



Architectural glass in Sainte-Chapelle, Paris, France, one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Photo by Mitya Ivanov.



Welcome to the Age of Glass with AGG A Recap of the International Year of Glass 2022

Interior of Sainte-Chapelle looking up.

by Kathy Jordan

On January 18, 2020, the American Glass Guild (AGG) formally submitted its Letter of Support for an application to the UN for an International Year of Glass (IYoG). Since 1959, the United Nations has designated International Years for the purpose of drawing attention to topics of global importance and to encourage international action. It would be the first time that a material had been recognized by a UN International Year. The UN announced the formal resolution at the General Assembly on May 18th of 2021, and in August of 2021, I accepted the Co-Chair position for the IYoG North Americas Steering Committee (RO7 – Regional Organization 7 of 18 worldwide) as the Art Glass representative. Each RO endeavored to be the conduit to the glass constituencies in science, academia, industry, art, museums, and research institutes. Its monumental planning was a grassroots effort with a network of volunteer muscle worldwide. The AGG is a 501c3 charitable nonprofit and run by all volunteers. This was right up our alley.

Preparing for Individual and Collective Glass Events

I was quickly introduced to, and interacted with, many glass art organizations from around the world. I worked alongside Karol Wight, the Executive Director of The Corning Museum of Glass (CMoG) and Dr. Larry Sibrack, the sitting President from the Art Alliance of Contemporary Glass. All of the participants were preparing for their individual and collective glass events. I enthusiastically became a member of the Art Alliance of Contemporary Glass (AACG) and jumped right into an ad-hoc IYoG committee. The opening ceremony took place at the Palace of Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. Due to COVID, the number was very restricted, and only fourteen would be allotted entrance from RO7. Of that fourteen, only four spots were for Art & Museum. I asked Lani McGregor and Dan Schwoerer of Bullseye Glass Company, and they enthusiastically accepted and represented the United States at the ceremony.



Artist Natalie Tyler on the right with Dr. Laurence Sibrack and Kathy Jordan standing in front of her work, *Wildfire*, outside the UN Headquarters in New York City.



Keynote speaker Narcissus Quagliata at the 2022 AGG CMOG summer conference. Photo by Kathy Jordan.

The first official event in the US was the National Day of Glass (NDoG), held in Washington, D.C., in April 2022. I was asked to lead a panel on Art and Glass in Society. Narcissus Quagliata gave an extraordinary presentation at the NDoG titled “Glass: Two Collaborations Between Science and Art—The Cosmos in the Basilica & Beyond Painting.” A video of his presentation is available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=4zXva3-XS3s. In May of 2022, I spoke at the Glass & Optics Material Division annual conference in Baltimore, Maryland. It gave me an opportunity to share my art glass career with a room full of young glass scientists and their mentors from around the world. I was deeply moved by the positive response and possibilities of future collaborations. July was earmarked for the AGG Summer Conference at The Corning Museum of Glass. We were proud to have David Pye speak at the conference.

Celebrating Seven Glass Wonders of the World

The genesis of the idea of having an International Year of Glass went back to 2014. Several scientists in Corning proposed the concept with the theme, *The Arrival of the Glass Age*. David Pye, Dean Emeritus of the College of Ceramics at Alfred University realized it was a short leap from celebrating light to celebrating glass and its inextricable relationship with light. Featured speakers included Thomas Denny, Judith Schaefer, Narcissus Quagliata, Dr. David Pye, and many more. Those who were unable to attend the conference at CMOG or would like another chance to see some of the programming can visit www.americanglassguild.org/aggvideos.

The AGG was awarded grant money from The International Council for the International Year of Glass Initiative. Allocations were based on the “seed funding” principle being awarded to applicants worldwide. The initiative had funding from sponsors who supported selected worldwide actions promoting glass across all sectors. Seed money in the amount of 207,798 Euros was given for IYoG projects, with 86 applications funded, 47 of which were received for artistic glass projects.

There would be seven objects, buildings, or places named where glass had a fundamental role. Over 50 proposals submitted by regional organizations from each continent were assessed for their originality and innovative character as well as historical, cultural, and industrial character. Glass professionals from the arts, architecture, science, and industry formed the prestigious international jury. I was honored to be one of those judges. The Seven Glass Wonders of the World were unveiled at the closing ceremony in Japan: Glass from the Tomb of Tutankhamun, the Lycurgus Cup, Sainte-Chapelle in Paris, The Corning Museum of Glass, The Ware Collection of Blaschka Glass Models of Plants, Optical Fibers, and the Hubble Space Telescope. Visit lothar-bottcher.com/2023/01/the-7-glass-wonders/ for more information and a video presentation of the collection.

Honoring the Artistic and Cultural Aspects of Glass

The last formal event of the International Year of Glass 2022 was held on December 14 at the UN headquarters in New York. “Glass can save the world” was a sentiment repeated throughout the closing ceremony. It was structured around the UN 2030 Humanitarian Goals of Equality and Education, Health Issues, Sustainability, and Climate Change, with Glass as the unifying theme. The recording of the event is permanently posted on the UN Web TV site, media.un.org/en/asset/k15/k15lqiaip.

The hallmark of IYoG was its reach beyond the science, engineering, and manufacturing to the arts and cultural institutions. As the art and science community became more intimately involved with each other over the course of IYoG, they discovered a shared fascination with glass and found that both communities have much to learn from each other at the intersection of art, science, and technology. IYoG 2022 had more than 1,000 events with more than 2,400 endorsements, was celebrated in 95-plus countries, and had more than one million people involved in the process. Tim Carey and Justin Moore of Vitreonics created and captured a fantastic video snapshot of the International Year of Glass 2022 during the AGG Corning Conference that can be seen at youtu.be/6UYK7uDCxSg.

There certainly remains plenty of work to be done, and 2022 definitively shows that glass will be important to solving the world’s pressing grand challenges. Dr. Alicia Durán summarized the moment well saying, “Goodbye IYoG. Welcome to the Age of Glass!”

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Visit www.americanglassguild.org to find out more about AGG, its current and upcoming events, and how to become a member. For those who were unable to attend the conference at CMOG or those who would like another chance to see some of the programming, visit www.americanglassguild.org/aggvideos.

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