

# Stained Glass

By PEGGY O'CROWLEY

Living Section writer

WOODBRIDGE — In the Middle Ages, each northern European cathedral had its own workshop of artisans who created magnificent stained glass windows. Those workshops are gone, but the tradition of stained glass artistry continues with the interpretation of modern visions within the context of ancient methods.

Stained glass of the past and present is on display at an exhibit at the Barron Arts Center here now through Jan. 4.

"Evolution of an Art: Concepts in Stained Glass Design" is co-curated by Colonia resident Leland A. Cook, a noted photographer of stained glass, and Barbara M. Meise of Tenafly, a stained glass artist and medievalist who lectures at The Cloisters, Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the School of Sacred Art in New York.

Photographs of medieval and nineteenth century stained glass windows by Cook, examples of nineteenth century style stained glass, and pieces by contemporary artists from the metropolitan area chronicle the development of stained glass through the centuries.

"Through my photography of stained glass, I've come to know many artists who work in the medium," explained Cook, who retired three years ago from Tiffany & Co., where he was the advertising photographer. "They have become my friends, and we decided to put an exhibit together."

Among those representing modern stained glass in the exhibit are Albinus' Elskus, one of the foremost stained glass artists in the country.

Elskus' work, which he describes as "imagery suspended in mid-air," may also be seen locally at the St. Gertrude's Mausoleum on Inman Avenue in Colonia.

Like medieval stained glass makers, modern artists use techniques like oxide painting and lead coming to meld pieces of glass together.

## Exhibit sheds new light on traditional art

The challenge of modern stained glass artists is to translate ancient techniques into new expressions, according to co-curator Meise.

"I use essentially the same methods as the 12th century glassmakers," said Marni Bakst of New York, one of the featured artists. Bakst uses texture and heavy lead coming as line designs in her work.

Ellen Mandelbaum utilizes glass painting to suggest "landscape space," as illustrated in her pieces "Golden Martinique" and "Mountain View."

The use of the abstract, dimensions and a restrained display of color are all elements of modern stained glass, said Meise. Much of the work is influenced by the Bauhaus Movement of the 1930s, which espoused purity and minimalism.

Harriet Hymans uses abstract shapes in both lyrical and geometric expression in her works "Seascape" and "Glas Architecture IV."

Saara Gallin's (CQ) work often incorporates three-dimensional relief on glass, as in her piece, "Hope," which has molded relief faces and blown glass shapes that protrude from the glass. She refers to her work as "sculpting with light."

Carol Frohlich uses modern techniques like sandblasting to create opaque outlines on clear glass.

Other artists in the show include Michael Davis, Tom Garcia, Mary Clerken Higgins, Sister Gerardine Mueller, and Meise herself.

In conjunction with the exhibit, a series of three slide presentation/lectures focussing on the evolution of stained glass will be given. All the lectures will take place at the First Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall, 600 Rahway Ave., Woodbridge, at 7:30 p.m. The Barron Arts Center will be open prior to the lectures to enable those attending to view the exhibit.

On Nov. 5, Cook will present "Stained Glass Windows Richly Dight," a slide show of his photographs of stained glass windows from England, America, Hawaii, Hong Kong and Tokyo.

The second lecture, "Stained Glass: Colored Light," will be presented by Janetta Rebold Benton, associate at The Cloisters, Metropolitan Museum of Art, on Nov. 19. Benton will discuss the materials, technique and history of stained glass, focussing on the masterpieces of late medieval France.

The last lecture, to be given by Meise on Dec. 17, is entitled "Stained Glass Painting: Medieval to Contemporary." She will discuss medieval techniques of stained glass painting still used today in religious and secular work.



"Seascape" by Harriet Hymans

## Middle Ages spawned craft, artists

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