



# Propensity for Perfectionism

Rahnee Gladwin is an acclaimed artist in her field of custom mosaic design and assembly. **Nancy Foster** puts the pieces together.





Rahnee Gladwin, owner of R. Gladwin i Design Tile in Fredericksburg, stays quite busy on intricate tile projects that are made to flow with the aesthetic of each client's home or business. A propensity for perfectionism to ensure complete satisfaction has been a consistent factor in her reputation as an innovative designer in this trendy specialty market.

### Creating a Niche

Gladwin and her husband moved to this region from the San Francisco Bay area in the 90s because they "loved the Hill Country, Texas music, and the nature conservancy. This area is just so special." She comes from a background of 25 years experience in design and 20 years working in stone, glass, and ceramic tiles.

"I was looking for and finally found an outlet for my art school background and imagination," she says, and has been working in custom tile in the Hill Country for the past 16 years, including a current five-year stint at her office/studio in Fredericksburg.

Explaining further why she chose tile as her artistic genre, she explains, "I enjoy using this medium to convey a very personal story of my client with color and texture. Mosaics actually chose me, she said." I was asked to develop a large-scale mosaic for a

**"I was looking for and finally found an outlet for my art school background and imagination."**

Galveston client who I was working with on a high-end remodel. The client wanted to surround herself in her very large master bath with an underwater reef scene that was evocative of the Tahitian reefs that she snorkeled in as a child. I created a mosaic experience that included floor-to-ceiling mosaic walls of tropical reefs and fish indigenous to the Tahitian reef area, a 'blue hole' custom tub lined with translucent aqua glass mosaic pieces and a freestanding wall that was the entrance to the wet area with a large turtle floating in the sea.

All my mosaic is hand cut and assembled and the Tahitian reefs project included hundreds of glass colors and stones to achieve the effect desired."

Of the hundreds of pieces she has completed, Gladwin says she is most proud of the Galveston mosaic because it was site-specific and drew inspiration from the local shorebirds and flora.

When asked if she has a favorite project, she smiles. "I love all my children," she says, although she does give the nod to "The Maze" at the Witte Museum in San Antonio, a 10-foot x 12-foot permanent installation of a mosaic interpretation for a Navajo rug.

"I love knowing the public has an opportunity to interact with this piece on a daily basis, she said."





### Stellar reputation:

R. Gladwin i Design Tile pieces appear in homes and businesses across the U.S. and Canada and have been featured in dozens of periodicals including Architectural Record, Western Art and Architecture and Urban Home. Among her many distinctive recognitions is the 2007 Legacy of Design award from American Society of Interior Designers. She is also an Allied Member of the American Institute of Architects and a member of the American Tile Heritage Foundation.

Gladwin's reputation has drawn a clientele from near and far, from satisfied individual clients she has worked with and from respected architects and designers who laud her professionalism and inventive designs.

Rahnee Gladwin has a message for future clients.

"I want people to know that each of my pieces is specific to the client and project. Each project is its own story and each one has a unique connection to the client and site. I do not repeat a project; each stands alone and is unique to that client's vision. It will not be duplicated."



## The Process:

Gladwin can use up to 100 different tile types in her creations and is exacting in every detail.

All her mosaics are hand cut and assembled and can incorporate many varieties of tile and finishes to create the desired effect. Her talent extends to combining tile types to create a three-dimensional look as in a custom project used to craft intricate beach grasses, sea birds, fish and nature-based elements into the designated space. Each project is a painstaking effort that results in a timeless work of architectural beauty.



Photos: Courtesy photos