

*Featuring the latest from the American Glass Guild*

# *The AGG Celebrates Its 10th Anniversary*

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Photography by Vicki Ireland

The American Glass Guild marked its 10th anniversary with another successful and well-attended conference in June 2015. Most of the three-day event took place in suburban Washington, D.C., at the Rockville Hilton Hotel. The highlight of the conference for many attendees was the full day spent at the historic Washington National Cathedral.

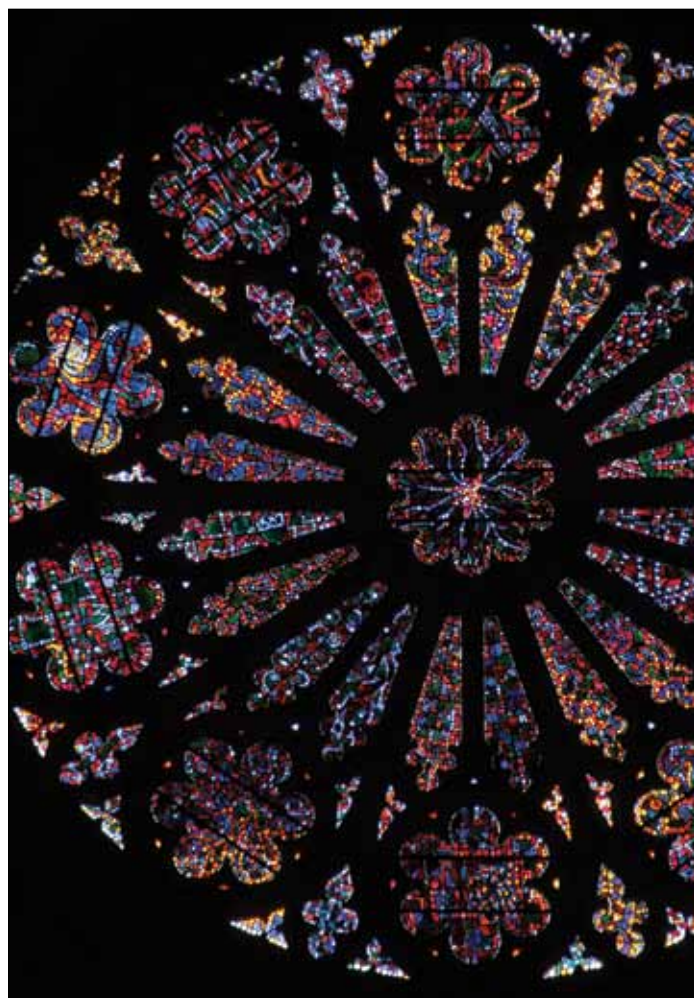
## **Glass Education and Event Highlights**

In keeping with the AGG's mission of education in stained, leaded, and decorative glass, pre-conference workshops were presented by Peter McGrain, William Cochran, Troy Moody, Sasha Zhitneva, and Nancy Gong. Samples from each workshop were on view during the conference proceedings the next day.

McGrain shared his unique Vitri-Fusaille technique, which combines fusing with traditional glass painting. As always, those in attendance were enthused by his singular wit and wisdom, and his willingness to share his art glass knowledge with students. Moody's class focused on basic fusing techniques, a valuable subject since more and more stained glass artists are incorporating fused glass into their projects. Zhitneva shared her love for the clear palette in a workshop that focused on designing with different textures and patterns of clear glass. The workshop led by Gong covered the cold working techniques of chipping and textural etching, which can add nuance and interest to glass projects of various kinds.

In addition to his workshop, Cochran was also the weekend's Keynote Speaker. A Maryland artist whose extensive public art portfolio includes incredibly realistic outdoor murals as well as glass sculptures, he taught workshop students the importance of color temperature and value in painting as well as glass selection. "We don't see any color accurately, because our eyes and mind alter everything," said Cochran. During the Friday evening banquet, Cochran spoke to the entire group about color perception and how it applies to design, then wowed the audience with images of his work. "All of art is learning to see things differently."

AGG celebrated its 10th anniversary with a cake as well as a rousing rendition of "Happy Birthday!" This was followed by the Live Auction, a highlight of the annual conference festivities. Comedic entertainment was supplied by auctioneers Scott Ouderkirk and Kathy Jordan, and Auction Chair Daniel White was pleased to announce that the auction events brought in over \$17,000. More than half of that goes to support the James C. Whitney Scholarship Fund, which provides monies to qualified applicants who wish to attend classes, workshops, or conferences to further their knowledge of stained glass.



*The AGG sponsored a public stained glass education day at the Washington National Cathedral on June 26, 2015.*

## **Visiting a National Glass Art Treasure**

The major event of the weekend was a day at the beautiful, gothic-style Washington National Cathedral, which goes back over a century ago. President Theodore Roosevelt was present in 1907 as the foundation stone for the Cathedral was laid, and the building was completed 83 years later in 1990, with President George H. W. Bush in attendance. Sitting atop the highest point in the District, the Washington National Cathedral, officially known as the Cathedral Church of St. Peter and St. Paul by the Episcopal Church, has served as a house of prayer and a spiritual home for the nation.

AGG hosted an outdoor display under tents for the Cathedral's Stained Glass Open House. Dozens of area families were drawn to the grounds to learn about the history of glassmaking and stained glass, thanks in large part to the wonderful display organized by former AGG president J. Kenneth Leap. "I think this outreach is critical for the AGG to continue its mission by educating the public," said Conference Chair Tony Glander. The event helped raise public awareness of the value of this historic landmark and its glass, especially since the Cathedral is attempting to raise funds to repair extensive damage caused by a recent earthquake that resulted in \$26 million in damage to the Cathedral.

Cathedral visitors were treated to special window and other artwork tours that took them to remote areas not usually accessible to the public. They were also able to view the *American Glass Now:2015* exhibit, a three-month-long juried gallery installation of AGG members' work. Juror Judith Schaechter, a well-known glass artist based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, presented the American Glass Now Award for Excellence (AGNX Award) to both Troy Moody and Marie Foucault Phipps. French-born Foucault's work, *Reflections: Mute or Silenced?*, reveals her feelings regarding the recent Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris and the right of free speech. Troy Moody's fused glass panel, *Mental Cartography*, is based on his sketches and studies of satellite imagery of agricultural and urban development in central Arizona, where he resides.

## Cathedral Artists

The afternoon program featured three artists whose work includes the design and/or painting of windows installed permanently at the Cathedral. Brenda Belfield's work includes 22 small windows depicting the *People of the Hebrew Bible*. Completed between 1979 and 1981, these windows can be found in the Southwest Tower stairways and are a delight to the eye. In the Northwest Tower Stairway are her 22 *Water Windows*, an abstract collection of small windows based on the life-giving theme of water. Fifteen of her other window designs can be seen throughout the Cathedral. Belfield spoke about the challenges and rewards of commissioned stained glass projects she has undertaken throughout her long career.

Mary Clerkin Higgins next spoke about her working relationship with the late Rowan LeCompte, describing the development and fabrication of the *Isaiah's Coal Window*. Originally rejected by the review committee because of the poor quality of photographic images taken during the fabrication of this window, Higgins worked diligently to defend LeCompte's design with revised photos and ultimately succeeded. While the painting and fabrication on the four lancets were finished several years before LeCompte's death in 2014, the windows were not installed by Higgins' crew until later, after she had also completed painting a small rose window above the lancets and fabricated the remaining lancet. Three other lancets were fabricated earlier by Dieter Goldkuhle, who died in 2011.

Charles Z. Lawrence, who designed a total of five major windows for the Cathedral, entertained the gathering in typical fashion with assorted wild stories in a presentation he called *The Darkside: Misfortune at the Cathedral*. The artist described the perils of working on commission for the Washington National Cathedral. In one story, he related how he was forced to redo one window, replacing frowning faces with smiling ones. In another, he described the wild scenario during an installation where a worker slipped and fell off the roof of the Cathedral, stopped from plummeting to his demise only by a gargoyle on the edge. Lawrence said that other crew members hung him out of the window opening by his feet so that he could grab and save the poor fellow.

## A Lifetime Achievement Award and Final Tours

Following his presentation, Lawrence was awarded the American Glass Guild Lifetime Achievement Award for his long-standing career as an artist working in stained glass. The award was presented by former AGG board member Kathy Jordan, his longtime friend and artistic director at Willet Studios.

On the last day of the conference, the group visited a number of local sites to view stained glass art. Included on the tour were viewings of work by artists Ellen Mandelbaum and Erwin Timmers

at the Kol Shalom Synagogue and contemporary windows by artist John Calligan at Trinity Lutheran Church in Bethesda, Maryland. The group was also able to view fabrications by Tony Glander of Nick Parrendo, Ken Leap, and Dick Millard designs at Our Lady of the Visitation Catholic Church in Darnestown, Maryland, bringing to a close another fabulous conference. **GA**



*The bus tour included contemporary windows designed by artist John Calligan at Trinity Lutheran Church in Bethesda, Maryland.*



Visit [www.americanglassguild.org](http://www.americanglassguild.org) for more information on AGG's James C. Whitney Scholarship Auction, the organization's upcoming July 2016 Conference in Chicago, Illinois, and becoming a member.

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