

Around the World on the 44th Parallel

You may click on the name to see the panel corresponding to that city:

[Toronto](#) (23K), [Ravenna](#) (81K), [Florence](#) (40K), [Sarajevo](#) (84K), [Mankato](#) (57K), [Changchun](#) (89K)

or you may also go directly to [Joyce Kozloff](#)'s page at MSU Memorial Library.

Visitors to Memorial Library can enjoy a visual journey "Around the World on the 44th Parallel" when they view the series of ceramic tiles created by artist [Joyce Kozloff](#). Her work features cultural motifs and sections of maps of 12 cities, including Mankato, that lie roughly along the same latitude.

Each city is represented in a panel four feet high and seventeen feet long, composed of ceramic tiles twelve inches square. The series of panels surround three open bays on the library's main floor. The first four depict the North American cities of Mankato, Toronto, Burlington, Vermont, and Eugene, Oregon. The European set includes Ravenna, Florence, Sarajevo, and Nice while Asia features Sapporo, Vladivostok, Changchun, and Urumqi. Kozloff selected one or two sections from each city's map as a starting point. She explains that she then tried to incorporate "motifs, symbols, patterns, culture and traditions" of the city into its panel.

For example, Changchun, the film capital of China, includes raised pagodas to designate the locations of film studios while Vladivostok's panel uses patterns from Russian textiles produced in the 1920s. The pagodas, carp, and bumblebees that emerge from the surface of the Changchun panels were cast in plaster molds then glazed. The figures were then epoxyed to the surface of the tiles.

The inclusion of Sarajevo is particularly meaningful for Kozloff since "a lot of what's on this map isn't there any more because it predates the war." Many of the patterns on the panel could have been found in Sarajevo's famous mosques before they were destroyed in the recent fighting.

For the Mankato panel, Kozloff used a detailed map section of the area from Sibley Park eastward. Over 500 ceramic decals of two boys fishing remind viewers of the numerous lakes, ponds, and other fishing sites in the region. At the ends of the Mankato panel, decorative patterns recall the beadwork of the woodland and plains Indians who lived in or passed through the area.

Not only does Kozloff tie Mankato to other cities on the 44th parallel, she also connects the town to the place where she produced the tiles: Los Angeles. "The one-inch squares on the Mankato map were cut from earthquake-damaged tiles lying in boxes in the Tile Guild factory where I worked on the project for eight months," she said.

Kozloff was pleased to have the opportunity to incorporate different kinds of lettering in the panels. She explained that she had studied calligraphy for three years when she was in art school, but this project was the first time she had ever gotten to use the techniques. They seemed especially appropriate because of the many languages represented in the European and Asian panels.

Installation of the panels at Memorial Library took a week. The tiles for each panel were unpacked and laid out in order on large tables. Then two installers from Brainerd applied adhesive to the panel surface and carefully fit the tiles into place. Kozloff spent the week in Mankato to oversee the installation.

She returned this fall for a formal dedication of the artwork October 25. Additional lighting had been installed to provide adequate viewing of the panels because many of the details were obscured when the tiles were first in place due to inadequate illumination.

The project was funded under the Minnesota Percent for Art in Public Places program. Whenever a state building is constructed or expanded, one percent of the budget is allocated for art. Memorial Library's expansion and remodeling, completed in 1992, led to Kozloff's commission.

Kozloff has earned a national reputation for her work in a variety of media, including fabric and tiles. Since 1979 she has completed 12 public art projects using various kinds of mosaics.

The Ravenna, Sarajevo, and Changchun panels created as part of the Mankato work were included in an exhibition of her art at the Midtown Payson Galleries in New York this spring. The reviewer for the New York Observer categorized the three panels as "striking, decorative, and playful." The New York Times reviewer praised Kozloff's map works as "densely layered, lushly colored and so packed with detail and suggestion and visual treats that the eye hardly knows where to start."

Kozloff says that she intentionally uses a great deal of detail in her public art. "I want to give people a lot of things they can discover over time," she noted. "Students might be here four years or longer. I don't want them to be bored with the work."

Kozloff's work can be viewed whenever the library is open. Three wall plaques provide a brief overview of the cities included in each continental set. To gain a full appreciation of the details of the tiles, viewers may want to look at the artwork from the second floor as well as from below. For a closer look, binoculars are also available at the reference desk. A videotape featuring Kozloff's comments about the work and showing how the tiles were installed is available for checkout in the Educational Resource Center in the lower level of Memorial Library.

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