

Trends

Steve Keeling

DKT Artworks' co-founder Steve Keeling has been involved in the creation of bespoke artworks for 40 years, with involvement in over 75 high-profile superyacht projects.
dkt.co.uk



Creating a complex mosaic requires skill and precision, but the end result can be a unique and exclusive interior design feature.

I founded DKT Artworks – a multidisciplinary team of imaginative and highly skilled artists – in 1979 with two college friends, Sean Trowbridge and Niki Davies. We saw potential in the – then neglected – field of decorative arts and we would like to think this placed us at the forefront of their revival in the early 1980s.

Since then, we have been working with the industry's most respected designers, shipyards and specialist outfitters, and today our creations can be found on some of the most renowned superyachts in the world.

We specialise in bespoke artworks and limited editions, where decorative finishes lend a contemporary resonance to traditional arts and crafts. Our projects span classic, period, and contemporary genres.

This year we will celebrate 40 years since our foundation, having assembled a team of talented artists and artisans who master a plethora of skills, from murals and trompe l'oeil to handcrafted mosaics, painted and gilded surfaces, verre églomisé, sculpture and bas-relief. As well as our main studio in London, since 2018 we operate from a second base in Prague to better service our mainland Europe based clients.

Among the many skills within our portfolio, highly complex mosaics are certainly one to mention because they require special dedication and precision as well as great knowledge of materials, and only few companies can offer this, as we do with our Fine Art Mosaics range.

We have found there are several reasons why people like mosaics. They can be a great backdrop or an interesting focal point and highlight the need for something different and exclusive, where you really see the hand of the artist. Owners appreciate the attention to detail in the way each tessera is placed. When the requirement is for something different, intricate, handcrafted, and of high precision, an artistic approach to composition can lead to something special.

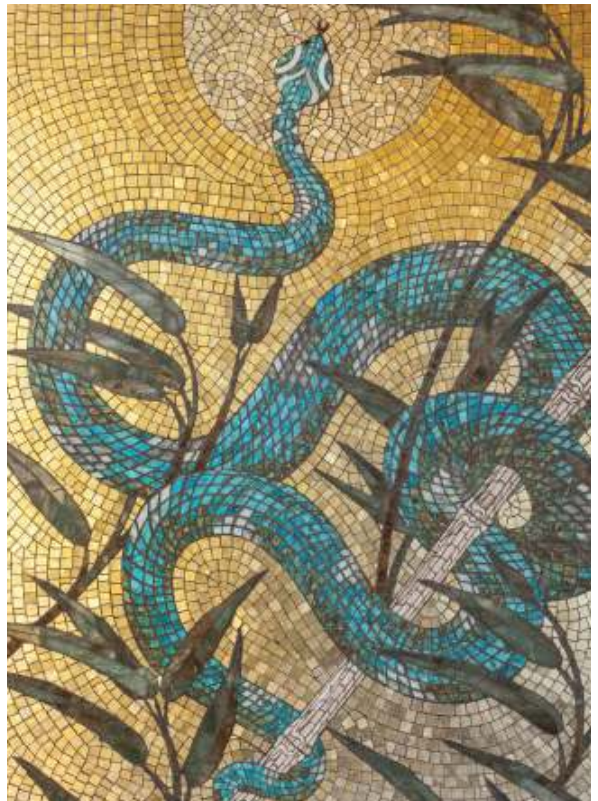
To give a good example, we were thrilled to be involved in a project



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for a complex mosaic carried out in cooperation with Reymond Langton Design on a private superyacht project for Lürssen. The theme – encompassing the spa area, the steam room and the day head – was based around the Persian buta or boteh pattern, a teardrop-shaped motif with a curved upper end, more commonly known in the United Kingdom as Indian Ham or Paisley pattern.

As well as retaining the flow of the basic motif proper of the Paisley pattern, the brief required us to introduce variety and interest in the interpretation, creating a bespoke



art piece. Due to the complexity of the design and the application, we had to use different techniques and materials for each of the elements. Our team liaised directly with the Reymond Langton team, making sure all steps of the process were planned and coordinated as effectively as possible.

The project started with the designer providing DKT Artworks with computer renders of their vision and the areas involved. Before starting production, we had to research sources of raw materials and visit suppliers in Europe, in order to secure a consistent supply. Once this was accomplished and we progressed to the next stage, the floor mosaics were set against a background of Botticino marble inlaid with turquoise (which we found in the last working mine in North America), amethyst, rose and yellow quartz, and Tiger's Eye – a hard stone found predominantly in South Africa and Australia.



Clockwise from above:
The completed Paisley-inspired mosaic.

Work in progress using metal leaf mosaic tiles.

Another of DKT's major mosaic works.

Bamboo Viper, part of DKT's Fine Art range of mosaics.

In order to accommodate obstacles such as inspection hatches and service points, the initial designs had to be modified to fit the final dimensions of the space. We had to find original creative solutions to overcome some challenges presented by the floor plan, and effective liaison with German outfitter Vedder was key. As a result, the outfitters divided the floor area into manageable sections to form a jigsaw-like series of panels, perfectly cut to fit the space along lines in the pattern. Once we received these panels, we could start the mosaic application process.

Another challenge was the fact that Tiger's Eye is a very hard stone, and as a result the design needed to be interpreted

in such a way as to keep the cutting process of these particular elements as straightforward as possible.

Upon completion, we laid out the mosaic for final inspection by the Reymond Langton Design team before shipping it to Germany for installation. Our team was, of course, on site to carry out the final finishing on board.

The wall-mounted mosaics commissioned for the spa area and steam room were set against a background of Tiger's Eye inlaid with turquoise, amethyst, rose and yellow quartz. The dimensions of these artworks were determined in advance and each was made in a single panel so, from a production point of view, were more straightforward

than the floor mosaic.

The wall-mounted mosaic commissioned for the day head had a graded background of seven metal leaf mosaic tiles from Angelo Orsoni, Venice. This was inlaid with a variety of hand-cut tesserae embellished with details cut by water jet.

The mosaics were made using the traditional indirect technique, meaning the tesserae were not glued onto the panels immediately, which allows for adjusting material and shapes if required. The overall project took almost two years from design to completion, with lots of hard work and precision but, as always, knowing the client was happy was a great reward for the whole team involved. [O](#)