



Celebrate Glass, an Historic Conference AGG and SGAA Together in Texas

by Tony Glander

The 14th annual 2019 American Glass Guild Conference has a great twist to it! For the first time, the American Glass Guild (AGG) and the Stained Glass Association of America (SGAA) are joining together in San Antonio, Texas, June 3–5, 2019, with pre-conference classes on June 1 and 2. This historic conference will be a great opportunity for members of both organizations to network alongside their shared interest in stained glass. Conference hosts Jack Whitworth, Bryant Stanton, and Cynthia Courage have been working hard to organize an incredible event that will not only have everything AGG members have come to enjoy at a conference, but even more through networking opportunities with the SGAA.

Cynthia Courage shared: “The presenters and guests that we have lined up for our amazing event are diversified and very dynamic. The schedule of events is emerging with professionals and artists from around the planet coming to attend. The energy that is building within both organizations is exciting and thrilling. We know that this event will be historic, but mostly it will be a group of extremely talented people all in one place at the same time. This type of momentum means that anything is possible, artist’s dreams will be expanding, and relationships will be forged. It will be fun!” With all of these plans in place, it’s easy to understand why the slogan for the conference is “Celebrate Glass.”



Helen Whittaker and Keith Barley at Helen's studio in York. Photo by Kathy Jordan.



Educational Opportunities

Both organizations will be working hard on the annual scholarship auction to provide scholarship funds for both the AGG and the SGAA. The American Glass Guild Auction is the sole source of support for the James C. Whitney Scholarship Fund, which has awarded over 100 scholarships thus far to worthy recipients, many of whom have traveled nationally and internationally, allowing them to hone their skills and expand their knowledge. Items in the auction range from books to tools and, of course, original stained glass panels from some of today’s best artists. The bidding in the silent auction tends to be civil, but the live auction is traditionally spirited and much laughter takes place. Knowing that each organization uses these funds to encourage the education of stained glass practices keeps everyone motivated.

*Cynthia Courage panel in honor of the 2019 joint AGG/SGAA conference.
Photo by Tony Glander.*



David Fode panel, Praying Mantis.
Photo by Tony Glander.

The members' exhibition will take place at the hotel where the events will be held. Sixteen panels from each organization will be on display throughout the conference. Last year's AGG exhibition included work from Hallie Monroe, David Fode, Amy Valuck, and Cynthia Courage. The Courage panel was in honor of the 2019 joint conference including a dichroic skyline of San Antonio. Valuck's panel included traditional stained glass art incorporating fused glass elements. The combination of both organizations will make this year's exhibition truly amazing.

An incredible array of workshop opportunities has been arranged for June 1–2. Nationally noted artist Gail Stouffer will be opening her studio to the conference with a workshop on incorporating graphics in fused glass. For attendees who like high tech, White Cloud Drones and Jules Mominee will be offering an intensive day entitled "Drones and Documentation in the Field." This class promises to be fun as well as educational. Workshops still being developed at this writing focus on glassblowing, kiln casting, and traditional glass painting. Instructors for these workshops are always selected from the best in the industry for their talent as well as their enthusiasm.

Renowned Speakers

This year's speakers bring their extensive knowledge and experience to the stage. Mary Clerkin Higgins will be presenting a talk about a recent restoration project, and the ever-entertaining Ken Leap will be discussing his incredible research that has been focusing on glass enamels. Leap will also discuss a college program he instructs at Bryn Athyn College where students learn and create incredible stained glass.

Three well-known architectural glass artists will also share their insights at the conference. Helen Whittaker, creative director at Barley Studio, York, is a renowned artist and designer who is highly regarded for her new stained glass windows and architectural sculpture in glass and copper. She will be presenting a talk on her inspirational work.

Laurel Porcari's full-time focus for over a decade has been on large-scale commissions. Busy creating both private and public pieces, her work is featured in the permanent collections of New York's Montefiore Medical Center, Baylor University Medical Center, and more. She will discuss her fused glasswork, from gallery pieces to large-scale installations. In addition, Laurie Wells from Old World Stone will be talking about modern stone repair in today's architecture.

Demonstrations, Auctions, Awards, and Tours

Also planned for the conference are a number of demonstrations. Sasha Zhitneva, an award-winning designer and artist who has worked creatively with glass since 1995, studied in Russia, Spain, and the United States. She will show the techniques and tricks that go into her fused glasswork.

Vic Rothman worked at the Greenland Studio before opening his own studio in 1991. Over the years he has worked on a number of Tiffany and La Farge window restorations and will demonstrate restoration techniques, including proper reinforcement practices. Tony Glander will also share fused glass techniques and discuss adding a layer of dichroic coating to lend extra flare to stained glass work.

Throughout Monday and Tuesday, attendees will have the opportunity to bid on an assortment of classes, tools, glass, and incredible stained glass panels that are all part of a scholarship fundraising auction to benefit both the AGG and the SGAA. The fun goes on into Tuesday night, when a number of pieces will be offered as part of a live auction that promises laughter and applause. Tuesday evening will also host the traditional awards banquet, where the leaders in the industry are recognized with the appreciation they deserve.

Stained glass tours will be offered on Wednesday. With San Antonio being such a great walkable city, it offers a number of sites available to those who wish to simply stroll the town. There will also be a bus tour to the best work that the San Antonio area has to offer.

If you have an appreciation for stained glass, there is no better event than this conference. Not only will it celebrate glass, but it will also offer attendees a chance to network as well as get inspired and educated with the best and most dedicated stained glass leaders in America today.

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Visit www.americanglassguild.org for more information on becoming an American Glass Guild member and be sure to attend this great conference.