

American Glass Now 2014



Featuring the latest from the American Glass Guild

by Tony Glander

The American Glass Guild exhibited an incredible show of glass talent at its annual conference this summer in Philadelphia. The third annual juried show, “American Glass Now,” was held at the Glencairn Museum in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, May 1 through June 30, 2014. The 19 exhibiting artists included: Don Burt, Joseph Cavalieri, Marie Foucault-Phipps, Saara Gallin, Nancy Gong, Mary Clerkin Higgins, Kathy Jordan, Sr. Ann Therese Kelly, Barbara Krueger, J. Kenneth Leap, Linda Lichtman, Ellen Mandelbaum, Sean Merchant, Hallie Richards Monroe, Nancy Nicholson, Rick Prigg, Patrice Heinz Schelkun, Amy Valuk, and Sasha Zhitneva. The artists’ works of glass art carried bold statements by means of employing a spectrum of techniques.

Glass Painting and Three-Dimensional Relief

Patrice Heina Schelkun submitted *Gift of Life*. She says, “This design was created in a spirit of thanksgiving for the recent birth of my first grandchild, based on a photograph of my daughter and her new son, Jack. There is some personal symbolism in the piece. The water and mountain represent the lake where my daughter and her husband first met. The rays streaming down over the figures represent what I believe is the outpouring of God’s creative energy into the world. And while that life begins in purity and heady love, represented by apple blossom branches, it ultimately also includes challenge and suffering, hinted at by the Crown of Thorns.” To convey all of this symbolism, Schelkun used traditional glass painting techniques.

Saara Gallin’s panel, *Aishet Chail-Woman of Valor-The Tradition Continues: Prov. 31:15*, honors many of today’s young women who seek and attain stature in their professions while being devoted to their families in the very tradition of the Aishet Chail. Gallin says, “This work is dedicated to the women who persevere and face the eternal divide between selfless devotion and individual identity.”

Depicted in the work by use of laminated imagery, are:

- A classic woman of yesterday, sorting feathers in the marketplace.
- Dr. Pamela Gallin Yablon, Clinical Professor of Ophthalmology and Pediatrics and mother of four preparing to operate during her ninth month of pregnancy.
- Claire Samuelson Meadow, Esq., practicing attorney, author, lecturer, mother of three, and grandmother of four.



Patrice Schelkun, *Gift of Life*.

“They are sisters all,” Gallin claims, “living an ancient tradition that gives meaning to their lives.” Her panel is a combination of imagery and three-dimensional relief works.

Finding Creativity through Diverse Elements

The eye-catching panel by **Amy Valuk**, *Purple Roses*, came from a series of fusing experiments with scrap glass. “I played around with color displacement to make blurred edges in the flower petals, trying different thicknesses and spacing of clear and purple to achieve the look I wanted.” She experimented by using a variety of glass stringer and base colors to achieve the veining in the leaf. Finally, all of the fused elements were incorporated into a leaded panel, and Reusche paints were used to add in the thorny vines that cut across the background.

When **Nancy Gong** was asked to create a design based on artwork by American visual artist, Juane Quick-to-See Smith, she turned to her cultural background. “The dress made me think of my mother. Before I knew it, I was researching my mother’s life role in U.S. immigration history,” Gong says. *War Bride*, the panel, turned into an experimental piece, beautifully combining vitreous painting, etching, and laminating.

Rick Prigg's panel, *Spin for A Western Light*, grabs the viewers interest with bold lines and great glass selection. Prigg says, "The traditional lead line in stained glass is typically suppressed to serve the glass. In my work, I make it as important as the glass. At the same time I am using different densities of glass to call forward the way light can pass though or be held by the different types of glass."

Joseph Cavalieri's panel, *Close Your Eyes and Think of England*, is based on the 1950s portrait of England's Queen Elizabeth II. This panel is a great example of the benefits of layering screen-printed glass in a traditional style panel.



Rick Prigg, *Spin for A Western Light*.



Amy Valuk, *Purple Roses*.

A Showcase for Talent, Dedication, and Imagination

The other panels in the show were brilliant pieces of art in a wide range of themes, colors, and imagery. From Kathy Jordan's panel, *Beauty & the Beast*, which was created with powder frit and framed in a stoneware slab, to Sean Merchant's panel, which incorporates bevels and traditional painting, the finished pieces portrayed a great amount of talent, dedication, and imagination.

"American Glass Now" was intended to give artists an opportunity to experiment, show their skills, be ambitious, have a dialogue with fellow artists, and show the public what stained glass can be. Thanks to these artists, the public has a great understanding that imagination and creativity are alive and well in the stained glass field.

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Saara Gallin
with her panel,
Aishet Chail-
Woman of Valor.



Nancy Gong, *War Bride*.
Photo by Martino Flynn.

Visit www.americanglassguild.org to learn more about AGG and all of the events happening during "Glasstopia."

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