

2014 American Glass Guild Awards



Featuring the latest from the American Glass Guild

During the June 2014 Conference in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, the American Glass Guild presented three awards to leaders in the glass community. Narcissus Quagliata was presented with the AGG Lifetime Achievement Award in Design. A youth program in Philadelphia received the AGG Inspiration Award. Finally, Peter McGrain was presented with the Joe Barnes Lifetime Achievement Award. These AGG awards recognize the passion, dedication, and mentoring the award recipients provide to the glass community.

Joe Barnes Lifetime Achievement Award

by Tony Glander

The guidelines for the Joe Barnes Lifetime Achievement Award are based on its namesake's love of working with glass, friendliness toward others, desire to help others succeed, and a rare quality of simply being a good person. Kathy Jordon recognized all of those in Peter McGrain, thereby nominating him for the award.

McGrain has been in the glass industry for over 35 years. His love of glass art has compelled him in the making of many of today's landmark pieces known throughout the industry. This love has also made him an incredible instructor and mentor to many students, and he has been sought after as an author for countless articles on countless techniques. His dedication to the medium is evident in every piece he creates.

What this award mainly focuses on, however, is the nominee's general good nature and willingness to help others, and this is where McGrain excels. His students, many of whom have never even painted before, leave his workshops with a can-do attitude. McGrain's love and enjoyment of glass shines through his teaching and how he truly wants his students to go home and continue to create pieces and improve their skills.

In his workshops, his goal is for the student to succeed. He encourages them to quit doubting themselves and enjoy the creative spirit. And he does it all with a smile, an unwavering sense of humor, and pure sincerity. Although he couldn't attend the conference, his video recorded acceptance speech was a testimony to his good nature, humbleness, and musical talent.

Peter McGrain playing a Stroh violinophone.



American Glass Guild Inspiration Award

by Patrice Schelkun

At a luncheon on Sunday, June 29, 2014, the American Glass Guild gave a newly created Inspiration Award to the co-founders of a Philadelphia-based youth outreach program called The Stained Glass Project. In recognition of the hard work done by everyone involved in the program, Evenheat Kilns generously donated a kiln to help move the group's work forward.

The Stained Glass Project was organized by professional artists Paula Mandel and Joan Myerson Shrager in an effort to enrich the lives of inner city high school children by introducing them to the art and craft of stained glass. The after-school program, which meets from October to June, is in its eighth year. It has given dozens of kids the chance to experience many things they otherwise might not have—affirmation and encouragement in a family-type setting, exposure to art venues and travel, and the experience of reaching out to others with their own creative gifts.

As the program has grown with the help of donors and volunteers, these children have had the opportunity to make and donate windows for schools in KwaNgcolosi, South Africa; New Orleans, Louisiana; and Minnesota. Some were even able to hand-deliver their creations during a group travel experience they will not soon forget.

"I think it really gave the kids a sense of being in a position to gift others with their hard work and their creativity," said Mandel. Before the windows were shipped, they were exhibited at Love Park in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and at a special reception at the Philadelphia Visitors Center. Shrager shared that such an experience



Members of The Stained Glass Project at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia. Photo by Joan Myerson Shrager.

made the children feel that, “Wow! Look what I’ve done. Look what I can contribute!”

Mandel, Shrager, and representatives from The Stained Glass Project accepted the AGG award with gratitude. “You know how magical glass is,” said Mandel. “In this setting, the glass is just a back door to mentoring.”

American Glass Guild’s Lifetime Achievement Award in Design

by Nancy Gong

Narcissus Quagliata has had a profound effect on many artists and the field of architectural glass. From early in his career, his unique vision has flowed from his paintings to glass artwork in a powerful way. He has taken figures in glass to a whole new realm.

While most artists were content with creating beauty in glass, Quagliata portrayed pain and anguish with beauty that touched the heart. He brought color and the brush to glass in an explosive manner in a way that allowed him to bring fresh work in a “new light” to a classical basilica in the Dome of Santa Maria Degli Andeli e dei Martiri in Rome, Italy. Taking the basic Asian design theme, yin and yang, he also presented light and darkness in terms of the meaning of life in a brilliant way for the massive *Dome of Light* for the Kaohsiung Rapid Transit Station. Venturing into various modes of hot glass, he has not hesitated to integrate these processes with architectural glass designs. He is, on the outside, fearless in the approach to his designs.

Since the mid-1970s when Quagliata taught design, he has encouraged artists to see within rather than rely solely on what was outside their souls. Then he cuts the cord and lets his students fly. To this end, he has helped guide many artists in creating art that exemplifies who they and their spirits are, adding to the realm of vernacular, traditional, and ecclesiastic stained glass. He has helped to shape a generation and a whole new vocabulary in glass art.

Quagliata shares his knowledge of design through his books, distributed worldwide, to encourage well-thought-out original motifs in the world of architectural art glass. His techniques are available in two important books: *Stained Glass from Mind to Light*, which he authored, and *Narcissus Quagliata: Archetypes and Visions in Light and Glass*, where he leads by sharing his exciting projects.

In presenting the Lifetime Achievement Award in Design to Quagliata, the AGG is simply professing the passion and all-consuming commitment this artist has for his work in glass. No doubt, he is a living master. One look at his designs and the viewer will experience why this great artist’s work, through heart, mind, soul, and skill, has the great power to connect with the human spirit.



Narcissus Quagliata receiving the 2014 Lifetime Achievement Award in Design from Nancy Gong and AGG President J. Kenneth Leap. Photo by Tony Glander.

Closing Thoughts

The American Glass Guild is proud to recognize these leaders in our glass community. Their art work will go on for many years to be seen and admired by many. But more importantly, it is how they have impacted the lives of others through their dedication and mentoring. **GA**

Visit www.americanglassguild.org to learn more about AGG and its upcoming events.

During the writing of this article, AGG was saddened to learn of Joe Barnes’ passing earlier this year. His warm smile and good nature will live on and hopefully be passed on by all those who had the good fortune to meet him.

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