

# Remarkable Architectural Art Glass

## *A Rochester Tour*

by Nancy Gong, Gong Glass Works, and Valerie O'Hara, Pike Stained Glass Studio



*The Eye Institute, Rochester, installation by Nancy Gong.*

Located south of Lake Ontario, a short drive from the beautiful glacier-formed Finger Lakes and one-and-one-half hours west of Syracuse is Rochester, NY. Rochester is the second largest regional economy in New York State. With a city population of more than 200,000, the surrounding area's population exceeds one million. The area has a rich history of innovation; businesses such as Bausch and Lomb, Eastman Kodak, and Xerox have facilities in the area; it is a leader in optics-manufacturing research; and it is home to fine educational institutions such as the University of Rochester, Rochester Institute of Technology, and smaller colleges such as Nazareth College and SUNY colleges. These entities, combined with the geographical attributes of the region, have contributed to attracting all sorts of creative people to the the

community. Of interest to SGAA members, Rochester has established and nurtured an arts and cultural community through the years, resulting in a still-growing appreciation of new installations in architectural art glass as well as the preservation of noteworthy stained glass. Through the years, glass designers and studios have added to a fabulous collection of centuries-old glass art.

Artists working in many disciplines have established studios in the area or have for a time had a studio in Rochester, including Wendell Castle, Claude Bragdon, Cab Calloway, Garth Fagan, Nancy Gong, Lou Gramm, Phillip Seymour Hoffman, Chuck Mangione, Peter McGrain, Valerie O'Hara, Albert Paley, Christopher Seaman, Michael Taylor, and Patricia Tyser, to name a few. Historic architecture and its art glass gems by notewor-

thy designers and stained glass studios are plentiful in a 1.7 mile stretch with what some call the miracle mile. For a whirlwind tour of architectural glass in Rochester, put your hiking shoes on for a trek, bike ride or drive along East Ave and ARTWalk of Rochester on University Ave. All are very convenient to visit.

If you choose to drive, parking in Rochester is available and often free. You'll experience a grand preservation district, all very well maintained, on the edge of the cultural district East Avenue. On the edge downtown Rochester is an impressive array of of important historic windows dotted with contemporary glass added through the years. We've

put together a self-guided, condensed tour of stained and architectural art glass we think you'll find inspiring. Most of these you'll be able to see from outside. To assure access from the inside, you may want to call ahead. If there is interest, we would be happy to lead a group tour. We'll start at the west end of East Avenue, downtown, and head east.

(1) Eastman School of Music's Wolk Atrium: (585) 274-1110 for access hours. Venetian-style chandelier, blown glass. Dale Chihuly 2010. Eastman Theatre, Renovation and addition completed 2010, is worth a visit as well.

(2) Christ Episcopal Church: (585) 454-3878; 141 East Avenue, Rochester 14604. Chancel, north transept, and choir loft by Tiffany Studios, 1890s. Side chapel attributed to Henry Sharp; North nave by Rambusch Studios; Narthex and vestry by Pike Studios

(3) LiDestri Residence — Private residence; please be mindful of their privacy; 234 East Avenue, Rochester 14604, next to the Little Theater. 25' wall of etched, chipped, and cold painted glass depicting Letchworth State Park, the grand canyon of the east. The art is a privacy screen between the residence and the urban street life: "Our Special Place," Nancy Gong, Gong Glass Works.

(4) Rochester Area Community Foundation, 24-hour visibility; 500 East Avenue, Rochester 14604. Outdoor sign. Cast and painted. Nancy Gong, Gong Glass Works.

(5) Third Presbyterian Church — 585-271-6531 for a docent led tour; 4 Meigs Street (corner of East Avenue). You can't miss this limestone lady in the Gothic Revival style. For those interested in historical stained glass, this collection is well documented. One chancel and four nave windows by Willett Studios in 1951, 1961, 1965; six east transept, two west transept windows by Pike Studios, 1921, 1934, 1945, 1966; three nave windows, 26 clerestory windows and east choir loft by Tiffany Studios, 1910 - 1915; one window by Charles Allen; one window by Maitland Armstrong; west choir loft by Tiffany, 1893; south entry skylight and columbarium by Pike Studios, 1965 and 1976. This church has three generations of windows made by Pike Stained Glass Studios.

(6) Lutheran Church of the Incarnate Word, (585) 244-6065, 597 East Avenue. Willett Studios, faceted glass.

(7) Strasenburg Planetarium; Contact: Heidi Luizzi, (585) 697-1941; 657 East Avenue, Rochester, NY 14607. Located in the lobby: "Monument," Leaded glass by Peter McGrain.

(8) Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation, (585) 244-3377; 962 East Avenue, Rochester 14607. Recent work by Pike Studios, 2003.

(9) St Paul's Episcopal Church, (585) 271-2240; 25 Westminster Rd. off East Avenue, Rochester 14607. Ambulatory (moved from old church bldg.) attributed to Henry Sharp; East and west transepts and chantry by Tiffany Studios, 1897; 12 windows in the east and west naves by Connick Studios.

According to Valerie O'Hara, Pike Stained Glass Studio, "The locations... are important because of the sizes and quantities of the windows. Combine that with the breadth and depth of studios and their work represented in each church, especially the Third Presbyterian and St. Paul's, and it makes them veritable museums of stained glass history. If you add the stories behind the donors, who are significant personalities in the history of Rochester, and the biblical iconography of the compositions, many Stained Glass Association of America members will be thrilled to know of this cache of windows in our city. As an added enticement, there is a window behind the baptismal font at St. Paul's Church that is unsigned and lacks any archival information. It is very similar, and in the same era as the Tiffany windows nearby, but Gwen Cheney, parishoner and docent, explained that there is a La Farge connection to the church and would love help in solving the mystery."



*Greek Orthodox Church installation by Pike Studios.*

(10) ARTWalk of Rochester Artistic Bus Shelter, Public Art; 24-hour access / visibility; 1000 University Ave (From East Avenue, one block over, taking Portsmouth Terrace to University Ave. Sited in front of Gleason Works.) "Engineers Have Fun Too!" etched and chipped glass by Nancy Gong, Gong Glass Works.

(11) Asbury First United Methodist Church, (585) 271-1050; 10050 East Avenue, Rochester 14607. Sanctuary windows by Willett Studios, office windows by Tiffany Studios, entrance window by Pike Studios, 2006.

(12) Frank Lloyd Wright's E. E. Boynton House, Private residence. *Please respect the privacy of the homeowners by remaining on the sidewalk.* 16 East Blvd., Rochester 14610.

For a city of its size, Rochester has a lot to offer, with lots of friendly people. Heading back, there are several nearby neighborhoods you can stop in for shopping, to see more art, or stop for a drink or a meal. There are also plenty of night clubs with the full range of



*This public art etched glass installation is by Nancy Gong, Gong Glass Works. Photography by Christopher Maggio.*

music that any large metropolitan area might offer. Listed below are several options.

**Museums, Galleries, Culture:**

- International Museum of Photography, 900 East Avenue, Rochester 14607
- Rochester Museum and Science Center / Strassenburgh Planetarium, 657 East Avenue
- Memorial Art Gallery of Rochester, 500 University Avenue, Rochester 14607
- National Museum of Play, One Manhattan Square, Rochester 14607
- Geva Theatre Center, 75 Woodbury Blvd, Rochester 14607
- Rochester Contemporary, 137 East Avenue, Rochester 14604
- Little Theatre - Independent Films, 240 East Avenue

**Nearby Neighborhoods:**

- Park Avenue — Runs parallel to East Avenue, one block south. The hip-and-trendy-people street, filled with great architecture, shops, restau-

rants and pubs. Parkleigh is a favorite shopping place, with the friendliest people on earth. Hogan’s Hideaway, Charlie’s Frog Pond, and the Park Avenue Pub are favorites.

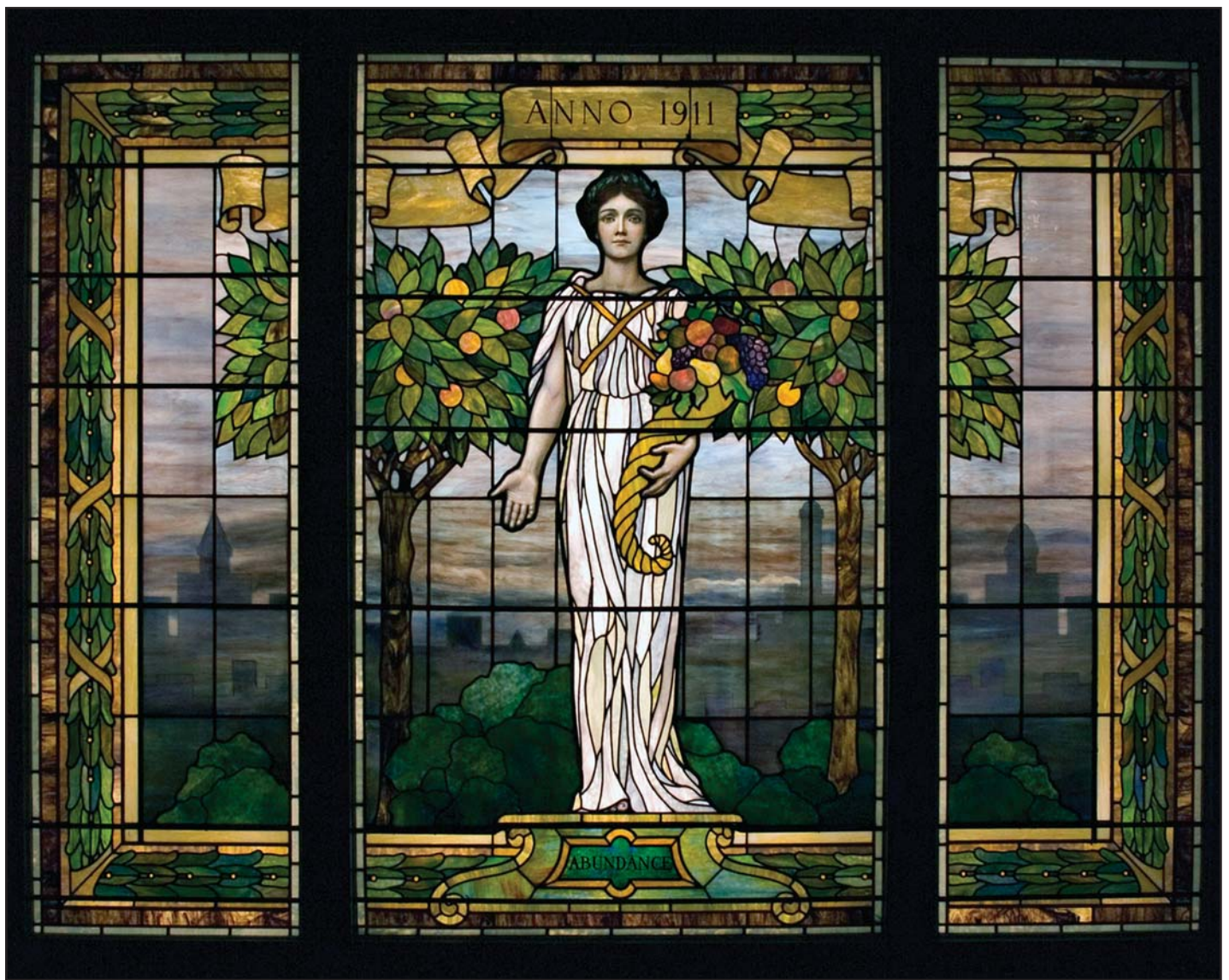
- Neighborhood of the Arts; University and Goodman Streets. University runs parallel to East one block north. You’ll find ARTWalk of Rochester on University from Goodman to Culver Rd.
- ARTWalk is an urban trail of public art work — an outdoor museum. An expansion project is underway from University to Prince Street, and from Goodman to Village Gate. You’ll also find the Memorial Art Gallery, Visual Studies Workshop, and School of the Arts and Craft Company No 6, a North American Craft store housed in an old firehouse along ARTWalk.

Other noteworthy installations outside of our miracle mile:

- Interfaith Chapel on the University of Rochester Campus; 500 Wilson Blvd, Rochester 14620. Faceted Blenko Glass by Willet Studios, Charles Z. Lawrence, Designer.
- Temple Beth El, (585) 473-1770; 139 South Winton Road, Rochester 14610 — Faceted glass in sanctuary by Samuel Weiner, Jr.
- Rochester Institute

of Technology, Administrative Services Building / Innovation Center, Building 87, Rochester 14623 — 54' x 10' wall of etched and hand chipped glass. “In Art Science and Life, What is the Question?” Nancy Gong, Gong Glass Works. Project awarded LEED Platinum status. 2010 AIA Rochester Merit Award.

- WXXI, Public Broadcasting, (585) 258-0200; 280 State Street — Relocated leaded glass from a private residence by Patricia Tyser, from her German period. Tyser studied with Ludwig Schaffrath.
- Port of Rochester Towers, Contact Pier 45 (restaurant) for access, (585) 865-4500; 1000 N River Street, Rochester 14612 on the Genesee River by Lake Ontario. Public Art project featuring leaded and etched glass by Nancy Gong, Gong Glass Works.
- Seneca Park Zoo, (585) 336-7200; 222 St. Paul Street, Rochester 14621, off Route 104 — Bengal Tigers in leaded glass by Peter McGrain.
- Wilmot Cancer Center at Strong



*This installation at Sonnenburg Gardens is by Pike Studios.*

- Memorial Hospital, (585) 275-5830; 601 Elmwood Ave. Box 704, Rochester, NY 14624. Meditation Room window by Pike Studios, 2008; lobby sculpture by Michael Taylor.
- Christ Episcopal Church, Pittsford, (585) 586-1226; 36 South Main St., Pittsford 14534 — Early Gothic revival building, 1870s. One nave window by Tiffany Studios; three nave windows by Keck studios, 1940s; three nave, several narthex and Fellowship Room windows by Pike Studios; one chancel window attributed to Sharp Studios.
- St. Thomas More Church, (585) 381-4200; 2617 East Ave. Rochester, NY 14610. — Twelve windows

throughout sanctuary by Pike Studios, 1958, 1960, 1967.

- St. Mary's RC Church, (585) 232-7140; 15 St. Mary's Place, Rochester 14607 — features windows by Tiffany and Pike Studios.
- Rush Rhees Library, (585) 275-4461 — Graduate Studies Room window by Pike Studios, 2009; carved glass installation in the lobby by Nancy Gong, Gong Glass Works.

**Other facts:**

The earliest church and oldest public building in Rochester is St. Luke & St. Simon Cyrene, founded by Nathaniel Rochester. It houses early-nineteenth-century grisaille windows.

The oldest recorded window of more than 650 commissions by Pike Stained Glass Studios (1911) is at the Sonnenburg Gardens in Canandaigua, NY.

Once the weather breaks, Rochester becomes a city of festivals. In June, the Jazz Festival will take over, with stage venues on the street, clubs, theatres, and everywhere else. If you are planning on stopping during the Jazz Festival, make your reservations now. Rochester is worth the stop, a feast for the eyes and nourishment for the heart and soul. For more information, contact *Nancy@NancyGong.com*.

