



Hidden Treasures within The Neustadt's Tiffany Glass Archive

by The Staff of The Neustadt Collection of Tiffany Glass

Tucked away in a nondescript warehouse in Queens, New York, is a library unlike any you've ever seen. Carefully stored in towering aisles of wooden cubbies are more than a quarter of a million pieces of Tiffany glass in a seemingly endless array of rich colors, bold patterns, and intriguing textures. This "library" is the repository of a unique trove of original material once used by Louis C. Tiffany's studios to create his celebrated leaded glass windows, lampshades, and mosaics. The Neustadt Collection of Tiffany Glass is its proud custodian and has prepared an exhibition on Tiffany's glass mosaics.

An Invaluable Resource

When Tiffany's firm closed in 1937, all of the remaining stock was sold. The liquidation sales included a vast inventory of flat glass ranging from full, uncut sheets to shards the size of a fingernail as well as a tantalizing assortment of glass "jewels." Early Tiffany collector and museum founder, Dr. Egon Neustadt (American, born Austria, 1898–1984) recognized the historical value of this material and purchased it in 1967. Today, this one-of-a-kind collection is an invaluable archive and offers important insights into Tiffany's artistic legacy in glass.

Perhaps the most thrilling discoveries were made after visiting mosaic commissions across the United States and poring over the new high-resolution images of some of these sites captured by CMoG's photography team. We successfully identified glass in our archive matching several of Tiffany's most dazzling mosaics, including *The Dream Garden*, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, based on a painting by American artist Maxfield Parrish. Glass made specially to translate Parrish's distinctive color palette was featured in the exhibition alongside a digital interactive exploring this monumental commission.

Insights into Tiffany Mosaic Commissions

The exhibition and publication spurred The Neustadt to sift through its own holdings of thousands of tiny pieces of glass that we had always suspected were used for mosaics. We found glass that was patterned and plain, textured and flat, iridescent and opalescent, opaque and translucent, some backed with gold leaf and others with aluminum leaf. Among those shards, we were surprised and delighted to find hundreds of pieces of glass that had been painstakingly selected and cut into deliberate shapes, but for unknown reasons were never used. Some of these pieces even retain a wax residue, indicating that they were placed into a working composition for the artist to consider.



Fathers of the Church, (about 1892). Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company, designed by Joseph Lauber (American, b. Germany, 1855–1948). Glass mosaic, glass "jewels," 97.5" x 58.5". The Neustadt Collection of Tiffany Glass, Queens, New York (N.86.M.01).

Sorting through thousands of unique examples, where no two are ever exactly alike, gave us a greater appreciation for the enormous task faced by Tiffany's artisans at the start of each mosaic commission. From this seemingly endless variety of glass, choices had to be made. The Neustadt faced a similar prospect as we agonized over which pieces to include in the exhibition. In the end, it took over 1,000 examples to even hint at the staggering range of possibilities. We hope this selection illuminates and reflects the artistic vision and persistence required to create these mosaic masterpieces.

Inspiring a New Generation of Tiffany Admirers

Lindsay R. Parrott was recently promoted to executive director and curator of The Neustadt Collection of Tiffany Glass, thus recognizing her role in its transformation into a preeminent voice in the study and preservation of Tiffany glass. "Lindsay is a leading expert in Tiffany glass. Her work and passion for Tiffany have helped preserve an important piece of our American culture and inspired a new generation of admirers," said Cynthia Williams, president, board of trustees, The Neustadt.

During her 15-year tenure, Parrott has led pioneering research into the history and artistic use of The Neustadt's glass archive. She has organized traveling exhibitions drawn from the permanent collection at venues including the Cincinnati Art Museum, Cincinnati, Ohio; the Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware; the Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, Virginia; and the Biltmore Estate, Asheville, North Carolina.

Recently, Parrott served as the co-curator of Tiffany's Glass Mosaics and co-editor and contributor to the accompanying award-winning publication. She is credited with growing The Neustadt's partnership with the Queens Museum in New York City, which now houses a gallery dedicated to The Neustadt's collection. On Friday, March 16, at SAMA's 2018 American Mosaic Summit in Boston, Massachusetts, Parrott will present a lecture on the artistry and innovation of Louis C. Tiffany's mosaics. The lecture is drawn from her recent research while preparing the *Tiffany's Glass Mosaics* exhibition, which was organized jointly by The Neustadt and The Corning Museum of Glass.

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Visit americanmosaics.org to find out more about the Society of American Mosaic Artists and its upcoming events.



Selection of glass "jewels," about 1890–1920. Tiffany Furnaces, Corona, New York. Photo courtesy of The Neustadt Collection of Tiffany Glass.



Racks of sheet glass used by Tiffany Studios. Photo courtesy of The Neustadt Collection of Tiffany Glass.

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