a beard wearing a plaid shirt is an incredible feat of artistic workmanship. Not only did Jorgensen execute a design that no one else has attempted, he also suggested folds and volume. The female

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Zeus Europa