

AGG San Antonio 2019



by Tony Glander

This year's annual conference was a historic meeting of the American Glass Guild (AGG) and the Stained Glass Association of America (SGAA) in downtown San Antonio, Texas. The conference ran June 1–5, 2019. Attendees witnessed an incredible variety of workshops, amazing speakers, a silent auction, demonstrations, and a tour of local stained glass installation sites.

In a recent podcast, Tim Carey said, “There felt like there was a lot of new energy in the room that was shared by many attendees.” Whether it was lecturing or demonstrating or simply talking one-on-one, it was obvious that sharing knowledge and education about glass was what this conference was all about.

Educational and Entertaining Activities

The **Saturday** workshops were enthusiastically attended. *Restoration 101* taught by **Ralph Mills**, took the students through proper assessment as well as re-leading and reinforcement techniques. *Making and Modifying Mirrors* taught by **Alix Gomez of Angel Gilding** demystified gilding by explaining how to add silver to glass to create a mirrored surface. Angel Gilding creates kits that make this process very easy and even provides videos online to help instruct anyone on how to add this amazing surface to glasswork.

A number of artists taught two-day classes. **Gail Stouffer**, a nationally known artist, opened her San Antonio studio doors for her class entitled *PHOTO|graphic|GLASS* to allow students to try their hand at her incredible techniques of fusing, powder printing, and much more! **Hallie Monroe** taught an inspiring class, *Introduction to Glass Painting*. **Steven Cowan** took painting one step further with a *Painting for Replication* class. **Tembo Glassworks Studios** offered students a chance to *Make a Blown Glass Rondel*. **Drones and Docs** presented *Access to Windows in a New Way*, which gave students insight into new technologies that have become available.

On Saturday evening, the boards of both the AGG and the SGAA took the time to have a joint dinner in the Tower of the Americas. This 750-foot observation tower and restaurant offers a spectacular view of downtown San Antonio. **Sunday evening** saw the opening of the silent auction during a welcoming reception that reunited members from both the SGAA and the AGG. It was also the opening for a joint stained glass exhibition, which contained over 15 panels of incredible work from artists of both organizations.



Opening the silent auction.

Photo courtesy of Judson Studios/Kyle J Mickelson.

Conference Highlights

Monday was the official kick off of the conference with an opening greeting by both organizations' presidents, Tony Glander of the AGG and David Judson of the SGAA. **Rolf Achilles** started the talks by giving an intriguing presentation on the history of art glass spreading to the West. **Robin and Jake Sussman** clarified all of the possibilities of using metal framing along with proper installation techniques for stained glass windows. **Susan Stinsmuehlen-Amend** presented a talk covering Texas Origins and California Continuum.

Two panel forums kept the audience involved by creating interactive discussions. Just before lunch, a restoration panel that included Mary Clerkin Higgins, Keith Barley, Vic Rothman, Ariana Makau, and Ralph Mills had a lively discussion on various restoration techniques and practices and took questions from attendees. After lunch, a Glass Manufacturing Forum featured presenters from Bullseye, Oceanside, Kokomo, Saint-Just, Blenko, Wissmach, Pilkington, and Lamberts. Each manufacturer discussed the history and present atmospheres of their respective companies.

Monday evening provided an opportunity to meet a number of vendors who came to San Antonio to support the conference. The glass manufacturers and a number of other vendors, including Delphi and Handy Hangers, greeted attendees and answered questions.

Tuesday was a full day starting with an intriguing talk by **Laurie Wells** from Old World Stone presenting information about stone frames for stained glass. Her talk included modern fabricating methods and the challenges of repairing damaged stone frames. **Mary Clerkin Higgins** presented some stained glass history in a talk titled *Saints Alive*. **Ken Leap** entertained as usual with a discussion of how enamels work and the expanding glass teaching program at Bryn Athyn College in Pennsylvania.

In an impromptu panel discussion, David Fode, Judith Schaechter, and Tim Carey shared their various forms of producing imagery in their glasswork. David covered his process for traditional stained glass painting with a clear step-by-step process and images of his creative work. Judith exposed her labor-intensive flash glass process that she uses to generate her exquisite and unique imagery. Tim Carey revealed his exceptional new process of creating imagery by using fused glass techniques along with painting to create incredible depth and color.

The afternoon captured the attendees' attention with demonstrations on various techniques. Ken Leap explained more about enamels. Alix Gomez demonstrated the gilding process with everyone. Vic Rothman answered questions and discussed restoration techniques. **Tim Brown** from Amerway Solder explained the full line of solder, fluxes and custom alloy products. **Marco Caporaso** from Abatron described how the company's epoxies could be used for wood and metal repair.

The final talk was from **keynote speaker, Helen Whittaker**, creative director for Barley Studio in York, U.K. After her talk, it was quite obvious why the title fits her. Throughout her talk, Helen illustrated her unique approach to numerous jobs and how she paid tribute to the design, architecture, and the patron to create awe inspiring commissions.

Tuesday evening was a festive and animated evening. The banquet portrayed the success of the joint conference by the volume of the camaraderie. Attendees talked with old and new friends alike.

Special Awards and Scholarship Auctions

All too soon it was time for awards. **Vic Rothman** was presented with the Nick Parrendo Lifetime Achievement Award for his vision, achievement, and leadership in stained glass as well as always sharing his expertise on restoration. **Kathy Jordan**, a premiere teacher of traditional stained glass painting, was awarded the Joseph Barnes Award for her undying service to the stained glass industry. **Judith Schaechter** was awarded the first Joint Presidents' Award from both the AGG and SGAA for all she has done and continues to do for the industry and for both organizations. Finally, **Tony Glander** was given an award by the board of the AGG for exceptional presidential service. The award was designed and fabricated by **Troy Moody**.

The night became more dynamic as the live auction began. Competitive bidding on incredible stained glass panels drew laughs, cheers, and applause. In the joint atmosphere of the conference, the panel created by **Cynthia Courage** that graced the cover of this year's program to commemorate this historic conference was caught in a heated bidding battle between an AGG and an SGAA member. The AGG member finally won it, but then donated it to the SGAA office. The combination of both the live and silent auction raised over \$20,000 for scholarships.

Kathy Jordan summed up the conference well. "Two organizations came together with one objective—to gather like-minded glass artists to share, educate, and mingle with old and new friends!"

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Visit www.americanglassguild.org for more images and information on the AGG Baltimore 2020 conference.



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Artist: Michele Knecht. From Delphi's Online Artist Gallery.

