

Following a successful 2005 conference on the aesthetics, history and conservation of 19th-century glasspainting, this summer the British Society of Master Glass Painters, in conjunction with the Worshipful Company of Glaziers of London, organized a second international 2-day conference at Glaziers' Hall, London. Featuring eminent speakers from the UK, Europe and the USA, lectures presented a wide-ranging historical overview of the far-reaching developments in stained glass that took place throughout the 20th century. The following text is a summary of the main points of the conference (a more detailed report will appear in the 2008 *Journal of Stained Glass*).

On day 1, the morning session was chaired by BSMGP Chairman Caroline Benyon FMGP. She opened the conference, welcoming the speakers and the delegates, and then introduced the first speaker. Julie L. Sloan MSc, a stained glass consultant in the USA, spoke on the 'Crystallization of Form: The Stained Glass of the Prairie School'. The Prairie (or Chicago) School, an architectural movement in the USA popular between 1895 and 1925, was born in Chicago and spread through Wisconsin; it is related to both the US Arts & Crafts movement and Modernism. Its philosophy was unity of design, 'form follows function', and its designs were characterized by low-pitched roofs, open floor plans and large horizontal-banded stained glass windows that take advantage of light during different parts of the day.

Within the movement were two architectural firms of particular note: Adler & Sullivan and Joseph Silsbee. Frank Lloyd Wright worked for Silsbee for a year then was offered more money to work for Louis Sullivan, who became his mentor. Examples of the Sullivan firm's work included banks such as the National Farmers' and Merchants' Bank in Minnesota. In these buildings, the glass and colours in the windows were chosen to give a large quantity of interior light, but avoid glare or heat. Plate glass was used on the exterior to regulate the internal temperature. The tellers' desks were also carefully placed so that the light coming through the windows fell on the bank customer, not the clerk. Frequently its motifs were geometrical – square, circular and hexagonal – or based on organic forms; some taken from a school botany textbook – e.g. shapes resembling a seedpod. Works by other members of the School such as the firm of Purcell, Feick and Elmslie were also illustrated, along with their motifs and characteristic styles.

The second talk of the morning titled 'Frank Brangwyn: Stained Glass' was by Dr Libby Horner. Her talk detailed the politics that informed the designs and Brangwyn's working methods. Frank Brangwyn was the quintessential artist-craftsman, but it is little known that he produced designs for stained glass throughout his career, beginning with six panels commissioned by Siegfried Bing in 1899 and made by Louis Comfort Tiffany. He delighted in experimentation and new techniques, and his designs for stained glass particularly highlighted his innate understanding of colour.

He had no formal training, and worked in many styles. At the age of 15 he joined Morris & Company as an apprentice copyist of Flemish tapestries. Morris suggested that he be apprenticed to 'the glassworkers' job', but Brangwyn did not take up his advice, instead becoming a painter. When one of his paintings won a medal in Paris, he was introduced to Siegfried Bing, and was subsequently engaged to produce designs to decorate Bing's rue de Provence Galerie, a series of murals and stained glass panels based on Japanese plant designs. Other designs for Tiffany included a Baptism, with a dove descending from Heaven (similar to a Piero della Francesca painting), and stylized Art Nouveau designs with semiclad female figures amongst trees and flowers, with titles such as 'Music'.

Church designs included four windows for St Mary the Virgin, Bucklebury, Berks; an East window for a Congregational church in Northampton for a friend's son who had died at Paschendale; a memorial to the son of Cecil Hunt who died aged 19 at Saint Winifred, Manniton, Devon; and five double lancets at St Andrew's Abbey, Zevenkerken, Bruges. Two further designs commemorate the 1st Earl of Iveagh (Edward Cecil Guinness of the brewing family): one, Brangwyn's largest and probably best known, is at St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, the second at Sts Andrew and Patrick in Elveden, Suffolk.

After coffee, the emphasis switched to development in Continental Europe as Michael Barker, spoke on: 'A Survey of 20th-century Stained Glass in France from the End of the Belle Époque to Abstraction'. This talk examined the roots of Modernism stemming from Samuel Bing's commissions from Nabis artists; the impetus of the Art Sacré movement spurred on by Maurice Denis; the influence of the new Art Deco style in the 1920s; and the dynasties of stained-glass makers based at historic centres such as Chartres and their creative collaboration with renowned painters including Matisse, Braque, Léger, Rouault, Chagall and Miró.

He began by setting the scene in France at the peak of its Belle Époque, with the Exposition Universelle of 1900. Amongst the stained glass there was a significant work which led the way artistically not only for Art Nouveau but also to the twentieth century: Le Printemps (Spring) created in 1895 by Eugène Grasset and executed by Félix Gaudin. Also the artists of the Nancy School breathed life and excitement into the medium in the 1890s with new glassmaking techniques developed by the Daum brothers and adapted to stained glass by Jacques Grüber. Samuel Bing – sent to America by the director of the Beaux-Arts – commissioned Tiffany to execute 13 designs by

Bing's artist friends: Toulouse-Lautrec and the Nabis painters. They were exhibited first at the Salon de la Société National des Beaux Arts in Paris in April 1895, then installed in December that year at Bing's Galerie de l'Art Nouveau in the rue de Provence. However, despite avant-garde painters already creating waves in the first decade of the 20th century, stained glass largely remained in its pictorial figurative tradition.

After the Great War there was a renaissance with a vast programme of rebuilding in war-devastated Northern France – creating an explosion of new building and associated decorative arts. The key work in the history of modern ecclesiastical architecture was Notre Dame de la Conciliation at Le Raincy, a suburb of Paris. Regarded as the world's first modern church, building commenced in June 1922 and was completed in a mere 13 months. Maurice Denis was chosen to design the great expanse of stained glass, executed by Marguerite-Félicité Huré. Notre-Dame was nicknamed the 'Sainte Chapelle' of modernism and influenced church design internationally from then on but, its concrete construction proving faulty, it was necessary to restore the church and its stained glass from 1953 (by Gabriel Loire).

Despite the early emergence of avant-garde art in France, it was not until after the Second World War that abstraction made its general reappearance. In the interwar years, the figurative style we now call Art Deco dominated; an example is to be found in the Reading Room rooftop by Jacques Gruber in the new library at Reims – a city largely rebuilt in the 1920s. Three sublime small post-war churches were each created by a single artist: the 'Chapelle du Rosaire' at Vence in the South of France by Henri Matisse, the pilgrimage chapel of Notre-Dame-du Haut at Ronchamp by Le Corbusier, and the church at Varengeville, near Dieppe, where Georges Braque created the beautiful 'Tree of Jesse', which has been described by Patrick Reyntiens as 'the best stained glass of the 20th century'.

The list of major artists of the 20th century who designed windows for French churches at that time is very long, and included Marc Chagall, who was 70 when he designed the stained glass for the cathedral of Metz then later Reims cathedral, where he painted the figures on the glass himself; Jean Cocteau at St Maximin in Metz, St Blaise-des-Simples at Milly-la-Forêt, south of Paris, and Notre-Dame-de-Jérusalem near Fréjus; surrealist Joan Miró at Senlis; Alexandre Cingria at Le Fayet in the Haute-Savoie; the abstract artist Alfred Manessier at numerous churches, including Hem, near Lille, Charles Marc at Lyon, Léon Zack at, for example, Issy-les-Moulineaux, Max Ingrand at Yvetot, and, probably the most prolific, Gabriel Loire.

The afternoon session was chaired by Martin Harrison FSA, Hon. FMGP, and continued to look at glass on the Continent, this time in Germany. Dr Iris Nestler spoke first, about 'The Influence of Modern Art on Glass in Germany'. The analysis began with Bruno Taut's glasshouse at the 1914 Werkbund exposition in Cologne. The period between Bruno Taut and Johan Thorn-Prikker, on one hand, and Heinz Mack's architectonic utopia, on the other, was marked by strong contrasts. Her study of glasspainting in the second half of the 20th century, and in particular the three post-War decades, started by referring back to Prikker. She posed two questions: What actually happened between Prikker and the present? and What is the difference between the achievements of Prikker and Meistermann, and were there actual regressions between Prikker and the 1960s?

Studying the works of German glasspainters the speaker revealed, as well as a relationship with the architectural space of the contextual building, a stylistic comparison with contemporary trends in the art of painting. The artistic development of the period between 1900 and 1960 encompassed Art Nouveau, Expressionist, Surrealist, Constructivist, Bauhaus and, in contrast, very painterly tendencies. Looking at a selection of German architectural glass over the same period, very similar diverse tendencies can be charted within this wealth of stained glass windows from five decades. There exist links to Expressionism, Constructivism as much as lyrical abstraction, optical kinetics as well as gestural painting.

The next contribution, on behalf of Derix Studios, was by Andrea McKay: 'Glass as "Fine Art in Architecture" from the Second Half of the 20th Century to the Beginning of the 21st'. She is the International Art Projects Adviser and Coordinator for the Studios, who have a 150-year history working with more than 1000 artists worldwide. She examined the role of the Studio in achieving an artist's concept and vision and the diverse range of artists requiring different techniques and approaches. She also covered the practicalities of developing commissions from ecclesiastical art to the growing number of public art projects and the use of art glass in architecture.

From the 1960s, a new sense of freedom was felt in music and fashion, and British artists were hungry for new influences, such as Brian Clarke, travelled to Germany, and encountered the work of Johannes Schreiter amongst others. Realizing the importance of the 'German masters', Clarke was instrumental in introducing this work to the UK, in 1978 helping to stage the exhibition 'Glass Light', followed in 1980 by the Swansea exhibition 'Glass Masters'. The 'German style' embodied the return of the most basic elements of glass – glass, lead, and light – on a grand scale. A number of artists' works were shown to illustrate and exemplify stylistic points and materials used in projects that Derix had been involved in executing, including Johannes Schreiter – one of the first artists to plate glass with Plexiglass, whose famous

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