



Cartunes on Parade

Detroit, MI

Project Spotlight: June 2005



LOCATION:

Public Art Exhibit
Center for
Creative Studies Gallery
Detroit, MI

ARTIST:

Penny Mason
Clarkston, MI

INSTALLATION SYSTEM:

LATICRETE International, Inc.
Bethany, CT

LATICRETE PRODUCTS USED:

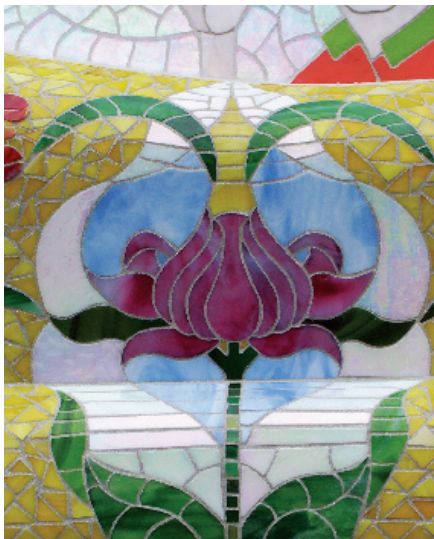
LATAPOXY® 300 Epoxy Adhesive
LATICRETE® SpectraLOCK™ PRO Grout
LATICRETE SpectraLOCK Dazzle
(Pearl and Glow)

LATICRETE DISTRIBUTOR:

Genesee Ceramic Tile Dist Inc.
Sterling Heights, MI

LATICRETE adds shimmer and glow to mosaic sculpture

By Lesley Goddin



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Air conditioning. Power steering. CD/MP3 player. Sunroof. And a fresh coat of glistening — glass mosaic tile! OK, maybe not your usual automobile options. But this isn't your usual automobile.

"C.C. Rider" is a stylized car sculpture made out of ABS plastic, covered in a 60's design theme formed by broken glass mosaics. It's one of 102 designs chosen to be part of the international CarTunes on Parade project (www.cartunesonparade.org) in the cities of Detroit, Mich., and Windsor, Ontario.

Penny Mason, the local artist who brought C.C. Rider to life created a magical, whimsical nostalgic design out of nearly 20,000 pieces of cut glass. She relied on LATAPOXY® 300 Epoxy Adhesive from LATICRETE International to bond glass to plastic and LATICRETE® SpectraLOCK™ Pro Grout with Dazzle components to add sparkle and a nighttime glow.

CarTunes on Parade celebrates the car and music history of these two cities. The outdoor art exhibition, inspired by Cows on Parade in Chicago and Moose in the City in Toronto, adds beauty and fun to public spaces on both sides of the border. As the first international public art project of its kind, it aims to increase awareness for public art, recognize and support local artists, boost local tourism and benefit both the YMCA of Metropolitan Detroit's Y-Arts Program and the Windsor Endowment for the Arts.

There's also an educational outreach component of the event, involving lesson plans for students in grades kindergarten through 12 to learn about related topics. Thirteen high schools were also involved in creating sculptures for the exhibition.

Mason, the Clarkston, Mich. — based mosaic/mixed media artist who designed and executed C.C. Rider, has only been working with mosaics for two years, but she's twice received the Detroit Festival of Arts "Award for Excellence" (www.pennymason.com). With degrees from Wayne State University in art education and computer programming/systems analysis and networking, Mason has taught at private and public schools. She's also a member of the Society of American Mosaic Artists (SAMA) and Local 32 Tile, Marble & Terrazzo.

Her connection with mosaic tile comes through husband John, who is the craft director, Tile Marble & Terrazzo mechanics division of the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers (BAC). "I've gone to the Coverings show with him and saw

tools and products that are fun to work with," Mason said. "I decided to give it a try."

Mason's design was chosen by a jury and then selected for a \$5,000 sponsorship by the DaimlerChrysler Corporation. Sponsors chose from 136 scaled down models or "maquettes" of the final designs that were only 1/7th the size of the final sculpture.

Mason's design caught the eye of Rick Aneiros, vice president of DaimlerChrysler Jeep & Truck Design. "What really stood out for him was the brightness and combinations of colors and the pretty unique approach," said Sam Locricchio, manager of communications for Chrysler Group Design. "It gave off a very positive vibe. It played into a 60's theme that seemed to permeate throughout most of the CarTunes, focusing on the Motown era."

Mason said, "I developed colors and drawings reminiscent of the hippies. We used to go to The Hideout and Crow's Nest, and see Mitch Rider and the Detroit Wheels and Bob Seger." The design included images of doves and peace signs, flowers and slogans like "Flower Power," and "Groovy" combined with vibrant, luminous and iridescent colors.

The actual sculpture measured 7' long by 4' tall by 3.5' wide. Windsor artist Joe DeAngelis designed the car prototype, and Bernard Mould, Ltd produced the moulds in Windsor.

Foam backing coated the inside of the two-part ABS plastic shell, which had to be screwed together. Mason glued foam around the lip, carved it and applied fiberglass mesh and Bondo auto body filler around it to form a smooth curve. Husband John built a wheeled wooden stand to make it easy to move the sculpture around the studio.

After Mason sanded and primed it white to create a canvas of sorts, she spent almost a week drawing so the design would flow from one element into another. She used pencil and then magic marker that was the exact width of her grout joints — 3/4".

Then she and assistant Jacki Beavais started cutting glass for the front hood, choosing swirled colors that gave nice color variations. She used sheets of glass in at least 20 color families, and cut them to the desired size with nippers and a ring saw for intricate pieces. She sourced glass from Michigan stores Always Stained

Glass in Auburn Hills and Delphi Stained Glass in Lansing.

Bonding non-porous glass to non-porous ABS plastic proved to be a challenge. She turned to husband John as a technical advisor who contacted the Technical Service hotline at Laticrete International about bonding glass to plastic.

Arthur Mintie, Director of Technical Services at Laticrete advised the Masons to use LATAPOXY® 300 Epoxy Adhesive, since conventional adhesives wouldn't adhere to ABS plastic. "Cement based or latex-fortified cement-based products commonly used for tile and stone adhere well to masonry surfaces, but epoxy-based adhesives are the only choice for ABS or fiberglass," he said. "LATAPOXY 300 Epoxy Adhesive also adheres exceptionally well to glass, he said, which was the main component in the project. "LATAPOXY 300 Epoxy Adhesive offers good 'grab' and high bond characteristics with exceptional flexural strength."

Working with LATAPOXY 300 Epoxy Adhesive was easy, said artist Mason. "It was just like using a thin set. I put it down with a notched trowel, starting with the horizontal surfaces on the front hood. I did small sections at a time so as to make sure each piece fit exactly, placing the major design elements first and background last."

Soon "Jenny Take a Ride" on the passenger side and C.C. Rider on the driver side came to life.

This is the part of the project she enjoyed the most. "The process is always much more exciting than the final result: the step-by-step creation of each major design element, each form building and then blending one into another until the final background color slowly transformed all the pieces into a whole," she said. "The eruption of the color on the blank canvas of the car."

Another highlight was creating the "little people that run along side of the car near the back bumper and seeing how much color I could get into their little personalities." Mason said that each character was based on a previous illustration and sculpture inspired by real people. "One is 'Kapinsky', a fellow with a skin condition who is named after a little boy I had to hold hands with in first grade gym class who had warts all over his hands. The other is 'Nellie Tate', a

very independent aunt of my mother's I met when I was about three. She must have made a lasting impression!"

When the glass was in place, Mason grouted the sculpture, using three different colors of LATICRETE® SpectraLOCK™ Pro Grout: 1222 Midnight; 1216 Siltstone and 1241 Kashmir. "I knew it would be outside for summer and I wanted it to shimmer in the sun and glow in the dark," Mason said. LATICRETE SpectraLOCK PRO Grout 1298 Pearl Dazzle component gave it a glittering effect in the sunshine. And Mason selected LATICRETE SpectraLOCK Pro Grout 1299 Glow for the headlights, taillights, peace sign on the roof and windows – which showed C.C. Rider and Jenny profiles – at night. "When we'd turn off the lights at night, not only were those glowing, but there were specks glowing all over the studio floor!" she said.

"Compared to old epoxy grout, LATICRETE® SpectraLOCK™ Pro Grout cleaned up so easy, I didn't have any problems at all," she added. "I just wiped it down with water mixed with the cleaning additive included in the package, and followed the included instructions to make sure there was no film or residue on the surface."

Completed CarTunes on Parade sculptures are "parked" in the Cultural Center/Midtown area, downtown and riverfront in Detroit and in the City Center and riverfront in Windsor. They will be on display from June through September, culminating in an auction on October 26, 2005 at the GM Wintergarden in the Renaissance Center. Sponsors have the first option to buy the sculptures. Visitors to Detroit can view C.C. Rider in the Cultural Center area, on the east side of the Detroit Institute of Arts, in front of the Center for Creative Studies gallery.

Looking back, Mason said, "the most challenging part for me was 'making the deadline' while still maintaining the highest quality product. I am, without a doubt, my own harshest critic."

Mason had been working in tile mosaics, and wasn't sure that she could transform the picture in her mind into a three-dimensional sculpture within the specified time frame, using glass. "Consequently I worked 10 hour days, seven days a week until I was sure I had my mind's timetable correct to make the deadline. Turned out I finished a little early," she said.

Admirers of her work would have to admit that the resulting C.C. Rider sculpture is nothing less than groovy!



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