



**Is that on the SCQF...? London School of Mosaic's Diploma in Mosaic Studies
by Sylvie Jacobi, Head of Education at the London School of Mosaic**

London School of Mosaic is the first education institution in the UK focusing on teaching mosaic up to higher education level through both practice and theory. We were formed in 2017 with the aim to provide a sustained programme of teaching that reflects the ambition for self-trained mosaic makers to professionalise their practice. We are one of a handful of institutions for mosaic worldwide and are proud to be building on mosaic's British heritage from the Romans to the Victorians. Our curriculum extends this tradition through technical and design expertise from the Italian master mosaicists who work with us. In 2018 we established the Diploma in Mosaic Studies, which is the first sustained one-year programme in the subject taught in the UK (and in the English speaking world).

The course has been credit rated by the SQA (Scottish Qualifications Authority) at SCQF Level 7 with 120 credits. The core module is focused on practice as students specialise in traditional mosaic making techniques through projects completed in the workshop, which is contextualised by 2 terms of design training and history of mosaic lectures. At the end of the year students produce a final project and get to present this at an exhibition. In our first year

we had 8 students enrolled and our second year cohort consisted of 12 students. We also teach around 100 students each term in short courses and vocational training.

We are the only institution in the UK teaching mosaic at higher education level. Before forming as a school we had over 10 years' experience through Southbank Mosaics, which was a studio that used mosaic as a catalyst for social impact. We continue to build on this ethos as we run several free activities for the local community and would like to recruit more students onto our diploma from disadvantaged backgrounds. We found there to be many knowledge gaps in our area of work that prevented professional development. Many of the techniques and design approaches were not well understood or contextualised and practitioners lacked experience of critical analysis of what they were making, which is what we specifically address in our diploma.

The diploma is unique because our students learn the traditional mosaic making techniques using Hammer and Hardie, so they know how work with materials such as marble and smalti, a specialist mosaic glass used in many cathedrals. Prior to our diploma there was no opportunity for mosaic makers to specialise in these techniques here in the UK. This prepares our graduates to work on Britain's historical buildings in which those materials were used as well as on commissions of new work. Our course contextualises this with intensive training in mosaic design, which introduces aspects of composition, colour theory, andamenti (pattern) and material composition.

It enables students to develop design ideas through to technical designs. This is unique in the context of UK art schools where aspects of skill and technique have been side-lined in favour of more conceptual approaches. The History of Mosaic module not only gives students theoretical insights into the origins of mosaic from Roman through to Byzantine art, students also do archaeological experiments into ancient practice which allows reflections on modern mosaic.

Our aim is for the course to nurture excellent mosaic makers, who can either open their own studio or teach mosaic so that our practice is not lost to future generations. The diploma is embedded in our studio which takes on commissions and in which we have various other teaching activities going on, which our diploma students are welcome to take part in to gain professional experience.

For more information visit www.lsomosaic.com