



Founded in July 1987 Tile Heritage is celebrating its 39th anniversary this year. Supporters like YOU... members, major contributors, industry sponsors, generous grantors... everyone... have made possible the continued fulfillment of the Foundation's mission to Document and Preserve tile history in the U.S., both past and present. THANK YOU!

E-News for Winter 2026

Here's What's Below

Woman on Horseback (pseudo)

Confirmation of a Masterpiece

**House Handcraft-ed In San Jose
Mystery solved in Portland**

Welcome from Karim Motawi

Friends will always be with us



Jean Ames' mural's dimensions: 34.5" x 46.75"
(undated). Produced on 12" x 12" x 1/2" Franciscan
Terra Floor tiles, bonded to 1" plywood.

"Woman on Horseback" (pseudo) Gift to Tile Heritage Foundation

In 2025 a Jean Ames' mural, "Woman on Horseback" (pseud), was donated to the Tile Heritage Foundation by Donato V. Pompo, founder of Ceramic Tile and Stone Consultants, Inc. The mural was originally purchased from the artist by Donato's father, Vincent N. Pompo, a manufacturer, importer and distributor of ceramic tile in Southern California. The mural hung above the family's living room fireplace.

Vince Pompo began his tile career around 1950 working for Gladding, McBean in Glendale, California, unloading box cars of quarry tile. From there he worked his way up from the warehouse to upper management over a 25-year period. It should be noted as well, that Vince's mother worked at the Franciscan dinnerware factory, hand-painting the dinnerware when she was pregnant with her son.

“Woman on Horseback” (pseudo) continued



A protégé of Millard Sheets, Jean Goodwin Ames (1903-1986), muralist and educator, was born in Santa Ana, California and studied at the Chouinard Art Institute, the Art Institute of Chicago, Pomona College, and UCLA, receiving her master's degree from USC. Jean taught at Scripps College and Claremont Graduate University. In 1958 she was named a Los Angeles Times Woman of the Year. (Wikipedia.org)

Tile Heritage would like to acknowledge the generosity of Donato Pompo and his family for gifting this mural to the Foundation, an art piece that reflects a mid-20th century period of tile excellence in the United States.

Vince Pompo worked together with Millard Sheets (1907-2089) at Franciscan Tile in Glendale where Vince was a sales manager when Gladding, McBean and Interpace owned Franciscan. Vince sold Home Savings and Loans bank on having Sheets' murals installed on the outside of their banks, many of which are still in existence on those buildings now owned by different companies. The pair also worked on the original Hilton Hotel Rainbow exterior veneer tile installation in Honolulu.

Sheets and Pompo were personal friends as well and owned race horses together. Millard was not only renowned for his tile murals, but he was an accomplished watercolor artist whose paintings are in the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Whitney Museum in New York, the Chicago Art Institute, the National Gallery in Washington DC and the Los Angeles County Museum.



Vince Pompo with his son, Donato. 2014

Confirmation of a Masterpiece

August 8, 2024: "Attached are photos of the Calco <California Clay Products Co.> fireplace from a 1926 home in Los Angeles! Let me know if you'd like the owner to contact you." From Iris Shih, archivist at the Pasadena Museum of History.

August 8th: We'd be delighted to feature this pristine Calco fireplace mantel in "E-News." I'd need a picture of his house from the street, name of the architect if available, and a short paragraph from the owner with his personal feelings living with such a masterpiece. '26 is when Rufus Keeler left for Malibu, which means that he and/or his staff would have been responsible for each and every Aztec interpretation. This is quite wonderful, indeed. jt



Nestled in the hills in the Los Angeles area.



August 10th: Recently, I sent pictures of my Batchelder fireplace that I now know is Calco (although I'm not sure there's any signature on it). The previous owner of my house had sent me a book of Batchelder's because he saw one with similar tiles, and we both agreed that he was probably the maker. Anyway, if you're still interested in putting it in your newsletter, I would be open to it. Dan

August 12th: Dan, your Calco fireplace is pristine! We'd certainly like to feature your home. Can you send us a picture of your house from the road? We like to match up tile installations with architecture. We do not publish addresses. By the way, Rufus Keeler would be the person responsible for your Aztec design tiles. He was a founder of Calco in South Gate as well as the superintendent and glaze specialist at Malibu Potteries. jt

August 16th: I sure appreciate your clarifying who created the tiles. From the street the front of my house is just a garage so it doesn't have much curb appeal. The house sets down the hill. Dan



In the master bathroom, in addition to the tiles, there are towel bars, a towel hook, built-in soap dishes, curtain rods, and a tooth brush holder.





Spanish Colonial architecture in San Jose, 1930.

House Handcraft-ed in San Jose

My reason for reaching out to you is to try to ensure that the new owners (if we sell) understand - and, hopefully, appreciate - the history and merit of the tiles, as there has been talk about renovating the bathroom. Real estate records show that my home was built in 1930. In a 1931 phone book, I found that Frank M. Santana, who served on the city's planning commission, lived here.

Kind regards, Lilian

Lilian, you have Handcraft tile produced in Milpitas, California. I'll send you a brief history of the company, which remains in business today but on a much smaller scale. jt



Exotic Handcraft Tile warms the living room. Design tile details are below.



Mystery Solved in Portland, OR

Good morning! I am a homeowner in Portland, Oregon. I'm preparing to sell my home and learned from a realtor that the tiles in our fireplace are likely Batchelder tiles. I had long wondered who the artist was. Iris Shih at the Pasadena Museum of History has assured me they are not! I hope my photos will confirm their origin. We are told that our home was likely built in 1936.

The large center tile features a casita or villa in front of two mountains and surrounded by trees. There are geometric tiles on both sides of the fireplace, as well as geometric tiles in the niche.



Cara, greetings from Tile Heritage!

Your fireplace tile surround was produced in Oakland, California by Charles Elsenius at Woolenius Tile Co. (1927-1941). The story of this man and his company can be found in *California Tile: The Golden Era 1910-1940* published by Schiffer in 2003. Your fireplace is a beauty for sure. I had never seen the keystone tile (below) before! jt



We would love to learn more about this design (is this a common or rare tile, etc), any historical information available, and how/where we might learn of its value (beyond the obvious aesthetics).

Thank you, Cara





Tile Heritage Foundation

Karim Motawi
Executive Director of Development

I have recently joined the Tile Heritage Foundation as Executive Director of Development. My job is to help prepare the Foundation for the future and work to continue its legacy as the guardian of our sacred tile heritage.

While I invite you to learn more about our work at www.tileheritage.org, I first want to share why this mission is so deeply personal to me.

MY TILE HERITAGE STORY

When I started making tile in a garage in Ann Arbor, Michigan in 1992, I was making tile in a bubble. I didn't know any tile history or about the tile industry; I just didn't know much of anything. What I did know was that clay felt good in my hands and that I wanted to make something beautiful.

Then I met Joe Taylor and Sheila Menzies, the founders of the Tile Heritage Foundation and attended my first Tile Heritage symposium. What I didn't know at the time, but I would come to understand later, is that this was the Big Bang Moment of my life in tile.

They introduced me and many others to the handmade tile community that they, in large part, created and fostered. They shared with me their passion for historic tile that I caught and carry with me to this day. Through their efforts, I secured my first tile showroom client, setting me on a path in the industry that I have followed for 33 years.

Since then, I have made tile, sold tile, collected historic tile, taught tile making, earned a living, and made lifelong friends and memories. I owe much to Joe and Sheila, and the whole Tile Heritage family.

This is why, when the idea of joining the Foundation and working to secure its future arose, I knew this was the role for me. I've come full circle, returning to where I started, and now it is my time to protect and continue the living legacy of the Tile Heritage Foundation.

Karim

Board of Directors

Our most valuable asset at Tile Heritage Foundation is our dedicated governing body, the board of directors.



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Bart Bettiga



Rick Church



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**Molly Trendell
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Co-founder and
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Tile Heritage Foundation executive staff and dedicated staff volunteers comprise extensive industry and technical expertise.



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Co-founder, Editor



Sheila Menzies
Co-founder, Executive
Director



Karim Motawi
Executive Director of
Development



Dale Wiley
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Jenny E. Meeker
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**Lucas O. A.
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Photographer



**Cynthia Faber
Smith**
Website Management



Susan Oleari
Bookkeeper



**Alistar W.
Hamilton**
IT Services



Tim Grasty
Collections Manager, SC

Friends who will always be with us

Ginger Dunlap-Dietz, a close friend and member of Tile Heritage for many years. jt



Ginger Dunlap-Dietz

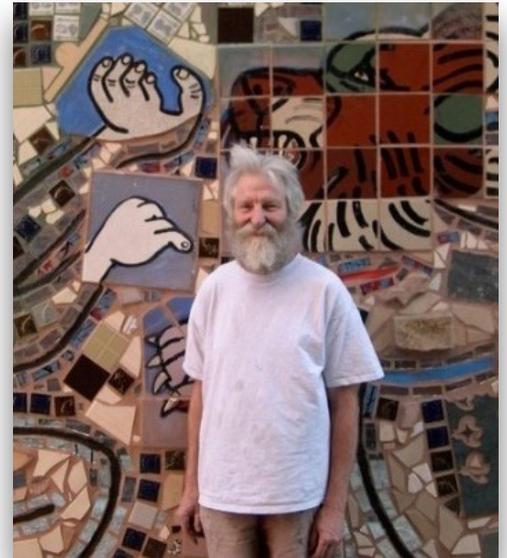
A message on behalf of Hugh Dietz, Ben Dietz, and Isaac Dietz

We want you to know that Ginger Dunlap-Dietz, aka Ginger-Pots, or Grandma Picci, passed away last year, peacefully and quickly, as she always planned. She was recently diagnosed with liver cancer, and passed after a mercifully short period of illness following her diagnosis.

We remember her lovingly as Mom, Wife, Grandmother, Mother-in-Law, cousin, friend, artist, gallery and studio owner, ceramic educator, mosaic muralist, inspiration, collaborator, and fountain of joy, love and experience. Her wonderful and playful eye for the arts, and deep appreciation and knowledge of art process will be fondly remembered by the many who knew her. She was a lifelong artist, potter and ceramicist, working almost daily with clay until just the last week of her life.

Isaiah Zagar, master of mosaic art.

We are heartbroken to announce the death of Isaiah Zagar on February 19th 2026. He died from complications of heart failure and Parkinson's Disease. In his 86 years, Isaiah became one of the most renowned mosaicists on earth, working from sunrise to sunset each day; creating hundreds of public mosaics, dozens of buildings and facades, and thousands of drawings, paintings, prints, and photographs. One of Isaiah's greatest joys was collaborating with other artists, specifically with folk artists and other art environment creators around the world. His other great joy was being with friends and family, particularly his two sons, Zeke and Jeremiah, and his wife, muse, and partner in visionary thinking, Julia.



Isaiah Zagar, surrounded

Isaiah was more than the founder of Philadelphia's Magic Gardens; he was our close friend, teacher, collaborator, and creative inspiration. He was unlike anyone we have ever met and will ever meet. Above all things, he was an artist. In his lifetime, he created a body of work that is unique and remarkable, and one that has left an everlasting mark on our city.

He always told us that the staff and visitors were the beating heart of his artworks, and with us it will beat on. We love you, Isaiah. We will miss you so much.

Statement from Emily Smith, Executive Director of Philadelphia's Magic Gardens

Honoring Cleota Reed (1935-2025), a founding and sustaining member of the Tile Heritage Foundation.

On Friday evening, May 19th, 1917, approximately 80 invited guests gathered in the Elkins Gallery at the Mercer Museum in Doylestown, Pennsylvania to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Tile Heritage Foundation. The catered event featured fine hors d'oeuvres, beer and wine as well as a silent auction of special tiles and ceramic objects from artisans throughout North America.

The highlight of the evening was the presentation of the Tile Heritage Award to tile historian Cleota Reed, who unbeknownst to her had been secretly encouraged by her husband and daughter in Syracuse, New York to attend the Foundation's special event. As her family members and friends appeared unexpectedly at the party, she knew something was up. About an hour into the program, Katia McGuirk, then a local tile and mosaic artist who serves on the board of directors of Tile Heritage, addressed the assemblage:

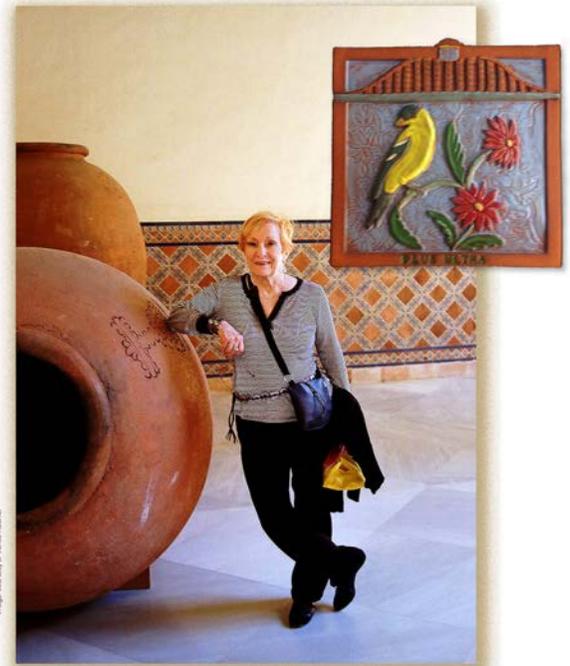
"In 1993 the board of directors of Tile Heritage wished to acknowledge those individuals who embodied the Tile Heritage mission in some exemplary way: promoting an awareness and appreciation of ceramic surfaces in the U.S. The Tile Heritage Award was thus created and by this time has been presented to 13 individuals.

"We can only speculate why in the early 1980s our dear friend, **Cleota Reed**, decided to devote her life to researching the story of **Henry Chapman Mercer** and his tiles. In the Preface to her book *Henry Chapman Mercer and the Moravian Pottery and Tile Works* she wrote: 'Henry Chapman Mercer transformed the art of the ceramic tile in America. He elevated it from a prosaic form of decoration to a medium of plastic expression capable of conveying original and complex ideas. His work as a ceramist was one of the most distinctive products of the American Arts and Crafts movement and its advocacy of handcrafted decorative objects.

"Cle's scholarship, her devotion to tiles as a decorative medium, has served as an inspiration to countless folks who have come to Doylestown and become transfixed by Mercer himself, the legend, and his uniquely fabulous designs, installations and tiles that continue to inspire generations of tile makers throughout the United States and beyond, those who work with their hands and create beautiful things to enrich the lives of others.

"Cleota Reed, you have inspired so many. You honor us all in receiving the Tile Heritage Award for 2017, designed just for you by your friend Mandy Baker at Whispering Hill Studio."

TILE HERITAGE AWARD



**CLEOTA REED
2017**

TILE HERITAGE FOUNDATION PLANNED GIVING

Make preserving the Ceramic Tile Traditions in America
part of your Legacy

As a **Legacy Friend** you can have a lasting impact on tile history preservation by leaving a gift to Tile Heritage Foundation in your will, trust or by beneficiary designation.

DETAILS:



TILE HERITAGE FOUNDATION
IS GROWING! DETAILS:



There are multiple ways to CAPITALIZE
and SUPPORT the Foundation into the future!

TILE HERITAGE SPONSORS

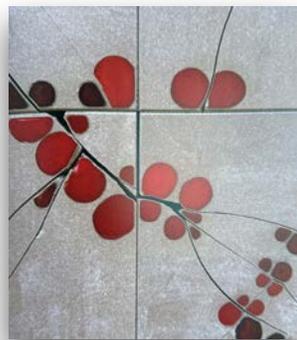


FOR WHOM IS ART HISTORY TOLD? GRIFF WILLIAMS

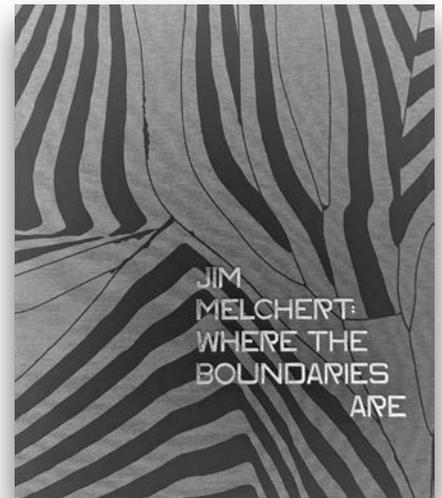
The history of art is rife with tales of the artist as a heroic virtuoso – an outsider of singular divine talent whose work towers above that of their peers and who stands before us to be adored. This notion of the artist as a virtuoso serves the commercial aspect of the arts but little else. It certainly doesn't get us any closer to understanding what creativity is or what is required to pursue a lifetime of artistic practice. And we rarely hear the stories of those who pursue goals that aren't commercially driven. This is that story. The book is the first monograph ever published about the profoundly impactful career of Jim Melchert (1930-2023), a career that was largely unconcerned with the commercial marketplace, and for that reason, you know less about him. The modern history of art is largely the story of white men who achieved success in the galleries of New York. But what of the tens of thousands of artists around the globe who lead extraordinary lives of curiosity, creativity, and generosity for whom no story is written? GW



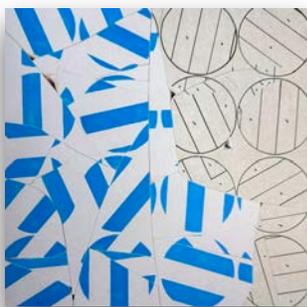
Jim Melchert painting tile for *Coming to Light* at the Tile Guild, Los Angeles, CA. (1990)



Constellations
Yield (in Red) #1



Jim Melchert:
Where the Boundaries Are (256 pages)
written by Griff Williams,
published by Gallery 16 Editions.



Scores and Performances (blue),
2014, broken and fired porcelain
tile, 18'x18"



Just Why?, 2022, broken and
glazed porcelain tile, 12"x12"

tinyurl.com/BuyMelchertBook



Flight, 2014, broken and fired porcelain
tile with glaze, 71"x71". San Francisco
Museum of Modern Art collection