

American Glass Guild Conference

by Troy Moody

The assorted far-flung members of the American Glass Guild will come together in Baltimore, Maryland, for their 15th annual Conference. Once again this lively gathering will be chock-full of engaging speakers, enlightening tours, demos, and other educational opportunities for its diverse membership from around this great nation.

A Perfect Location

For this year's event, Conference Chair and Past President Tony Glander has secured a truly unique event space. The Maritime Conference Center and Hotel is situated close enough to Baltimore proper to allow for plenty of exploration whether individually, in impromptu groups, or through ever-popular organized bus tours. The center offers all the obvious essentials of our annual congress—a comfortable auditorium, general session spaces, quality dining, and a well-appointed bar.

The location is convenient and affordable, but more importantly, it will provide an intimate space to gather, network, and learn. The AGG conferences have always provided, first and foremost, opportunities to meet and mingle with like-minded individuals as well as laugh with friends new and old in the ever-expanding world of glass art. To quote current AGG President Kathy Jordan: "Our AGG conferences are built on the collective experiences and inspiration we gain from one another. Rewarding interactions in our lives occur in our social and personal space. Cultivating an environment that fosters shared interests ensures the continued growth of the American Glass Guild."

Opportunities to Learn and Grow

The 2020 list of speakers and instructors is truly exceptional and includes experts in everything from stone installation and lamination repair to some of the most celebrated designers working in glass today. Anyone who has attended an AGG conference can attest that it would be impossible to fit a description of every lecture or presentation into this brief article, so I am limiting myself to just a few of the notable highlights.

• **Michael Janis**, our keynote speaker, enjoyed a 20-year career as an architect practicing in the United States and Australia before re-focusing his creative and mental energies on working with glass. He is co-director of the Washington Glass School, has twice been featured in *The Corning Museum of Glass New Glass Review*, teaches workshops worldwide, and has been awarded impressive awards including the Florida Art Glass Alliance Emerging Artist Award, the James Renwick Alliance Distinguished Artists award, and the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities Mayer's Arts Award.



Detail of Christ depicted by Tiffany at Brown Memorial Park Avenue Presbyterian Church.

• **Andy Young**, a prolific artist working in glass for close to 50 years, will share recent projects with Pearl River Glass Studio that will be particularly relevant to the spirit of the AGG. He will discuss how the cross-pollination generated by surrounding ourselves with talented artists and craftspeople who are passionate about glass as an expressive medium challenges us to expand our notions of what is possible while staying true to proven craft practice.

• **Art Femenella** will discuss two interesting restoration projects he consulted on with Amy Valuck. Any dialog centering on restoration tends to get plenty of attention from a dedicated segment of the Guild. The depth of knowledge to be found among those members on ensuring the longevity of masterworks of the past is sure to lead to spirited discussions.

• **Tim Carry**, a gifted painter and designer for Judson Studios, is increasingly being recognized for his independent projects and autonomous work as well as being a star pupil of the Narcissus



Brown Memorial Park Avenue Presbyterian Church of Baltimore houses an impressive collection of Tiffany windows.

approach. Tim is offering not only a highly informative lecture but a look into his design process and the use of computers to convey his ideas to the client.

Some of the most celebrated working art glass designers in America will also be on hand for the Baltimore Conference, five of whom are being assembled into a remarkable design workshop. **Narcissus Quagliata** has been a highly sought after artist for decades and recently began teaching his refined approach to a new generation of glass artists. **Helen Whittaker** is part of the workshop team offering a nuanced look at designing with an eye on historical approaches. **Charles Devillier** will contribute an analytical approach with his “design bootcamp” format. **David Fode** will share his invaluable experience in navigating clients through the commission process, from initial conversations to watercolor renderings and fabrication. The final slot in the design team workshop was filled graciously by the phenomenal **Judith Schaechter**, who will make her wit, intellect, and skill available to all in attendance.

A Purpose Beyond Ourselves

In addition to these and many more wonderful lectures, the AGG will host kids from The Stained Glass Project (SGP). Now in its 14th year, this after-school arts program introduces underprivileged Philadelphia public high school students to the art and craft of making stained glass. This volunteer-run organization has provided more than 100 young people with the opportunity to explore their own self-expression while developing the discipline required by this technically demanding art. The SGP holds a special place in the collective hearts of the American Glass guild. It will be a treat to host its enthusiastic members and a joy to see youth so engaged in this beautiful medium.

During the Auction to help raise art glass scholarship funds, members and visitors will clamor for the winning bid on a wide selection of donated items ranging from books and tools to glass. Exquisite works of glass art have also been donated, including the highly sought after *Bird in Hand* by Silvia Nicholas, AGG senior advisor and living treasure for the stained glass community, and a beautiful portrait window of Louis Comfort Tiffany donated by Kristopher Tiffany.

AGG members are joining together for a purpose larger than ourselves. We always look forward to feeling rejuvenated and inspired by a genuine friendship of fellow glass-afflicted individuals and an appreciation for the opportunity to dive deeper into this odd subculture that is the American Glass community. **GA**

Shortly before *Glass Art*® went to press, AGG announced that the 2020 Conference unfortunately has been cancelled due to ongoing Covid-19 restrictions. However, the same conference is moving to 2021 at the same location. For more information on becoming an AGG member and for continuing updates on the conference, visit www.americanglassguild.org.



Auction Panel: Bird in Hand by Sylvia Nicholas

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