

Exhibition

Elaine M. Goodwin Gallery Bourglinster
14th. September 2012

Dear guests, Dear Elaine,

It is both an honour and a pleasure for me to give a short introduction tonight to this delightful exhibition of Elaine M Goodwin's newest mosaic art.

Elaine lives and works in Exeter, England, and she has already exhibited a number of times here in Bourglinster, which means that a close relationship has developed between the artist and Luxembourg.

I think we all appreciate this link, as it has opened up intellectual perspectives and created a new cultural space for us.

Dear Friends of the Arts,

Elaine M Goodwin is an artist who travels the world to explore the roots of her medium. This artistic journey has led her to engage in an internal intellectual and spiritual dialogue, which has inspired not only her working methods, but also the core of her artistic concept.

Elaine is not merely an artist working in the medium of mosaic, but she has pushed at the boundaries of this medium and has established a unique new way of working with it.

Although Elaine studied sculpture at art school, her real breakthrough came in the early 1990s, with her discovery of the Byzantine key to mosaic art. This happened, as she herself has explained, in the 6th-century basilica of San Vitale in the Italian town of Ravenna where she was studying Byzantine mosaics.

It was through these works that she had a revelation of light, which has stayed with her since. The radiance emanating from these mosaics captivated her not only because of the mirroring effect of their stones, but this light also spoke of a de-materialized space, a new artistic space for meditative contemplation.

This seminal experience in Ravenna was therefore not only the culmination of an art history pilgrimage, but it marked a significant turning point in Elaine's artistic production and eventually became the founding principle of her work. Consequently, this exhibition should be seen in part as a homage to Byzantine mosaic art.

Elaine's artistic journey has taken her from the ancient to the modern world and has engaged her on many levels. Its culmination provided her with the central focus of her work. It is a journey which has shown clearly that an active artistic engagement with an age old technique is still relevant even in our technologically advanced world and that mosaic art has never ceased to shine out despite the passage of time.

Elaine's mosaics generally express light and radiance, whether they reflect light through the medium of gold or glass or whether they imitate the effects of light as does Carrara marble.

This engagement with light in an almost mystical sense is the central thread passing through her mosaics and it encapsulates the artist's expression and design. Light is integral to the soul of her mosaics and moreover the patterns which emerge from the mosaic stones reflect worlds of feelings and thought and provide the driving force behind Elaine's work.

The poetry of Elaine's mosaics is highly polarized. It embraces the duality of male and female, light and dark, the symmetrical interplay of left and right, the cycle of life and death, of joy and suffering. The artist nevertheless remains firmly anchored in the long-standing tradition of mosaic art.

This is reflected in her technical mastery but also in her talent for composition. However, Elaine's familiarity with her medium, technical skill and artistic focus do not alone explain the vibrant effect of her work on the public.

This comes from the fact that though respecting the well established tradition of mosaic art she does not simply rely on the old, but has established new, innovative ways of working with it.

She consequently highlights the fact that an art form anchored in tradition can continually reinvent itself and that new life can be breathed into apparently out dated forms. On her own artistic journey Elaine M Goodwin has thrown off the weight of the past and overcome mental barriers to beat a new path and open new horizons in a well known landscape.

As a poet moulds verses from words, so Elaine speaks through the stone fragments of her mosaics, which are in fact poems that allow us to make exciting new discoveries in our modern era, which is increasingly characterized by rapid communication and virtual parallel worlds. Elaine's mosaics provide us with sustainable artistic values in the midst of our human condition.

Dear Elaine,

The stones of your mosaics are infused with a soul fashioned from light. They constitute a new poetic language for living.

I would like to thank you all for listening and encourage you to discover and enjoy the delights of this exhibition.

Paul Bertemes

Luxembourg, September 2012