

STAINED GLASS

THE QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF THE STAINED GLASS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

FALL 2023



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5
President's Message

6
Through the
Looking Glass: From
the Editorial Board

8
Reflections on
120 Years: From the
Executive Director

12
On The Shoulders
of Giants: Innovation
in Stained Glass
Developed by the Stained Glass Association of America Foundation (SGAA Foundation) in collaboration with Judson Studios, the On The Shoulders of Giants anniversary exhibit pays homage to the skills honed over generations, facilitating innovation both in Buffalo's past and in its present.
By Megan McElfresh

22
Conference 2023:
Forging New Paths
The 112th annual conference of SGAA was hosted for the first time in Buffalo, NY, marking a historic occasion for the organization. "Forging New Paths," spanned five full days, featuring two exhibitions, five tours, 20 workshops, 21 speaker presentations, and a week-long collaborative Mosaic Marathon running all day.
By SGAA Staff

34
Mosaic Marathon:
Buffalo Strong
At the 2023 Conference, the Mosaic Marathon, led by Dianne Sonnenberg, united the community for the creation of 'Buffalo Strong. Together,' participants crafted a mosaic supporting the local nonprofit Care Management Coalition in Buffalo, NY. Over five days, they worked around the clock, using over 6000 glass fragments to complete the mural.
By SGAA Staff, SAMA Staff, and Dianne Sonnenberg

40
Rambusch at 125: Objects,
Environments, and Light
Rambusch Decorating Company has thrived for 125 years, renowned for crafting bespoke liturgical furnishings, architectural lighting, restoration, conservation, and thousands of stained glass and mosaic projects, ranging from small-scale to monumental creations.
By Charles D. Linn

52
Through a Prism: Designing,
and Redesigning, the Fisher
Center at Belmont University
In 2021, Kaiser/von Roenn Studio, led by Kenneth von Roenn, designed and installed new windows at Belmont University's Fisher Center for Performing Arts. Positioned westward, these windows refract and disperse light around the grand foyer throughout the afternoon and evening hours.
By Liam Greenwell

60
Stained Glass Bookstore

61
Stained Glass Library

62
Advertiser Index &
Artist Spotlight Index

64
News & Opportunities

70
Classifieds

72
Connect with SGAA

73
Suppliers

76
Online Resources

77
SGAA Directory

STAINED GLASS

THE QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF THE STAINED GLASS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Stained Glass Quarterly is an exchange of ideas and knowledge among readers, a means of carrying information and inspiration of our craft to the world.

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From the Executive Director

REFLECTIONS ON THE SGAA'S 120TH ANNIVERSARY

As we draw the curtains on our 120th anniversary year, I find myself often contemplating the intersection of our identity as a community and as an industry with our real and perceived challenges.

If I had a dollar for every time someone told me stained glass was dying (or even already dead)—this organization would have an operating budget to last us at least the next ten years and a million dollar endowment to boot.

As frustrating as it can sometimes be to feel like so much of our world is unaware of the existence of the SGAA and our incredible studios, it is nothing compared to the frustration I have when I come across our own cynical narrative of ‘impending doom’.

At the end of our recent conference here in Buffalo, New York, we traveled up Delaware Avenue to The Buffalo History Museum (a place where people think only dead things live) where our “On The Shoulders of Giants: Innovation in Stained Glass” Exhibition is currently on display. As we sat together to celebrate

the achievements of our 120th anniversary year and of the conference itself, I shared with attendees a little bit of Buffalo History. When you visit Buffalo today, you will find that this is a fiercely proud city, but it wasn't always this way. The “Talk Proud” campaign in the 1980s here in Buffalo was a concerted effort to uplift the city's spirit during a time when it faced national criticism and negative perceptions. Criticism and perceptions that were intensified and exaggerated by Buffalo residents themselves. “Talk Proud” aimed to instill a sense of pride and positivity among residents and counteract the prevailing pessimism about the city's prospects. The campaign sought to boost civic pride, encourage resilience, and foster a more positive image of Buffalo starting from within the community and then spreading beyond the region to the nation.

Wonder how long it took to work? About 40 years.

But now? Boy, it was AWESOME to hear from so many attendees about how much they loved Buffalo. Because we love it too and we love sharing it and we could just tell you about it until you are downright sick of hearing us talk about it. I think the stained glass community, and our SGAA can learn a lesson here.

We've dwelled on the difficulties and labeled ourselves as a dying craft, shrouded in secrecy. But is stained glass truly endangered? Perhaps it does feel like that's possible, but the vitality of this community is a lot stronger.

We've often overlooked the love people harbor for stained glass. Industries are eager to collaborate, but our narrative of decline impedes potential partnerships. It's time we challenge the giants among us—let part of your legacy to this craft be to help us nurture a new narrative for this industry. To the emerging leaders among us, I implore you to help us break this cycle.

Let's dispel the notion of decline and embrace the vibrancy that defines our craft.

“Innovation in the arts is a gift we give each other.”
—Dr. Jane Cook

Looking at our accomplishments over these last few years, in spite of the challenges placed in our way; looking at the exhibitions we were able to create this year; looking at the growth of our organization, how can you not feel that vibrancy and innovation in your bones? Let's continue to nurture innovation and mentorship.

We have long yearned for apprenticeships, education programs, greater access—these dreams are within reach. To inspire architects, embolden stewards, and uplift the next generation, we need not one or two, but countless avenues for learning and discovery. It's going to take a whole community working together, but clearly, there's no limit on what we can, and should, continue to build.

Stained glass isn't merely an art form; it's a service to others, a community ethos. We understand that sharing is intrinsic to our craft—it's in the generosity woven into our daily work. My challenge as we conclude this anniversary year and look forward is simple: let's start talking “Stained Glass Proud.”

Together, let's craft a narrative of vitality and potential, fostering a community where pride, innovation, and generosity pave the way for a brighter, more vibrant future for stained glass.

Megan McElfresh
Executive Director ■

Megan McElfresh concluding the celebration at the Buffalo History Museum. Photo: Brett Deneve



The original organization name and logo that started it all in 1903.



In 2023, the Seal for the Stained Glass Association of America and the new Seal of the SGAA Foundation both got a major investment of energy and love. They are now updated to hearken back to the original logo of the organization and the mission it served.

On The Shoulders of Giants

By Megan McElfresh

Buffalo is home to some of America’s most historic houses of worship, boasting iconic stained glass windows. A captivating testament to the development of American Opalescent Glass as a technical art form unfolds over the ten-year installation span at Trinity Episcopal on 371 Delaware Avenue.

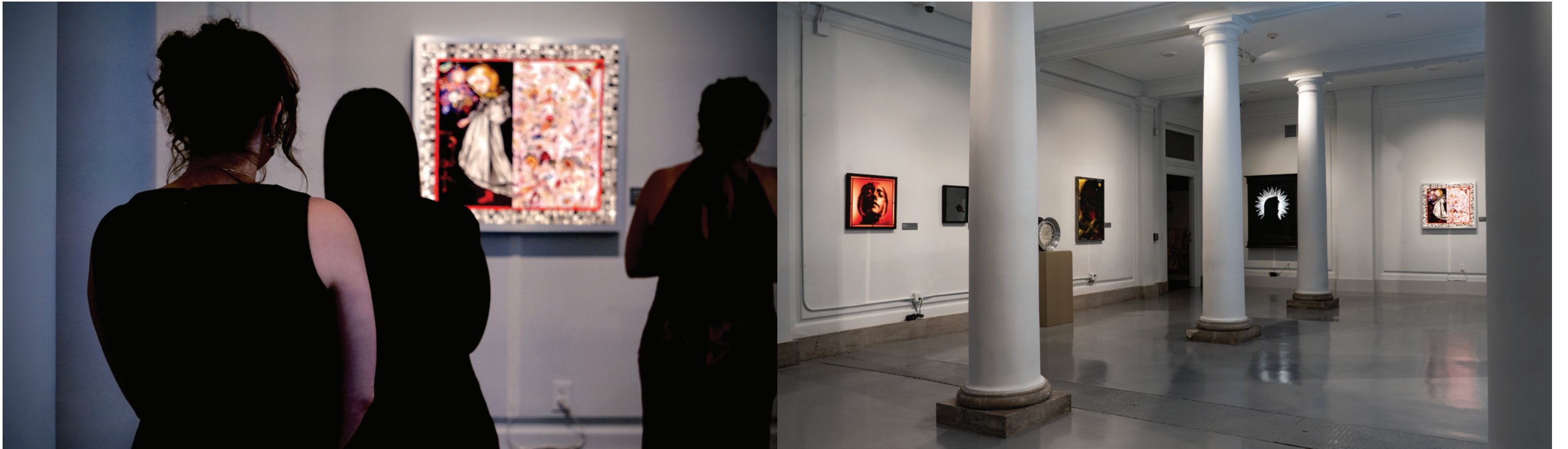
Notably, Buffalo stands as one of only two locations in the country where both Tiffany and LaFarge’s works coexist within the same space. The spirited competition between Louis Comfort Tiffany and John LaFarge, in their pursuit to revolutionize stained glass, unfolded uniquely in Buffalo, resulting in monumental windows that continue to captivate visitors today.

While Tiffany and LaFarge were pioneering their stained glass masterpieces, numerous other studios operated simultaneously, driven by a shared determination to support America’s burgeoning stained glass industry. The National Ornamental Glass Manufacturers Association, now known as the Stained Glass Association of America (SGAA), was established in July 1903 at the Southern Hotel in Columbus, Ohio. During this meeting, 26 representatives from 45 stained glass firms across the nation, either in person or by proxy, came together. Over the preceding decade, they had joined forces to lobby Congress for tariffs that would equalize the European glass worker’s wage scale with that of America’s, a wage gap of nearly three to one.

Even long after the closure of Tiffany and LaFarge’s studios, artists, designers, and studios within the Stained Glass Association of America continued to unite, sharing knowledge, advocating for improved working conditions, and creating educational resources for members. These studios, spanning multiple generations, remain active and dynamic



Facing page: *Cartomancy* by Shay Bredimus, 2019. 57" x 43" x 6"
Photo: Brett Deneve
Left: Opening night of *On the Shoulders of Giants*, September 15, 2023
Photo: SGAA



Top: *Human Nature* by Judith Schaechter, 2016. 30" x 32" x 3". Photo: Tala Harden

Bottom: *The Artifacts Left Behind* and *Silent Sounds* by Amir Fallah, 2022. 42 7/8" x 32 5/8" x 1 5/8". Photo: Brett Deneve

Top: Portico Gallery view displaying the work of El Mac, Indre Bileris, Quentin Blackman, Narcissus Quagliata, Shay Bredimus, and Judith Schaechter. Photo: Brett Deneve

Bottom: *Memento Mori* and *Silent Traveler* by Amir Fallah, 2022. 42 7/8" x 32 5/8" x 1 5/8". Photo: Brett Deneve



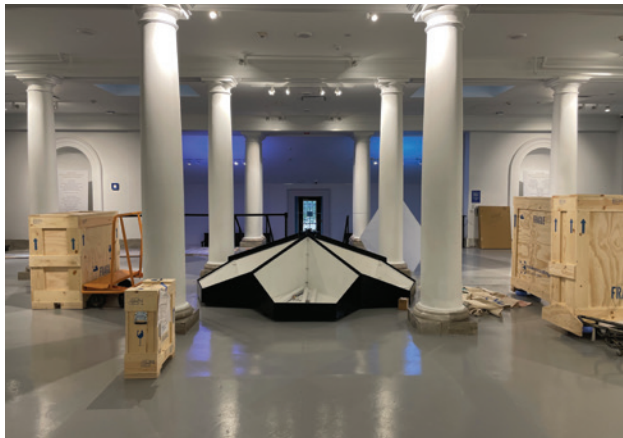
contributors to a community committed to pushing the boundaries of the medium.

Recently, the UK declared stained glass an endangered craft, while The New York Times declared that the field was experiencing a Renaissance. This juxtaposition captures the unique challenges of the stained glass world, yet it overlooks the intricate nuances that define the American stained glass industry today. America, as a relatively young nation, boasts an equally youthful stained glass tradition characterized by adaptability, experimentation, and service. Unlike older European counterparts, we do not have a deeply rooted, centuries-old education system dedicated to this craft.

Paradoxically, the pandemic has sparked a surge of interest in the stained glass craft. Unlike many other forms of glass art, stained glass can be practiced in



The installation process from delivery to final assembly for James Jean's *Pagoda* at The Buffalo History Museum. Photos: SGAA and Tala Harden



solitude nearly anywhere. Emerging voices in the field are now infusing the medium with contemporary perspectives, seeking ways to scale up projects and collaborate across disciplines. There is a common call for mentorship and guidance driving our stained glass community today.

What sets stained glass apart is its profound connection to service. Stained glass artists are primarily tasked with creating works of art that serve others—the communities they are intended for. This intrinsic bond to community narratives and values adds a unique dimension to the craft, offering a wellspring of inspiration and purpose, enabling artists to continually find fresh ways to celebrate what holds significance for their communities. For the American stained glass industry, there is no more solid foundation: it's not merely about survival—it's about thriving and evolving in ways that hold meaning

for the communities we serve. The strength of this connection to service is a guide as we navigate the path toward a vibrant and enduring future, ensuring that the art of stained glass continues to illuminate and inspire for generations to come.

This anniversary exhibit pays homage to the skills honed over generations, facilitating innovation both in Buffalo's past and in its present. Just as LaFarge and Tiffany pushed the boundaries of the medium in the 1880s, today's community propels forward, fostering innovation and creativity. The American stained glass industry finds itself at an exhilarating crossroads—a blend of tradition and innovation, history and potential, thriving on the energy and creativity of an entire community of voices.

Megan McElfresh is the executive director of the Stained Glass Association of America. ■

Portico Gallery view displaying the work of James Jean, Amir Fallah, and Dani Tull. Photo: Brett Deneve





Conference 2023: Forging New Paths

By SGAA Staff

What better place to celebrate the SGAA's 120th Anniversary than in the heart of our home city, where our SGAA national office, and the new SGAA Foundation, have been putting down community roots?

Buffalo, NY, renowned for its architectural heritage and adorned with a wealth of mosaic and stained glass, welcomed over 300 artists and enthusiasts. This conference marks the second joint effort between SGAA and SAMA, and we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the glass community for uniting in this annual celebration!

Our annual conference remains the pinnacle of our year. Forging New Paths was a five-day extravaganza that showcased two exhibitions, included five tours, featured 20 immersive workshops, then followed with 21 compelling speaker presentations, and introduced a brand-new, around-the-clock collaborative Mosaic Marathon with the expertise of the Society of American Mosaic Artists.

Networking starts over breakfast, mentorships take form by lunch, and long lasting relationships form for the years to come.

Year after year we build on the shoulders of giants, sharing our cumulative knowledge with one another. There is magic in providing space for the unplanned

to occur: the intermingling of artists, craftsmen, business people and suppliers. We exchange ideas, have impromptu demonstrations, and socialize. It is the chemistry created by our shared passion for glass that keeps bringing us back together.

EXPLORING BUFFALO'S ARCHITECTURAL MARVELS AND ARTISTRY

Western New York is home to one of the world's largest collections of works from famous architect Frank Lloyd Wright. 9 total structures remain in Buffalo today, including 3 structures that were recreated from original Wright drawings or blueprints. Tour attendees learned about the history of the Darwin D. Martin House, Graycliff Estate, the Fontana Boathouse, and the Blue Sky Mausoleum in Forest Lawn Cemetery.

Buffalo has many notable and talented Makers & Manufacturers. Boston Valley Terra Cotta is responsible for the restoration and revival of Buffalo's most significant facades and the only "global leader in the architectural terra cotta industry." They are one of only two remaining terra cotta manufacturers in the country largely because of the quality and craftsmanship of their work.

Buffalo Plaster and Architectural Casting is responsible for the restoration of some of Buffalo's most historic and intricate interiors and exteriors. Their list of award-winning projects include the restoration of the Hotel at the Lafayette, Shea's Theater and Performing Arts Center, Frank Lloyd Wright's Darwin Martin House and Graycliff Estate, Eastman Garden, the Dun Building, Our Lady of Victory Basilica, and the McKinney House.

Assembly House 150 is an artist-led nonprofit art, design and construction incubator and experiential learning center in Buffalo, NY. Founded and directed by Dennis Maher—a renowned artist and professor of architecture

The annual group photo of conference attendees in the Hyatt Regency lobby
Photo: Brett Deneve



at the University at Buffalo, Assembly House 150 is a reimagined church in the heart of Buffalo that serves as an immersive experiment in art, architecture, craft and community, mixing interactive display with workshop.

Founded in 1970, Buffalo State's Art Conservation Department is one of the leading programs of its kind in North America. Accepting only 10 students a year, their competitive three-year graduate program trains conservators of fine art and material cultural heritage. The faculty and staff of the Conservation Department invited SGAA and SAMA attendees to view the newly renovated and expanded 6,434-square-foot space, including the exquisitely designed conservation library, suite of studios, and all material laboratories.

Buffalo has an abundance of Notable Installations. Attendees had the opportunity to tour stained glass, architectural, and mosaic pieces all across the city. The stained glass tour included the works of Louis Comfort Tiffany, Mary Tillinghast, Tiroler Glasmalerei, Franz Mayer of Munich, Inc., and more at First Presbyterian Church, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Temple Beth Zion, Our Lady of Charity Parish, St. Stanislaus R.C. Church, Buffalo City Hall Council Chambers, St. Luke's Mission of Mercy, & Central Park United Methodist Church.



The Architecture and Mosaics Tour attendees visited Our Lady Help of Victory Basilica, western New York's most famous sacred space, which was built to rival the majestic churches of Europe. From there, they traveled to Blessed Trinity Roman Catholic Church, Delaware Avenue Baptist Church, First Presbyterian, Ray of Light Mural, Ellicott Square Building, Temple Beth Zion, & Buffalo Religious Arts Center, showcasing the variety of projects underway across the community.

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EDUCATION

Conferences provide a unique opportunity to acquire skills, often aligning with the specific strengths of the hosting location for that year. Workshops at each

Top: The Conservatory at The Martin House. Picturing a glass enclosed greenhouse and the full-size replica of the *Winged Victory of Samothrace*. Photo: SGAA

Middle: Group photo of the *Makers & Manufacturers* tour at Buffalo Plaster and Architectural Casting. Photo: Michael Lauer

Bottom: Group photo of the *Notable Installations: Architecture and Mosaics* tour at Blessed Trinity Roman Catholic Church. Photo: Michey Dick & Mary DeVeney



conference are customized to utilize nearby facilities and studio resources. Having the conference so close to home, we were able to take over the city and have instructors set up at The Hyatt Regency, Trinity Church, and Villa Maria College.

“Within the eight hour timeframe of the Introduction to Stained Glass Class, I went from wondering how glass is cut, to knowing the feel of yielding and resistance responses of various types of glass, each in its own voice as I slowly but surely gained control of the tools. The copper foil would become my secret as I found partnership with molten metal and my body, to smoothly pull lines of a substance that melted so effortlessly. The act of filling the furrows between my glass pieces was almost spiritual, plein-air soldering, witnessed by the presence and panes of Tiffany himself.” said Cynthia P., who was awarded an SGAA scholarship, enabling her to become a first-time SGAA conference attendee.

We were able to offer a total of 20 workshops, ranging from restoration, painting, casting, fusing, mosaic techniques, and many more. We've been very fortunate to collaborate with exceptional instructors from around the world during our conferences. These are industry leaders who often generously donate their time to share their knowledge with our members and attendees.

Each year during the General Session, we bring together speakers from around the world to speak about restoration, conservation, public art, history, and technology in the field.

Uniting the SGAA and SAMA communities creates a diverse pool, offering a wealth of presentations that serve as solid foundational references. Simultaneously, this collaboration sparks artistic exploration, catering to a wide array of interests among attendees.

In recent years, additional efforts have been made to bring notable guests and speakers to the conferences, aiming to address the collaborative nature inherent in our work. By discussing metalsmithing, masonry conservation, sacred spaces, adaptive reuse, fundraising, and public art, we can highlight the extensive range of

Top: Lead Medallions workshop with Sash & Solder at Trinity Church. Photo: Brett Deneve

Middle: Cynthia P. with her finished project from Erin Murdock's *Intro to Stained Glass* class. Photo: Brett Deneve

Bottom: *Illuminating Stained Glass & Other Works of Art* with Martin V. Rambusch and Edwin P. Rambusch. Photo: Brett Deneve





Peter & William Lupkin plating dinner catered by Tappo Restaurant before closing remarks. Photo: Brett Deneve

partnerships involved. There have also been numerous collaborations within the broader glass arts community, including kilnforming, flameworking, lamination, etc. Witnessing how connections forged at the annual conference push the boundaries of new innovative work is always an exciting aspect.

This year we invited 21 presenters to join us! Speakers and lecturers are chosen by a panel of peers for both their content and enthusiasm. The expertise of historians, conservators, and contemporary practitioners come together in a unique way to celebrate the enormous diversity of the entire industry.

COMRADERY AND CELEBRATION

2023 marked our first full-scale event post the COVID-19 pandemic. Attendees were delighted to reconnect with friends and colleagues, exchange stories, and plan for the years ahead. Following days filled with educational content, we transitioned into evening receptions to recognize and celebrate the dedication and achievements of everyone throughout the past year.

Evening receptions included the Vendor Marketplace Opening & Welcome Reception, Art Salon and Fundraising Auction, Mosaic & Glass Arts International 2023 Artist Reception, and the 120th Anniversary Awards & Closing Party with the *On the Shoulders of Giants* exhibition viewing.

Top: Evening reception outside of the Buffalo History Museum next to Hoyt Lake. Photo: Brett Deneve

Middle: Attendees silent bidding on the Art Salon pieces. Photo: SGAA

Bottom: Ted Ellison and Chevonne Ariss speaking with David Burton of Canfield Technologies. Photo: Brett Deneve

This year's greatly expanded Vendor Marketplace showcase was an opportunity to network and connect with manufacturers, suppliers, distributors, specialized art providers, and other generous supporters of the stained glass and mosaic community. We had over two dozen vendors! We want to specially thank each and every one of you:

Amate Studios, Angel Gilding, Andamento Studio & Gallery, Bendheim/Glashuette Lamberts Waldsassen GmbH, Boston Valley Terra Cotta, Bullseye Glass Co, Buffalo Plaster & Architectural Casting, Canfield Technologies, D&L Art Glass, Glass Accessories Int'l (Toyo), Kokomo Opalescent Glass Co, Laticrete International, Inc., Luna Mosaics, Mosaic Arts Online, Mosaic Mentoring/Rainbow Mosaics, Monarch Glass Studio, Oceanside Glass & Tile, Paul Wissmach Glass CoSunshine Glassworks Ltd, Sussman Architectural Products LLC, Talis Historic Restoration, Techniglass Corp, Traditional Cut Stone, Ullmannnglass GmbH, Verrerie de St. Just, Wit's End/Smalti.com/MosaicSmalti.com, and Youghioghney Opalescent Glass Co.

At every conference, attendees can explore tables filled with books, sample sets, vendor items, tools, and artwork contributed by members. Our conference's annual live silent auctions play a significant role in financing scholarship assistance.

Contributions directly support scholarships for stained glass instruction across the nation and worldwide. This year we raised \$7,036 to further support the future of our industry.

During the Art Salon, artwork is contributed to our live auction, providing an opportunity to acquire unique pieces created by numerous skilled members. This year over three dozen pieces were auctioned off to support the foundation's mission.

First: Gathering for the evening reception hosted at the Buffalo History Museum. Photo: Brett Deneve

Second: Current president of Judson Studios & past president of the SGAA, David Judson at the *On the Shoulders of Giants* closing reception. Photo: Brett Deneve

Third: Sunset on the Buffalo History Museum during the closing celebration. Photo: Brett Deneve

Fourth: Tyler Kimball receiving the President's Award from Bryant Stanton. Photo: Brett Deneve



120TH ANNIVERSARY AWARDS & CLOSING PARTY AT THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

For our 120th Anniversary Awards & Closing Party we celebrated at The Buffalo History Museum, where the On the Shoulders of Giants exhibition is on display.

Developed by the Stained Glass Association of America Foundation (SGAAF) in collaboration with Judson Studios, this exhibit is not only in celebration of the SGAA's 120th anniversary, but it also ties together our own unique history and legacy with our future architectural endeavors.

Buffalo is a living museum of the works created by the most notable studios in the American Stained Glass Industry. On the Shoulders of Giants: Innovation in Stained Glass pays homage to skills honed over generations that have facilitated innovation in the past and present-day Buffalo. Just as LaFarge and Tiffany pushed the boundaries of the medium in the 1880s, today's community continues to move forward, fostering innovation and creativity.

Glass is having a huge moment in Buffalo right now. This exhibition creates a trifecta of exhibits. Between the new Gundlach building at Buffalo AKG Art Museum and multiple new glass-related commissions being unveiled there this summer, "Brilliance: The Stanford Lipsey Art Glass Collection" at the Burchfield Penney Art Center, and this curated show—"On the Shoulders of Giants"—at the Buffalo History Museum, we have the opportunity to present Buffalo with an all new look at how glass is a part of our own built environment, building momentum for the art in our future.

The Buffalo community is invested in glass both as a material and as a resource for community renewal—supporting the Association as it builds its new headquarters here in Buffalo, NY and supporting our mission to foster new architectural voices in glass art. The exhibition is on display in the Portico Gallery through January 14th, 2024.

The featured artists include Indre Bileris, Quentin Blackman, Shay Bredimus, Amir H. Fallah, James Jean, El Mac, Narcissus Quaguata, Judith Schaechter, & Dani Tull. This is the very first time this collection of work will be displayed together outside of Los Angeles, CA.

During the awards ceremony, our Editorial Chair, Tyler Kimball, was recognized for the President's award. Tyler is the owner of Monarch Glass Studio in Kansas City, MO and is on the SGAA Board of Directors. He has led the Editorial Committee for over a year now and has actively worked on carrying the SGQ through its timeline while working to advance the content and layout. He has brought new layout features and worked on new ways to engage readers which has brought a new cadence to the SGQ, all while getting printing back on track. Under his leadership, the committee has grown, with new members and new ideas. With the SGQ being the heartbeat of the organization, President Bryant Stanton could not think of anyone more deserving of this year's award than Tyler Kimball.

We also want to specially thank some of our generous volunteers that helped significantly with the production of the 2023 Conference. Buffalo, together with its vibrant community and our combined efforts, showcases the



Manufacturing Panel led by GMIC President Scott Cooper.
Photo: Brett Deneve

lasting spirit that propels the ongoing journey of the entire glass community within the SGAA.

THE MANUFACTURING PANEL

The Manufacturing Panel is back for the first time since 2019. Scott Cooper, President of the Glass Manufacturers Industry Council, utilized a mobile poll app to engage conference attendees in getting to know more about the challenges faced by art glass manufacturers today while also driving the panel to talk about opportunities and hopes for the future.

THE MOSAIC MARATHON

During the 2023 Conference organized by SGAA and SAMA, the Mosaic Marathon brought together local community members to collaboratively produce "Buffalo Strong," a public art mosaic. Led by artist Dianne Sonnenberg, this cooperative effort involved a local nonprofit, aiming to showcase how mosaic art can connect and benefit communities. The completed artwork was donated to the Care Management Coalition (CMC) at 1021 Broadway in Buffalo, NY. CMC, located in the diverse East Buffalo neighborhood, comprises 11 nonprofits striving to build a community focused on health and well-being. *See page 34 for the full summary.*



Pictured from left to right: David Bleckman, Treasurer; Andrea Denning, Director; Ralph Mills, VP; Bryant Stanton, President; Tyler Kimball, Director. Missing: Megan McElfresh, Executive Director; Jim Piercey, Secretary; Ted Ellison, Director. Photo: Brett Deneve



Members of Society of American Mosaic Artists (SAMA) gathered for the closing celebration. Photo: Brett Deneve

Top: Laying mosaic glass on glass tile adhesive. Photo: Brett Deneve
Middle: Placing the finishing touches on the "Buffalo Strong" mosaic mural. Photo: SAMA staff
Bottom: Participants working together to lay out the mosaic glass. Photo: Brett Deneve



MOSAIC & GLASS ARTS INTERNATIONAL 2023

The Mosaic and Glass Arts International 2023 exhibition, held at the CEPA Gallery in Buffalo, New York, showcased the work of 35 artists from various countries. The exhibition featured two main segments: Fine Art and Site-Specific & Architectural Art. One highlight was a special exhibit by Kate Kerrigan, an artist from Redmond, Oregon. The event aimed to offer fresh perspectives on mosaic, stained glass, and architectural art, highlighting both established and emerging artists in these traditional mediums.

Top: Wide view of MGAI on the third floor. Photo: Brett Deneve

Left: Viewing of MGAI on the second floor. Photo: Brett Deneve



Attendees gathered for cocktails at the artist reception. Photo: Brett Deneve



Mosaic & Glass Arts International 2023 Artist Reception, catered from The Lunch Box. Photo: Brett Deneve



Viewing of MGAI on the second floor. Photo: Brett Deneve



Kathleen Crocetti and Susanne Breubek celebrating together at The Mosaic and Glass Arts International (MGAI) Artist Reception. Photo Brett Deneve



The Mosaic and Glass Arts International Artist Reception, held at the CEPA Gallery in Buffalo. Photo: Brett Deneve



Left to right: Tully Moeller, Suzanne Stanton, Bryant Stanton, and John Walp. Photo: Brett Deneve

MGAI FEATURED ARTISTS:

Michelena Bamford, Melanie Berry, Cherie Bosela, Janet Byrne, Todd Campbell, Jane Chaskey, Carole Choucair Oueijan, Kathleen Crocetti, Darcel Deneau, Barbara Dybala, Chris Elam, Jolynn Forman, Eileen Gay, Laura Gilroy, Jacki Gran, Carol Hemsley, Marilyn Kassel, Kate Kerrigan, Candice Klofenstein, Kelley Knickerbocker, William Lupkin, Ariana Makau & Armelle Le Roux, Nzilani Glass Conservation, Gigi Miller, Dale R. Molnar, Gila Rayberg, Monique Sarfity, Elizabeth Sinkova, Dianne Sonnenberg, Carol Stirton-Broad, Jamie Tessler, Anika Van Der Merwe, Donna Van Hooser, Casey Van Loon, Aloria Weaver.

MGAI was juried by a distinguished panel including; Claudia Carballada, Manager of Community Engagement, Buffalo AKG Art Museum, Lindsay R. Parrott, Executive Director and Curator, The Neustadt Collection of Tiffany Glass and Lillian Sizemore, Researcher, Maker, and Educator.

Claudia Carballada will always treasure the experience of jurying this exhibition. “The art practices of stained glass and mosaics come to me filled with historical richness. In the submissions to this juried exhibition, the artists shed brilliant light on the importance of what it means to use stained glass and mosaics to document current events of today; pushing boundaries and challenging tradition to evoke transformation. These works speak to community, personal reflection, transformation of space, and critical commentary of the world that circumnavigates around each artist. Within all of that, artworks produced demonstrated mastery of skill, technique, and the artists’ heart.”

Lindsay R. Parrott was moved emotionally by the field of entries. “I was struck by the strong emotional content of

so many of the works we considered. Through mosaic and stained glass, Covid’s impact on individual health and wellbeing were processed; lost loved ones were publicly memorialized; and communities were engaged to create joyful expressions of neighborhood and cultural pride. These expressions feel urgent—affirming life and love, and the importance of community—and they demonstrate how art making is an essential part of the human experience.”

The exhibition’s cross-over conversation between mosaic and stained glass was exciting for Lillian Sizemore. “Both mediums make use of light fractured into three-dimensions. Both build on “The One and the Many”, that is, materially, creating a whole image from small units arranged in determined patterns. Philosophically, the artist can be the alchemist of wildly varying surfaces telling stories of our origins.” Sizemore added, “We had many thoughtful conversations and being in dialogue with the other juror-professionals who offered their well-seasoned discernment was truly an exhilarating experience.”

Connected through a shared sense of generosity, both the stained glass and mosaic communities are driven by a desire to create for others. This exhibit initiates a conversation about our artistic forms and how artists aim to contribute to community healing and renewal. The SGAA and SAMA are enthusiastic about further supporting both communities to enable more of this impactful work. ■



Subscribe and visit the SGAA Youtube channel! There you can find recap videos of the highlighted events and much more.

WHAT YOU HAD TO SAY ABOUT THE CONFERENCE!

“I’ve had the opportunity to share my experience with a few folks since being back and I keep using the phrase ‘life changing’. It’s no exaggeration. This being my first conference, I had no idea what to expect and I was incredibly nervous to meet the artists and designers I’ve looked up to for years. Man, did I meet some rockstars. Anyway, once the butterflies settled and I began to meet more people, it’s amazing how empowering it is to know there are other folks out there pulling in the same direction for this craft and now I’m lucky enough to know they’re there when I need help.

If you’re an artist and there’s a conference you’ve always wanted to attend, take advantage of these grants. Experiences like this can change your life.”

—STEELTON GLASS

“I am so happy we have been connected and I was able to attend “Forging New Paths.” I look forward to the next conference.”

—MALCOLM POTEK

“SGAA2023... No doubt a great event. It’s hard for me to describe all the riches, these 5 intense days have been primordial, full of knowledge and sincere encounters. Great friendships bonded by common passions: stained glass, restoration, creation, Artisan’s life. Undoubtedly, I will never give myself the title of Master, but that of Amateur, in the most humble sense, but also the richest.

After spending 5 days co-working with some of the biggest names in America in the business, industrialists and craftsmen alike, I’m still blown away by their generosity and humility and, without question, their passion. The SGAA has proven its human power and wealth. Its administrators, staff and volunteers have shown devotion to our profession—transmitting emotions through the Glass Transcending Light—without any common measure.

To mention that I’m looking forward to the next conference would be an understatement! I discovered people with the same Rage for our craft and a... city! Long live SGAA and our Craft!”

—HUGO BAILLARGEON

“Artists from near and far and everything worked smoothly! Thanks and Amazing!”

—ELLEN MANDELBAUM

“We are recently back from the Stained Glass Association of America’s (in collaboration with the Society of American Mosaic Artists) conference “Forging New Paths” held in their home town of Buffalo NY for their 120th anniversary. This was our first year attending but it definitely won’t be the last as it was so much fun meeting a whole load of people who are so enthusiastic about stained glass! It was so encouraging how much drive there is out there for the future of this amazing art form.”

—JOHN & LAURA GILROY



Share your experiences and feedback with us by filling out the survey!



View photos from the conference and download your favorites!





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Tom Holdman



Mosaic Marathon: Buffalo Strong

By SGAA Staff, SAMA Staff, and Dianne Sonnenberg

The Mosaic Marathon brings together our members for a unique opportunity to create a public art mosaic in a cooperative educational and networking experience. The community project is designed in collaboration with a lead artist and a recipient non-profit organization local to our conference location.

The goal is to demonstrate the power of public mosaic art as a tool of connection and outreach in serving a community. “Buffalo Strong” was fabricated during the Mosaic Marathon sessions at the 2023 Conference, “Forging New Paths,” presented by the Stained Glass Association of America and the Society of American Mosaic Artists (SAMA). SAMA developed the Mosaic Marathon program in 2007 and has created mosaics for charities in over 10 cities across the United States.

2023 marked the first year SAMA partnered with SGAA on the program.

This around-the-clock collaborative mosaic-making project ran through the duration of the 5 day conference. Conference attendees worked alongside members of the community to create a beautiful and unique mosaic under the direction of lead artist Dianne Sonnenberg. Not only was this an incredible opportunity to get involved in a meaningful community project, but simultaneously everyone was able to strengthen their artistic skills and make new connections.

The 2023 non-profit recipient of the completed work is the Care Management Coalition (CMC) at 1021 Broadway in Buffalo, NY. They are situated in the culturally rich and diverse East Buffalo neighborhood and serve as a network of 11 nonprofit agencies working together to create a community of health and well-being. They prioritize empowerment, collaboration, innovation, integrity, and impact while providing a wide range of human services to individuals and families. By sharing resources and space, these nonprofits offer comprehensive support tailored to East Buffalo’s evolving needs, creating a cohesive support system for the community. Through collaboration and maintaining high standards, they aim to make a measurable difference in the lives of individuals, families, organizations, and communities, showcasing the power of nonprofits uniting for a healthier, more vibrant community culture in East Buffalo.



Participants working together to lay out the mosaic glass
Photo: Brett Deneve



From left: The grout of the silhouette figures tinted with carbon black pigment. Photo: Brett Deneve; Early stages of the creation of the mural, after the installation of the custom aluminum frames. Photo: SAMA; Fusing workshop held at Trinity Church to create elements for the mural. Photo: SGAA; Participants working with Dianne to fill in the stencil of the mural with mosaic. Photo: SGAA

In the early phases of this project, a survey was distributed at CMC, inviting individuals to share their preferences for the mural's content. A few of the responses are outlined below. Dianne attentively incorporated their feedback and tailored the mural design to as much of their input as possible.

Values: *Uplifting, equality, empowerment, diversity, inclusion, belonging, connection, growth, collaboration, caring, wellness, collaboration*

Artwork: *Bright, vibrant, reflect all races/ages/abilities, pride flag, holding hands, diverse cultures represented, positive*

Feelings: *Happiness, belonging, calm, secure, strength, acceptance, empowerment, inclusion*

Message: *Diversity, connection, inclusion, valuing all, learning from each other, providing safe space*

The "Buffalo Strong" mural was created with the intention of paying tribute to the community it represents. The strong foundation of the towering

tree symbolizes the deep-rooted strength of the local community's deep, resilient connections. The leaves adorning the tree were handcrafted by community members during a workshop, where they acquired the skills of fusing glass. The tree both embraces and safeguards, while evoking the cherished natural spaces within the city.

The silhouettes of individuals standing in unison symbolize a diverse population that values inclusion and appreciation. Depicting these figures as silhouettes serves to underscore the unity among everyone.

Vibrant, luminous hues in the sky convey inspiration and optimism, incorporating shades from various pride flags.

The circular geometric designs, known as mandalas, mirror the multicultural diversity of Buffalo's population. Circular symbols are prevalent in virtually all cultures, and here they play a role in honoring, welcoming, and embracing individuals, regardless of their place of origin or identity. Various artists and community members contributed to the creation of these mandalas, expressing their distinct viewpoints and artistic ideas. People also donated colorful plates and pottery to contribute to the project.



Dianne Sonnenberg's initial cartoon for the Mosaic Marathon Mural. Photo: Dianne Sonnenberg



Lead artist, Dianne Sonnenberg placing the "Buffalo Strong" fused glass centerpiece. Photo: Brett Deneve



The heart symbolizing "Buffalo Strong" was crafted by the lead artist using fused glass methods. Multiple hues of glass frit (finely ground glass) were utilized in the creation of the heart, and cast glass letters were incorporated. The piece underwent a high-temperature kiln firing, exceeding 1500°F!

Countless hours were dedicated to the construction of this mural. Mosaic art demands meticulous effort. Every glass or pottery element was either meticulously hand-cut or crafted in a kiln before being thoughtfully arranged to form the design. We estimate that this mural consists of more than 6000 glass fragments! After securing the individual pieces with mortar, grout was applied to fill the gaps. The final size of the mural was 3'h x 11'w x 1"d (2 panels at 3x3', one at 3x5'). The process of crafting the mural not only fostered new friendships and connections but also brought forth numerous hours of happiness and community engagement as everyone collaborated towards a mutual goal.

"It was an honor and a privilege to work with so many amazing artists and community members. I prepared carefully so that each participant could walk into the room, sit down, and create a segment of our community mural, whether or not they had prior experience with mosaics. From professional artists to interested bystanders, together we created a mosaic mural that everyone can be proud of in ONLY 5 DAYS. I'm grateful for the sponsors and all of the volunteers who helped make this amazing work of art possible."

—DIANNE SONNENBERG

Lead artist Dianne Sonnenberg is an internationally-recognized mosaic artist from Ontario, Canada, based in Austin, TX. She has been involved in the global mosaic community since 2006, and is a member of The Society of American Mosaic Artists, The Stained Glass Association of America, and Contemporary Mosaic Art (CMA). Dianne is passionate about mosaic art and has taught hundreds of students the wonderful art of mosaics. Her mosaics and sculptural works have won numerous awards, including Best Architectural Mosaic at the 2010 Mosaic Arts International Exhibit in Chicago, IL. Dianne is a member of the faculty at The Contemporary Austin Art School at Laguna Gloria and teaches mosaic courses across the US and Canada. diannesonnenberg.com. ■

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