



Introducing the AGNX Award

Featuring the latest from
the American Glass Guild

by Patrice Schelkun

On a warm summer evening in June, attendees at *Glass-topia*, the 2014 American Glass Guild (AGG) Conference, strolled the beautiful grounds of Bryn Athyn Historic District near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to a star-studded event on the hill. Those stars included two winners of the inaugural American Glass Guild Award for Excellence in the Art of Stained Glass (AGNX), as well as keynote speaker Narcissus Quagliata.

Guests were welcomed into the glass-enclosed stone entryway of the Glencairn Museum to view the third annual *American Glass Now* exhibit, an installation that ran from April 29 through June 30, 2014.



President J. Kenneth Leap, presenting Narcissus Quagliata with the AGG Lifetime Achievement Award.

AGNX Awards

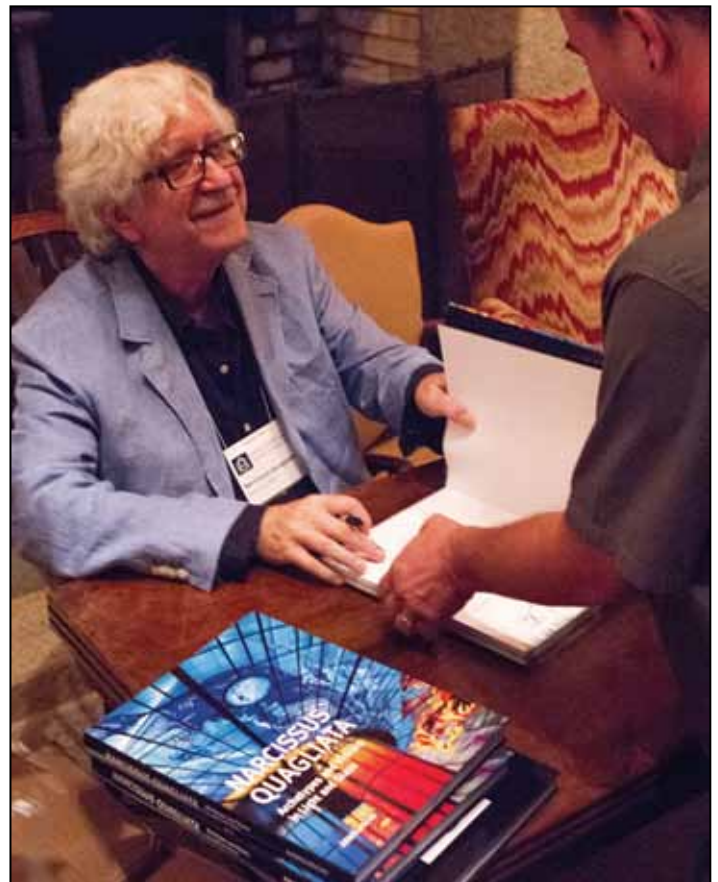
Choosing from among 19 exhibiting artists, the American Glass Guild presented its first AGNX awards to Mary Clerkin-Higgins for *Oh!*, her 12" x 40" piece done in blown glass, vitreous paints, and lead, and to Richard Prigg for his panel *Spin for a Western Light*. (See the July/August 2014 issue of *Glass Art* for more on Prigg's work.)

Jurors Virginia Raguin and Judith Schaechter led an oral critique of the exhibit for a crowd of onlookers. "The value of juried exhibitions is the increased dialogue among artists, critics, and the public. No one produces well in a vacuum. Communication, both through viewing work and face-to-face dialogue, is essential," said Raguin, Distinguished Professor of Humanities at College of the Holy Cross and a scholar in religious art history and stained glass. "The greater the awareness of varieties and possibilities in subject matter, materials, and skills, the more sure and focused an artist can be about his or her own choices."

Schaechter added: "It's always hard to select one person and place him or her above the others. I think artists whose work goes above and beyond, who truly stretch what is possible, should be recognized for their accomplishments." A Philadelphia-based artist and Adjunct Professor at the University of the Arts, Schaechter's uniquely creative work in the medium of stained glass is widely collected.

Insights from Quagliata

Following the AGNX award presentations, conference attendees and public invitees moved into the massive Great Hall to hear internationally acclaimed architectural glass designer Quagliata speak about his life's work. The event's setting was a perfect one for glass lovers of all kinds. The Glencairn Museum is a castlelike Romanesque-style mansion, once the home of billionaire businessman, Raymond Pitcairn (1885–1966). It houses Pitcairn's expansive collection of medieval and ancient religious art, which includes exceptional stained glass and mosaic installations.



Narcissus Quagliata signing copies of his book.



*Mary Clerkin-Higgins, one of two
AGNX 2014 Award winners.*

Quagliata ignited the imagination of this rapt audience with a discussion of the many highlights of his long career in art and stained glass design. He is best known for his spectacular public artworks, among them the Kaohsiung Dome of Light, the largest illuminated art glass dome in the world, in Taiwan's central rail station. AGG member Nancy Gong, along with AGG President J. Kenneth Leap, presented Quagliata with the AGG Lifetime Achievement Award in Stained Glass Design. Afterwards, the artist met individual audience members as he signed copies of his book *Narcissus Quagliata: Archetypes and Visions in Light and Glass*.

Looking Forward to 2015

The American Glass Guild hopes the introduction of the AGNX Award will encourage both experimentation and intensity of focus among future entrants. Depending on the quality of entries received, the award may not be given every year, or it may be awarded to more than one exhibitor at *American Glass Now*, as it was in 2014.

Next year's exhibition will take place over a three-month period at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., site of the next American Glass Guild Conference, June 18–21, 2015. The application deadline for *American Glass Now: 2015* is January 15, 2015.

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Visit www.americanglassguild.org to learn more about AGG and for details of the organization's upcoming events.

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