

1. What fascinates you about Byzantium?

Byzantium, present day Istanbul, was the last city in the European part of the Roman Empire, and it was the greatest - not least in having a superb mosaic workshop! The city's founder, Emperor Constantine's successor, was Justinian (c.482-565). He it was, who sent highly trained artists to enhance the new edifices of an ambitious and extravagant building programme throughout the Mediterranean. For many generations mosaicists were sent from Byzantium to Ravenna, Jerusalem, Sicily and other parts of Italy, Greece, Spain, Syria, Egypt and Kiev in Russia to create aspirational schemes for churches, palaces and also mosques.

I have seen many of these mosaics in-situ...and marvelled at them.

On one early visit, in Ravenna in Italy, I unravelled a secret held within the mosaics which has influenced my work ever since and inspires this present exhibition.

2. One of the mosaics in the exhibition at Bourglinster is called '*Sailing To Byzantium*'. Is there a link to a poem of William Butler Yeats?

Poems are read and re-read.

This mosaic was the first work done for this 2012/13 touring exhibition titled '*Homage To Byzantium*' which starts here in Luxembourg. It was indeed originally inspired in part by the wondrous poem by the Irish poet, W.B.Yeats (1865-1939) of the same title - a poem which I have known since school days and one which has always intrigued.

My journey in this instance is one taken as an artist with a knowing nod and a wink toward the ancient Byzantine mosaic maestros.

3. Where do you get your mosaic stones? I wonder if you are travelling all over the world to get THE perfect stone...

Ha ! Ha! I believe there is no such thing...It is not the stones, or *tesserae*, as they are called in mosaic, that have to be perfect.

For me the search is a personal one - a conceptual one - which questions the Absolutes, and for this I work with **light**. This is made by manipulating the materials that I choose to use - mosaic golds and specialized mosaic glass , called *smalti*, from Venice and mirror glass from Ravenna. All materials which have differing reflective surfaces.

4. Is a mosaic a more perennial piece of art because of the materials used than for instance a painting?

Certainly it is an enduring art form - and knowing this - there is a certain amount of daunting responsibility...

As I work with **light** within my work... the changes of perception by the viewer are infinite - forever giving new answers to the looking. So there is a marvellous ambiguity between endurance and fleetingness.

5. You have already had a few exhibitions in the Grand-Duchy; do you have a special relationship with Luxembourg?

I feel I have - ever since my first exhibition here in 1992, exactly twenty years ago.