

Featuring the latest from the American Glass Guild

## AGG Summer Conference "Glasstopia" at Bryn Athyn 2014

**Utopia** \yoo-'tō-pē-ə\ *n.* An imagined place or state of things in which everything is perfect.

by Tony Glander

If the word utopia means a perfect place, then "Glasstopia" must mean the perfect place for glass professionals. The American Glass Guild (AGG) has put together just such an event for its June 26–30, 2014, conference at Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. This distinctive location is an idyllic community 20 miles north of Philadelphia and home to one of our nation's premier collections of medieval glass. It was chosen mainly due to the stained glass wonders in the Bryn Athyn Cathedral and Glencairn Museum.

The conference will launch with a reception *American Glass Now: 2014*, a juried members' exhibition, at Glencairn Museum. A keynote talk by internationally acclaimed stained glass artist, Narcissus Quagliata, will follow. Both events are free and open to the public. The full conference will feature tours, workshops, demonstrations, lectures, and panel discussions.

### Exploring the Fine Arts

With more than 30 years of experience as an artist and crafts-person, **Judith Schaechter** has examined the uncomfortable relationship of fine arts today and the notion of skill. Her lecture will discuss the awkward place in which skill finds itself and what is at stake for the arts.

The unique history of the windows at Bryn Athyn inspired **Bri-  
anne Kozlowski**, a New Jersey native and a master's candidate at the University of York, England, to present a talk on why the window construction includes some very distinctive and exceptional aspects. Also from New Jersey, **J. Kenneth Leap**, President of the American Glass Guild and lecturer at Bryn Athyn College will present on the rich glassmaking history of the Bryn Athyn community. The conference venue will feature a rare exhibition of blown glass panels created by three Bryn Athyn factories.

**Cynthia Courage**, from New Orleans, Louisiana, has a fascinating story of stained glass windows finding a new home in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The story covers the seven-year journey of windows from a deconsecrated church in Pennsylvania through their life of storage and disrepair to their new life in some of the hardest hit areas in New Orleans.



*Sister Ann Therese Kelly, Song of Creation,  
Villa Maria College Library, Buffalo, New York, 4-1/2' x 16'.*

### Pushing Established Boundaries

**Sister Ann Therese Kelly** from Buffalo, New York, believes: "Our work in glass has the potential to help shape attitudes in today's world by speaking through original images, just as medieval windows had the ability to teach religious stories and truths through their presence in the great cathedrals." Sister Kelly's presentation is an important one for anyone creating new work today. She will speak to the importance of designing contemporary windows that speak to significant and vital ideas in their appropriate settings and times. Her latest installation for the Villa Maria College Library, *Song of Creation*, will be the main focus of this lecture.

From Arizona, glass artist and charismatic speaker **Troy Moody** will present *Stained Glass Sensibilities in Terrazzo Public Art*. Moody is often pushing his artwork into new boundaries—always adding a fresh, new edge. In this lecture, he will discuss how terrazzo, a decorative flooring material with a noble 600-year history, in many ways parallels the history of stained glass. He has had several wonderful opportunities to translate his stained glass aesthetics and design concepts into terrazzo. Moody believes, “My experience with terrazzo has convinced me of its artistic viability and the possibilities for symbiotic cross-pollination between it and stained glass.”

**Jordan Wright and Ryan Fleet** are coming to Bryn Athyn to educate the glass community on video production techniques. This lecture will shed light on the costs and processes involved in making video to help widen a studio’s customer base through television broadcasting or the Internet.

## Conservation and Restoration

This year the AGG has inspired a number of experts from England to contribute to the conference. **Tom Küpper**, team leader of the Lincoln Cathedral Glazing Department, will be teaching a conservation workshop. Master glass painters, **David Williams and Stephen Byrne** from Shropshire, United Kingdom, will be leading a painting workshop as well as demonstrating their famous talents for all conference attendees.

**Sarah Brown**, Director and Chief Executive of the York Glaziers Trust, is one of the most revered lecturers on the topic of stained glass, its history, and conservation. She will be presenting a talk entitled *Looking for John Thornton* and examining the current restoration efforts at York Minster.

Restoration experts will engage in a panel discussion entitled, *Conservation Standards and Guidelines: If Not Now, When?* moderated by Art Femenella. It will focus on the need for comprehensive standards and guidelines for conservation of the stained and leaded glass in the United States. AGG’s experienced members and guests will add expertise and passion to this dialogue.

## Demonstrations

A new feature of the conference this year will be a series of demonstrations open to all conference participants. Coming from New York, **Nancy Gong**’s Chipping and Textural Etching demo will show how to add expression and dimension to glass through the use of sandblasted techniques. This will be a great introduction for beginners and an opportunity to explore new directions for those with experience in sandblasting.

**Ellen Mandelbaum**, who is internationally recognized for her innovative stained glass commissions, is excited to demonstrate her painting style in the hope that it will open up new possibilities for other artists. *A Brush with Freedom* will give attendees the rare opportunity to see Mandelbaum’s personal style firsthand and will also demonstrate how each individual painter can go beyond the rules to find his or her own way to work. She states, “All of my work is about light. I paint with light.”

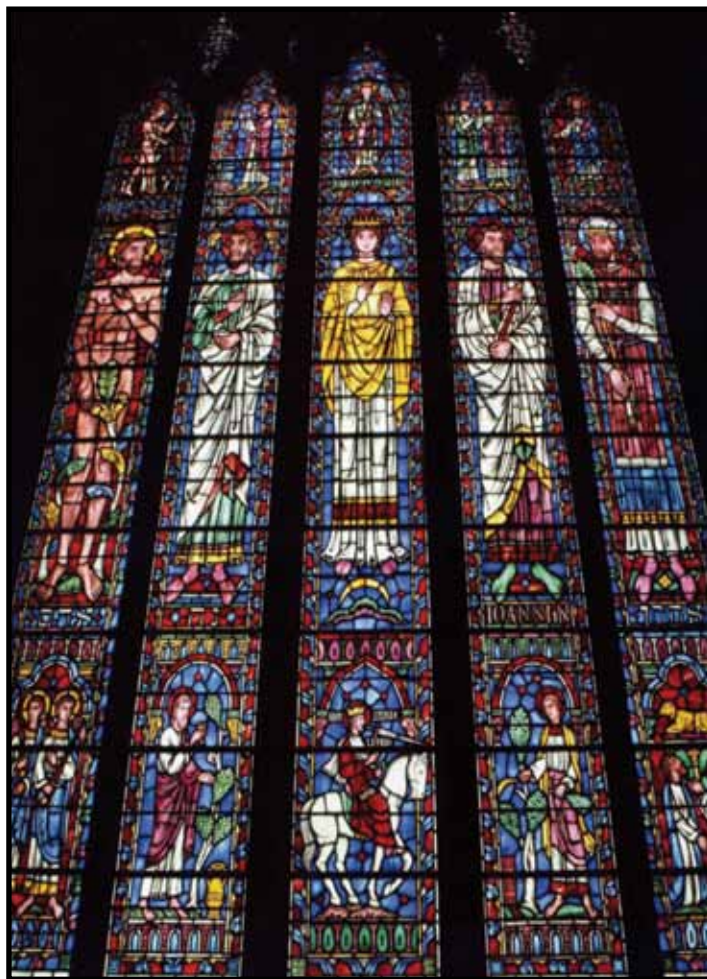
**Scott Ouderkirk** is an accomplished New York glass artist, author, and craftsman with an interest in using custom decals to enhance glasswork. In his demonstration, he will cover how the use of water slide decals is suitable for many applications, including mass production as well as single items.

## Additional Offerings from Bryn Athyn

To celebrate “Glasstopia,” conference host Bryn Athyn College will feature a series of glass workshops in its premier craft-based training program in the decorative building arts. This summer, the *Workshops at Bryn Athyn* will include glass painting with Williams & Byrne, J. Kenneth Leap, and Peter McGrain in addition to glassblowing, mosaic, stone carving, and blacksmithing. For more information visit [www.brynathyn.edu/academics/sacredarts](http://www.brynathyn.edu/academics/sacredarts).

Conference events and lodging will be held in the modern facilities of Bryn Athyn College with unparalleled access to the Bryn Athyn National Historic District. The only way to get the full “Glasstopia” experience is to attend. We look forward to seeing you there.

GA



*Brianne Kozlowski’s talk will include the stunning West Window of Bryn Athyn. Photo by C. Harrison Conroy Co.*

Visit [www.americanglassguild.org](http://www.americanglassguild.org) to learn more about AGG and all of the events happening during “Glasstopia.”



© Copyright 2014 by Glass Art.  
All rights reserved.