

# The American Glass Guild Visits Richmond in 2023



British artist Henry Holiday, 1839–1927, Moses in Egypt window at St. Paul's Episcopal Church detail.

by Troy Moody

Photos by Amy Valuck

Occupying a wonderfully renovated dairy building at the heart of Richmond's Fan District neighborhood is the Visual Arts Center of Richmond. Known casually as VisArts, the center is a dynamic space brimming with an inclusive, creative energy. It was a perfect fit to host the diverse and far-flung members of the American Glass Guild for a weeklong bonanza of glass-centric workshops. The topics and techniques ranged from traditional glass painting, fusing, and etching to advanced leaded work, edge gluing, flameworking, and silk screening.

Affable hosts, engaging instructors, the ease of shared meals, and the excitement of shared knowledge cultivated a palpable sense of camaraderie in the workshops that carried over to the weekend conference programing. As the last of the kilns were fired, the endless jars of brushes were cleaned, and soldering irons were cooled, a full schedule of lively events, lectures, and presentations was kicking off at the nearby Four Points Sheraton. The business and leisure center provided all of the obvious essentials for the annual congress—clean and comfortable rooms, general session spaces, quality dining, and a well-appointed bar. The location was also convenient and affordable. It provided a space to gather, laugh, network, and learn.



AGG Senior Advisor Virginia Raguin discussing the windows of St Paul's Episcopal Church during the bus tour of five churches.

## Friday Highlights

On Friday morning, the programing got going in earnest. This year's gathering started with a half day bus tour thoughtfully arranged to show off an impressive collection of early American, German, and French stained glass. Each of the five stops at St. Paul's Episcopal, Centenary United Methodist, The Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Grace & Holy Trinity, and St. Andrew's Episcopal churches held illuminating masterworks from Tiffany, Henry Holiday, Willet, Franz Mayer Co., and the Pierre Chigot studio of Limoges, France.



By midday, the giddy crowd of glass enthusiasts was breaking bread at a buffet lunch as AGG President Amy Valuck offered opening remarks and introduced an inspired afternoon docket of presentations. It was a pleasure to welcome Tamah Graber to speak on the National Capital Art Glass Guild. Ellen Van Dijk was inspiring and humble as she discussed her journey with glass, followed by a highly intriguing discussion of the research/documentation of Woodland Cemetery Conservation with Lindsay Parrott and Brianne Van Vorst.

Cappy Thompson was the keynote speaker for Day One, as she regaled us with intimate reflections on her decades of creating mytho-poetic narratives on glass. Cappy has been an artist in residence at Pilchuck Glass School and is a recipient of the school's Libenský award. Her best-known public works are *Dreaming of Spirit Animals* at the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport and *Gathering the Light* in the lobby of the Museum of Glass in Tacoma, Washington.

### **Celebrating Stained Glass with Lectures, an Auction, Music, and Fellowship**

The full schedule of lectures for Day Two included Nancy Gong's experiences with Art Glass Lamination and artists' talks from Rob Cooper and Wayne Cain. Both artists spoke on their inspiration and personalized techniques. Drew Anderson gave a cursory overview of various conservation materials and techniques before Greg Galer introduced us to the Association for Preservation Technology. Jennifer Booher shared the history of Bar Harbor Stained Glass, and Tony Serviente rounded out the afternoon with a calmly thorough yet wonderfully concise guideline to lead safety in the stained glass studio.

Professor Sarah Brown, Chairman of the Corpus Vitrearum (Great Britain) and Director of the York Glaziers Trust, led the team that conserved York Minster's Great East Window and now directs the Minster's Twenty-Year Plan for Stained Glass Conservation. In addition to her many accomplishments and prestigious credentials, Sarah is an ever approachable delight. The AGG was honored to welcome her as the keynote speaker on Saturday evening.

The event closed with a raucous auction, impromptu guitar performances, joyous small clusters of conversation, a rambling spontaneous sing-along, and already eager plans for next year's event. As has come to be expected of AGG's annual gathering, attendees were left rejuvenated by the friendship of fellow glass-afflicted individuals and grateful for the opportunity to dive deeper into this odd little subculture that is the American art glass community. **GA**

Visit [www.americanglassguild.org](http://www.americanglassguild.org) for more information about the American Glass Guild, AGG's upcoming events, and how to become a member.



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