

**Bigger and Bolder: A discussion on innovative approaches to traditional glass painting techniques and their potential to recontextualize an antiquated medium |**  
Hannah Maling, 2022

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# Table of Contents

1	Acknowledgments	12	Fellowship Learnings
3	Executive Summary	29	Personal, Professional And Sectoral Impact
7	Fellowship Background	37	References

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# Acknowledgments

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This work was carried out in association with the International Specialised Skills Institute. Katrina Jojkity and Kyle Palmer offered direction and assistance during all phases of this research undertaking. The Fellow would also like to thank the Mason Family Trust for this opportunity and their support towards furthering skill development in glass painting and the stained glass industry within Australia.

2 Finally, the Fellow would like to extend the sincerest thanks to Judson Studios, and in particular Indre Bileris and Sean Chao for their limitless generosity of skill and sharing, patience and kindness.

The Fellow would like to acknowledge the Gabrieleno Tongva people, the original inhabitants of the land we now call Los Angeles, where this fellowship took place.

Hannah is proud to represent the ISSI and grateful for opportunity to join the community.



*Figure 1. Glass Samples,  
Judson's Studios, Pasadena.  
2022.*

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# Executive Summary

## Fellowship Context

The art of manipulating coloured glass has existed since ancient times in the world of Roman rule and what we have come to recognise as stained glass can be found as early as within the 7th century in Britain. Although there have been many steps forward in the production, quality and technique of stained glass fabrication during the past centuries, a lag has developed within this niche artistic industry as the approach, context and, most importantly, content has failed to adapt to modern times.

The continued association of the medium of stained glass with the ecclesiastical world within a Western context that is drifting further from traditional religious ideas, rituals and belief systems has led to a halt in progress and visibility. As a result of this, artists with dynamic ideas and fresh approaches have not considered participating in the art of stained glass, which would, of course, rejuvenate and challenge the outdated ideas of the medium. It is within this loop that we find ourselves as an industry within Australia and internationally. The steady decline in public engagement with the practice of stained glass in the twenty first century because of failures to reimagine its content and context for new audiences lead to a nearly irreversible lack of knowledge and pool of professionals to learn skills from within Australia by the mid 2000s. Pathways to access education became non-existent and, those wanting to learn the skills of traditional stained glass fabrication, and in particular, in the more specialised area of painting on glass were unable to access skill acquisition in these areas within Australia.

In 2014, the only remaining Polytechnic college within Australia to teach skills in architectural Glass techniques made the decision to discontinue the course, apprenticeships in the field were made obsolete and universities continued to keep stained glass and traditional skills in painting on glass absent as electives within a Fine Arts education.

Without access to education in the traditional skills in stained glass techniques, there is no foundational knowledge available by which artists can begin to explore the medium and adapt its form to engage with new audiences through ideas such as collaboration, public art installations and contemporary content.

## Methodology

Judson Studios is the oldest family-run stained glass studio in North America, and has been an institution of Los Angeles, California since 1897. What singles out Judson Studios from its counterparts is its unique approach to the progression, and the adaptation of stained glass over the 20th and 21st century to new ideas and contexts. An approach that can be referred to only as 'preservation through innovation'. Judson studios recognizes the need to consistently push,

to reinvent and to include new voices in stained glass in order to preserve both its legacy and its future.

This Fellow was very lucky to be accepted on a four week placement at their studios in the humid October of 2022. The aim of this placement was to study advanced painting techniques on glass with their senior glass painters and observe the application of these skills to both traditional works in stained glass, and collaborative contemporary projects. Not only was it important to access knowledge and tutelage unavailable within Australia in the field of glass painting, but also to understand how a studio seeks exciting new projects to apply these ancient skills to.

Days were long as glass painting possesses a particular magic for making hours seem like minutes. Experiments in various oil, medium and paint combinations were conducted in addition to the development of painted layers on the glass, each fired in large kilns at the end of the day. This time within the studio was interspersed with field trips for the Fellow to significant stained glass and fine arts sites in the greater Los Angeles area. This contributed greatly to the conclusions reached by the Fellow of how to implement the professional, personal and sectorial change needed within the stained glass industry to direct it towards a more dynamic, sustainable and inclusive future.



*Figure 2. Judson's Studios, Pasadena.*

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## Fellowship Learnings

The most significant learning gained from this Fellowship experience was the understanding of the variety and possibilities of stained glass painting, both in technique and in application, to various projects. The opportunity to learn and practise with previously unheard of paint mixtures in oils to create a multitude of effects on glass, broadened the Fellows understanding of what is achievable in their medium.

Equally importantly, the experience was significant in demonstrating the need for alternative pathways into stained glass for artists and professionals, and how a multifaceted team or approach ensures the most dynamic work will be produced. Fieldtrips to significant architectural sites and museums reinforced the idea that new 'movements' within all arts industries are required at various times to ensure the momentum of progress within the medium. Ultimately, representation and inclusivity are ideas fundamental to the future of stained glass.

### **Personal Professional and Sectoral Impact.**

This fellowship will have a deep and long lasting impact on the Fellow as a result of the exposure to new information and the immersive environment by which they were able to garner this new knowledge. This has already provided the Fellow with greater confidence and redefined the pathway they are choosing to indulge artistically and within long term career goals.

The connections made during this fellowship have provided community and continuing mentorship to the Fellow, and the techniques developed in painting on glass and its potential application in larger glass artworks in Australia continue to inform the Fellow's professional practise.

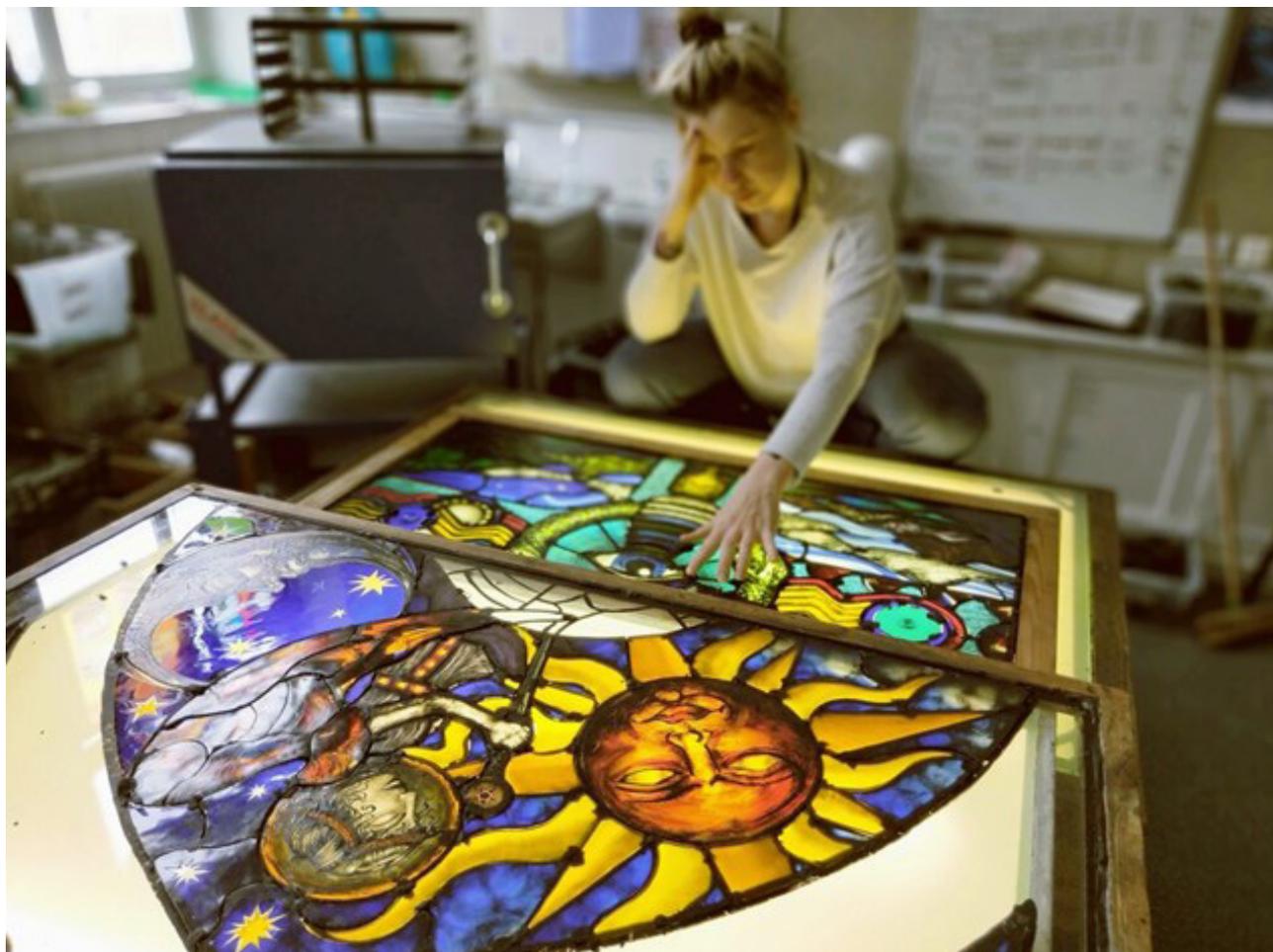
The impact this will have on the broader sector will continue to be demonstrated as the Fellow offers education, workshops and campaigns for an industry that is more acutely aware of the issues we face and how these can be tackled with inclusivity and demonstrating a wider range of stories and advanced techniques in our craft.

## Considerations/ Recommendations

During the brilliance and intensity of this four-week fellowship placement, some clearly defined recommendations presented themselves to the Fellow for industry overhaul. Centrally, alternative pathways must exist for those interested in choosing stained glass as an artistic career pursuit. Currently, it is extremely difficult to pursue stained glass as an artist, particularly if you are not in a position to own and operate a larger studio with employees or have an interest in larger scale restoration work. This issue is tied in with the need for more education to be readily available in the field of painting on glass.

6 Although Australia has very well reputed glass institutions such as Canberra Glassworks, the Jam Factory and a prestigious glass degree at the Australian National University, none of these organizations create space for stained glass or glass painting, to be pursued or supported as a fine art to the same extent as hot glass working processes. This leaves little space for Australian artists to consider stained glass as a viable career pathway and diminishes the appreciation for the art of glass painting and its potential to push its way out of churches, and homes and into the streets. Fortunately, GLAAS INC has campaigned for the reintroduction of Architectural Glass Courses into the Melbourne Polytechnic in Victoria, and it is largely through their work and their collaboration with myself, other artists, and hopefully the glass institutions aforementioned, that will see a shift in the future of stained glass and painting on glass.

# Fellowship Background



7

*Figure 3. Fellow, Hannah Maling, on placement as the International Artist In Resident at the University of Wales TSD in 2021*

## Fellowship Context

Early in the Fellow's career, they worked in studios across Australia during which time they became acutely aware of the struggles facing the industry, particularly the almost impossible task of advancing one's skill set within Australia and acquiring the expertise of painting on glass.

Maling travelling to the U.K as International Artist in Resident at the University of Wales in 2020 to seek the opportunity to learn that which she could not access in Australia. Fortunately, the Fellow was exposed to a variety of techniques to working with stained glass that are overlooked or not taught within Australia. However, this time in the UK and Europe also demonstrated to the Fellow that having access to these skills is only half the battle- it is also vital to the preservation of painting on glass and the stained glass industry within Australia that the sector develop ways to engage new audiences with the art form and re-contextualise the expectations of the medium as a whole.

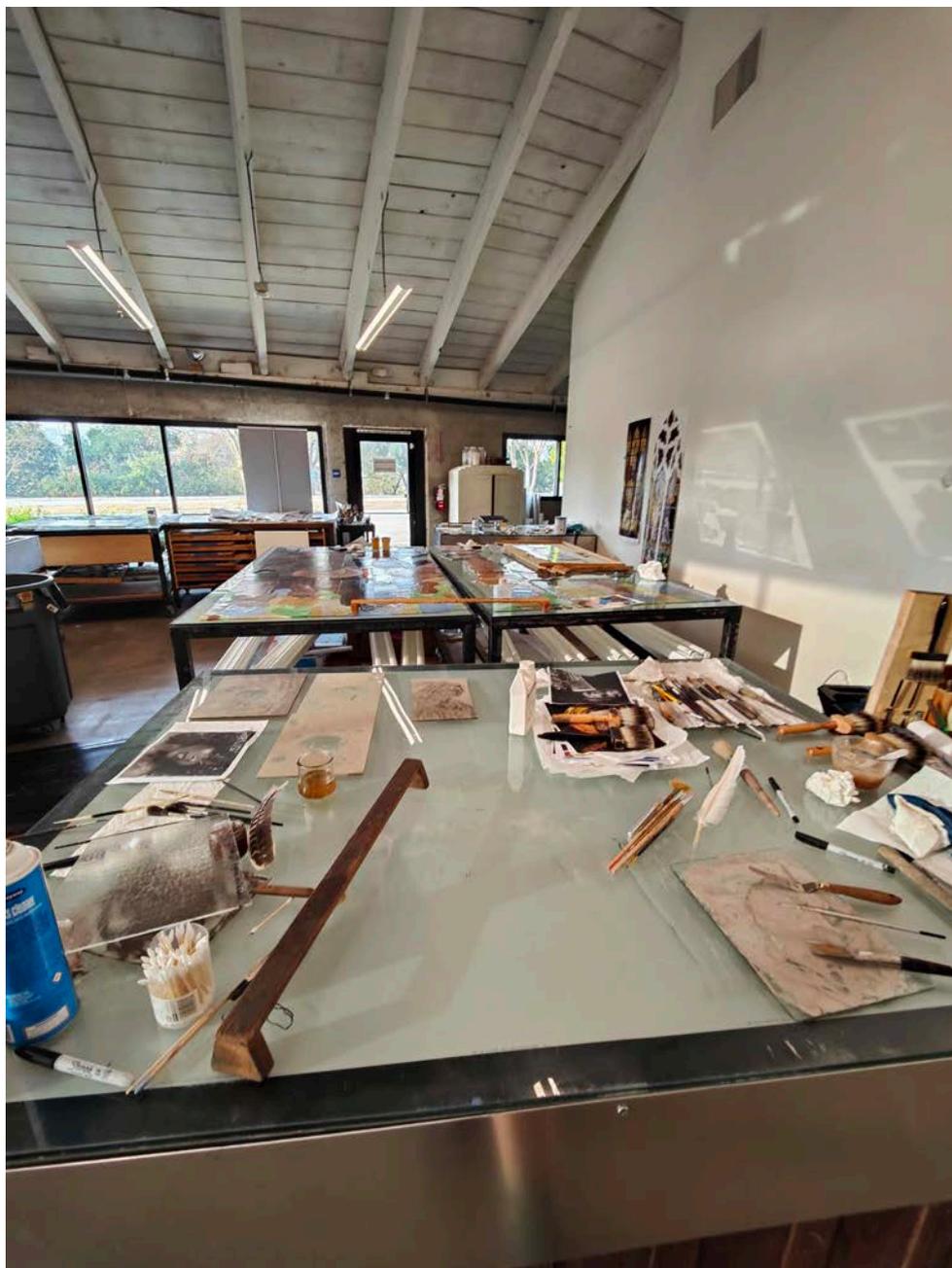
Due to this, the Fellow sought the opportunity as a Mason Family Trust Fellow to engage in a four-week skill enhancement and knowledge development placement at Judson Studios in Los Angeles, California. Judson Studios not only demonstrate unparalleled quality of work, particularly in glass painting, but the way in which they have adapted the medieval skills of stained glass to create contemporary and dynamic glass work that inspires and engages the glass community AND the artistic community at large is a model by which the Fellow believes the Australian stained glass community would most benefit learning from. Overall, the goal is to consider the preservation of specialised skills in stained glass to be paramount in the future of the industry and to consider how this can be achieved through innovative approaches in collaboration, public art and inclusivity.

## Fellowship Methodology

Workplace immersion at Judson Studios, Los Angeles, was the central method of conducting fellowship research in this case. The Fellow participated in painting on glass tutorials each morning and afternoon with two master glass painters, Indre Bileris and Sean Chao. Between tutorials, the Fellow would practise the new techniques that had been imparted earlier, with guidance from both Bileris and Chao. There was a diverse range of mixtures created to paint on the glass, and firing schedules implemented to adhere the paint to the glass would be discussed before being programmed into the kilns at Judson Studios for overnight baking.

Often, each piece of glass being painted upon would require several layers of various paint, and many firings in the kilns between new layers to build up a painting over the course of days and weeks. It was central to the Fellow's understanding of this process that Chao and Bileris discuss the materials being used and an education in products, tools and quality of both was a large source of discussion throughout the day.

The Fellow also participated in organized 'Field Trips' to museums, architectural sites and galleries to reinforce their understanding of depth, shadow and light, and the importance of each to painting on glass, in addition to reinforcing the need for various collective "movements" within the history of all art forms to progress any medium. Interviews and discussions with artists, technicians and administrative staff were also crucial to the Fellowship placement and these would be navigated as group discussions or informal conversations over the course of four weeks. This discourse would largely be centered around issues of public art, education in stained glass and artistic collaborations in the material of glass.



*Figure 4. Painting tables with inbuilt lights, Judson Studios, Pasadena. 2022*

## Fellowship Period

This fellowship period began with an induction to Judson Studios workshops and an introduction to all their staff on Monday, October 3, 2022 and concluded on the Fellow's last day researching and learning in the studio on October 28, 2022.

## Fellow's Biography

Originally from Walyalup, Western Australia, Hannah Maling learnt first hand how hard it can be in Australia to source education in stained glass when she found she had to relocate across country to Sydney, on Gadigal Land in New South Wales, just to get her foot in the door for two days of work in a stained glass studio.

10

Between 2016 and 2018, Maling worked in stained glass studios across Australia to learn and master the fundamentals of working with stained glass windows. She assisted on large scale restoration projects, public art and residential commissions in addition to teaching hobby classes to others hoping to learn. Since mid 2018, Maling has been self employed as a stained glass artist and has trained, worked, studied and travelled extensively in the United Kingdom, Europe and the United States of America to acquire a comprehensive and contrasting repertoire of both medieval and innovative, new skills and techniques to working with stained glass. However fantastic these opportunities have been, Maling has had to make great sacrifices to continually travel overseas for skill acquisition as the opportunity to learn and develop further skills in her field within Australia was previously impossible. This is something she would like to see change during her lifetime.

Maling has been awarded grants from the Australia Council of the Arts, The Western Australian DLGSC, The American Glass Guild, The United Nations year of Glass panel and has attended residencies and won awards for her work in the U.K, Austria, Australia and the United States of America. She is a member of GLAAS INC, AusGlass, The American Glass Guild, The Stained Glass Association of America, The British Society of Master Painters and Glaziers of Glass. She has work in private collections across the globe and currently lives on Yued Land in Western Australia and works on a commission basis.



Figure 5. Maling at work in Judson Studios, 2022

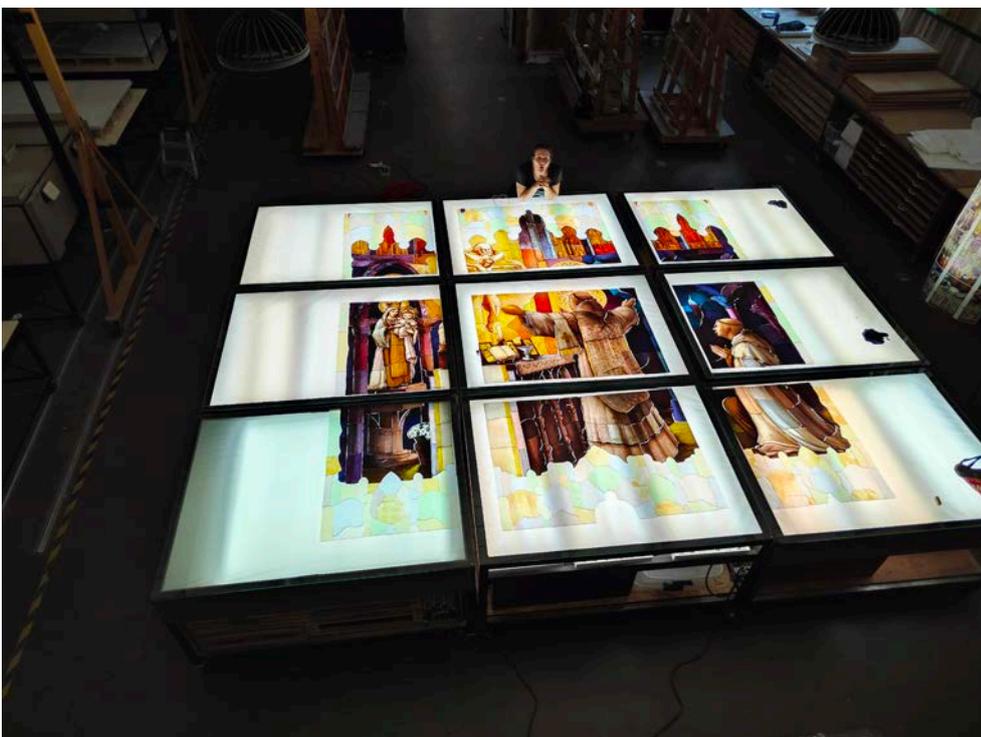
# Fellowship Learnings

## Painting on Glass: Innovation through Preservation

12

To understand the way forward in both the preservation and innovation of glass painting within the stained glass industry, we must first understand how much truly is possible to achieve in glass painting technique and application- very little of which been explored in an Australian cultural context. A critical element of this Fellow's learnings was in comprehending how much flow of information is lacking in the Australian stained glass sector due to the lack of skill sharing historically between stained glass technicians and artisans, and an overall absence of community within organisations.

Every tip, suggestion, comment and guiding thought directed to the Fellow from Judson Studio's primary master glass painter, Indre Bileris, was the culmination of years of learning and studying under a variety of teachers and experts in the field of glass painting. The very nature of the North American stained glass community has done much to preserve the art of glass painting, through constant sharing of new discoveries, information and approaches to the craft. Bileris is a perfect example of how the free flow of information between experts can create new adaptations to techniques and fresh experts in their own right. Bileris approach to glass painting is a pastiche of everything she has been exposed to over decades of various glass painting teachers and workshops. This became a guiding principle in the Fellow's immersion into the art of advanced techniques of painting on glass with Bileris.



*Figure 6. Indre Bileris with glass painting on light boxes for a large Monastery in Wyoming, U.S.A*

Education in glass painting at Judson Studios began for the fellow with an introduction to the various shades of vitreous glass paints available from the recommended brand, Reusche Paints as owned by Schilling Co. Reusche are the recommended paint supplier within in Australia, the UK, Europe, North America and the world at large. However, the variety of colours able to be explored and combined was a revelation to the fellow. Previously, having only utilised black for glass painting, it was thrilling to focus on the potential of other tones, ranging from “Ancient Brown” to “Flesh Rachel”, each colour resulting in a different hue and useful application in the painting of stained glass windows.

Any glass painting will begin with either linework or a matte being applied to the glass. Bileris guided the Fellow to tackle the same picture twice, approaching the process with both techniques to compare and contrast the results. The Fellow began one portrait of the singer Kelis, with line work first, and the other with an applied matte first. The most vital learning at this stage was to complete an applied matte successfully. As a glass matte can only be applied using a Badger hairbrush to achieve consistency in depth and hue, it can be difficult to maintain consistency. Bileris offered guidance and a variety of different Badger hairbrushes to trial in order to assist the Fellow to achieve a quality matte.



*Figure 7. Glass painting samples, Judson's Studios, Pasadena, 2022.*



Figure 8. Bileris demonstrating how to apply an even matte with badger brush for smoothing out lines in left hand.

Alternatively, the second portrait was commenced using linework as a framework for future painted layers. It was here that the Fellow first became aware of the importance of understanding the principles of drawing and how beneficial a fine arts knowledge can be for one in the pursuit of painting glass. Bileris had the Fellow first understand the highest points of light, midtones and the deepest shadows and mark them out firstly on trace paper. Linework was then applied using a red sable hairbrush. The Fellow was advised that purchasing brushes from Signwriting companies is the most reliable way to acquire durable and pointed brushes for linework on glass.



*Figure 9. Markings for high points of light and shaded areas of Kelis Portrait.*

of brushes that had been created by Bileris and Chao using scissors and flame. These brushes are cut and burnt to give them the exact stiffness required to gently remove dry glass paint from the glass, revealing high points in the portrait i.e., the source of the most light. Previous to this, the Fellow had never received advice on which brushes to use when attempting this stage of glass painting,

Not only was the portrait of Kelis an experiment in method, but also in mixes of materials. One matte was applied with a Reusche paint, water and gum Arabic mix, and another with a Reusche Paint and lavender oil mix. However, as the oil can take time to dry before being able to be worked into further, the piece of glass had to be dried in a low firing kiln before the next steps could be taken. Dried paint was then removed from the matte using a range



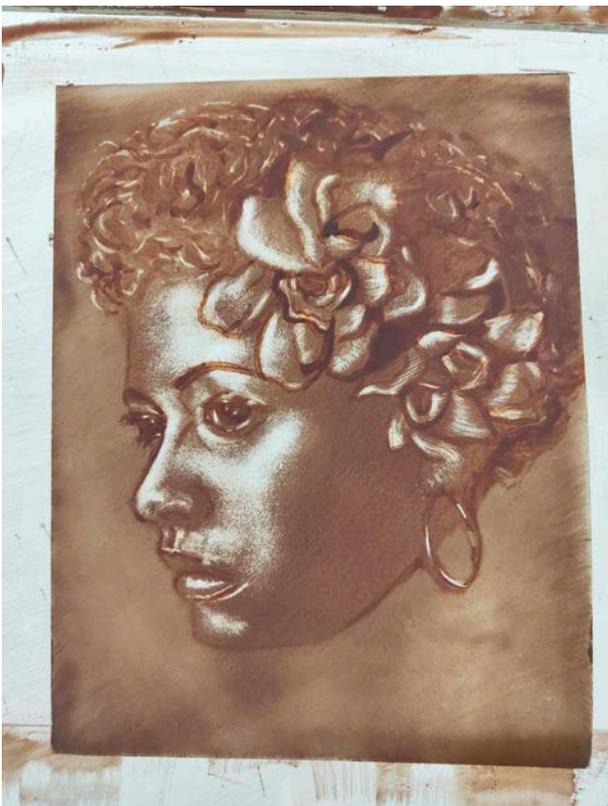
*Figure 10. Variety of Brushes for removing highlights in glass painting.*

and this guidance improved the quality of their work and confidence in a matter of minutes. At this stage, the portraits were fired in the kiln for the first time at a top temperature of 665 degrees Celsius.

16



*Figure 11. Example of successful and even matte with the beginning of highlights being removed by various brushes as featured in previous photo.*



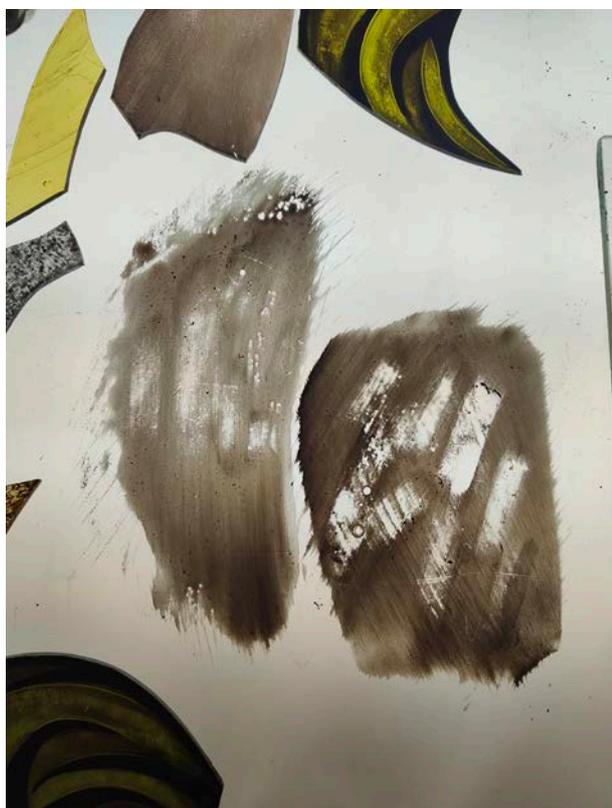
It is worth mentioning at this stage, that the decision to study a portrait of the African American singer Kelis was very intentional by the Fellow. Not only is there a lack of opportunities to garner skill acquisition in glass painting within Australia, but all stained glass painting courses, both in Australia and overseas, experienced by the Fellow until this point, had only featured figures with Caucasian skin. As typically glass painting is a skill often adapted to restoration work and repainting broken glass that already exists in decrepit stained glass windows, it usually requires the depiction of white figures and saints. This is a small example of how many artists may not feel compelled to enjoy or pursue stained glass or stained glass painting due to issues around inclusivity and diversity. The Fellow, having been encouraged to source and experiment with their own imagery, had chosen portraits of two black female singers, in Kelis and Billie Holiday, which allowed her the vehicle to explore different brown paints and painting figures other than white figures on glass for the first time.

Sean Chao, an independent diorama artist and part time glass painter for Judson's Studio has a background in fine arts and encouraged the Fellow to always consider the principles

*Figure 12. Portrait in progress of Billie Holiday. Experimenting with different brown paints for the first time.*

of shadowing, texture and highlights when approaching any glass painting. Chao was the tutor for the Fellow when she decided to approach her new glass painting challenge: a pair of hands. Chao demonstrated the need for a new matting and stippling approach other than that which was employed to the portrait of Kelis. Rather than perfecting a matte with the badger hair brush, Chao guided the Fellow to stipple the matte while still wet using a large pig bristle brush. The resulting dappled consistency of painting was effective in emulating the texture of human skin. The Fellow was encouraged to reveal highlights by removing paint using movements against the glass with their own thumb and fingers to reveal clear glass. This exercise gave the Fellow the opportunity to understand and feel the necessary amount of paint to gum Arabic binder ratio with their hands, and found that when paint is removed too easily, more binder must be added to the mix and, in contrast, if one is not able to remove paint easily with their finger, the mixture of paint contains too much binder and the soft gradients and highlights of glass painting will be difficult to achieve. In addition, Chao's technique differed from Bileris' in that it allowed the Fellow the ability to paint the linework as a new layer atop of the matte and highlighted layer before firing of the glass was needed. This is only achievable in this way if the paint, water and binder ratio is correct, hence using one's finger to test the mixture.

17



*Figure 13. Examples of mixtures containing too much binder (on left) and not enough binder (on right)*



*Figure 14. Sean Chao demonstrating stippling the matte to the fellow.*



Figure 15. Example of stippled matte by Chao.



Figure 16. Example of Fellow's first attempt at stippled matte with linework before kiln firing.

Already, at this point in the Fellowship experience, the Fellow was able to observe and immerse themselves in contrasting techniques in glass painting that could be applied for different needs over a diverse range of projects. This readdressed how imperative it is within any creative industry to allow a flow of knowledge and an exchange of ideas so that methodologies are consistently changing and developing. Although Australia is fortunate to now have glass painting available as a module in the Architectural Glass course at Melbourne Polytechnic, it appears obvious that real progress and upskilling of the industry will be possible only through the true exchange of a variety of techniques.

Throughout the four weeks of workplace immersion, layers of paint continued to be applied between firings to multiple pieces of glass. These layers were paint and oil mixes or paint and water mixes, but it is vital never to combine the two as the reaction causes bubbles and separation in the paint. The Fellow was instructed that oil paint mixtures are important when creating depth and shadow and water paint mixtures are necessary to create texture. This is the result of matching different brushes with the consistency of the mixture. Obviously, oil will be wetter and slippery for longer, allowing ongoing manipulation of the paint and movement of the darkness caused by the enamel

from one area to another across the glass through the use of fan brushes and badger brushes. Oil mixtures gather dust easily which can be an issue that causes “spotting” across the glass, however the ‘single cream’ like consistency of the mixture allows dramatic effects to occur quickly and is more forgiving of mistakes. In Contrast, a water mixture is a double edged sword to the glass painter. It dries quickly and allows for textural effects unachievable with an oil matte, by allowing stippling and dragging of different brushes through the dried paint. However, as the paint is dried, a glass painter is unable to remedy any errors that may occur in their painting. For example, if the glass painter was to remove too much paint and cause too much light to be seen through the glass they are painting, they would not be able to cover it back up again with paint as the wet paint would interact with the dry paint causing unsightly lines. It would also cause other paint to be removed in the process as the badger hair brush would come into contact with the already dry paint, and forcibly lift it.

19



*Figure 17. In the process of working into the first oil layer of the hand painting. As you can see the black dots suggest dust soaking up moisture in the matte, as mentioned earlier.*

From these tutorials, the Fellow was able to draw the conclusion from both Bileris and Chao, that all techniques, brushes and mixtures of paint have a place. The art is in knowing when to use which particular choice- which is knowledge that can often only arise from experience. Again, reinforcing the idea that exposure to a variety of glass painting teachers, subjects and techniques is crucial to developing the future of glass painting in Australia.

20

In addition to the portraits of Kelis and Billie Holiday, an image of singer, Debbie Harry, a historical replication of a 'Mayer of Munich' portrait, and an image of a Scarlett Macaw was used to learn with different techniques in glass painting, including the use of a 'Veneer' to create depth within a portrait, applications of various coloured enamels and experimental 'splattering' texture trials. On the portrait of Debbie Harry, fellow was instructed that applying a "Veneer" to the rear side of the glass will create depth to the face within a portrait. Bileris recommended using a very light mixture of paint to water ratio in order to prevent excessive light blockage. This, in particular, is a suggestion well-tailored to the needs of glass painting in Australia, as it prevents excessive light transmission passing through detailed portraits in glass paint which can "blow out" from the light and prevent the viewer from being able to enjoy the finer details of the work.

The Debbie Harry portrait also provided space to explore spontaneous glass paint markings as the Fellow was encouraged to add elements in painting to the background of the piece. Bileris and Chao both demonstrated a variety of ways that pattern and texture can be created in using splatterings of water, combs, rags or chemicals. In this particular case, the Fellow flicked water across the dry paint of the glass and, after allowing the splotches of water to dry, gently dragged their finger across the paint. This removed only the areas of the paint that the water had come into contact with, creating a dappled effect across the piece. This was a welcomed introduction to thinking "outside the box" and with less rigidity in approach to traditional glass painting methods. It is this genre of approach that is more in line with the working practice of artists across other mediums that may want to explore glass painting in an instinctual and flamboyant manner. This is a good example of how alternative methods of teaching glass painting could be employed to entice other Australia artists to explore the medium for the first time, therefore giving it more prevalence and encouraging more works of collaboration across our sector.



Figure 18. Debbie Harry Portrait in progress, removing highlights post linework.



Figure 19. wDebbie Harry Portrait before dapping effect.



Figure 20. Debbie Harry Portrait after dapping background with aforementioned water technique.

## Public Artworks, Collaboration and “Field Trips”.

Judson’s Studio was a very intentional choice for this fellowship as it not only offers the opportunity to learn and develop techniques in painting on glass alongside some of the greatest glass painters alive, but it also afforded the Fellow the chance to consider and discuss the recent artistic collaborations that Judson’s have succeeded in delivering to the glass world, and the world of Public Art. If there is to be a renaissance of stained glass and painting on glass within an Australian context that helps to preserve these skills, this will occur because of new voices entering the arena. Those voices include artists who do not usually work with glass, adapting their work into glass in collaboration with glass artists and studios to deliver large scale, and gallery work, of interest to engage with the public.

The first major public artwork Judson’s fabricated was for the painter and large-scale installation Artist, Sarah Cain.... Commissioned by the San Francisco Arts Commission, Cain’s permanent work is located at the Hyatt Hotel Air train stop at San Francisco International Airport:” (1) During their time at Judson’s Studio, the Fellow was able to interact with technicians and glass artists currently working with Cain on her latest public artwork commission which, again, uses stained glass. Although containing no glass painting, Cain’s work represents a step forward in the adaption of stained glass art for public artworks through “representing a totally new sensibility for the next generation” (2). Cain’s glass selection and approach is extremely different from that of someone

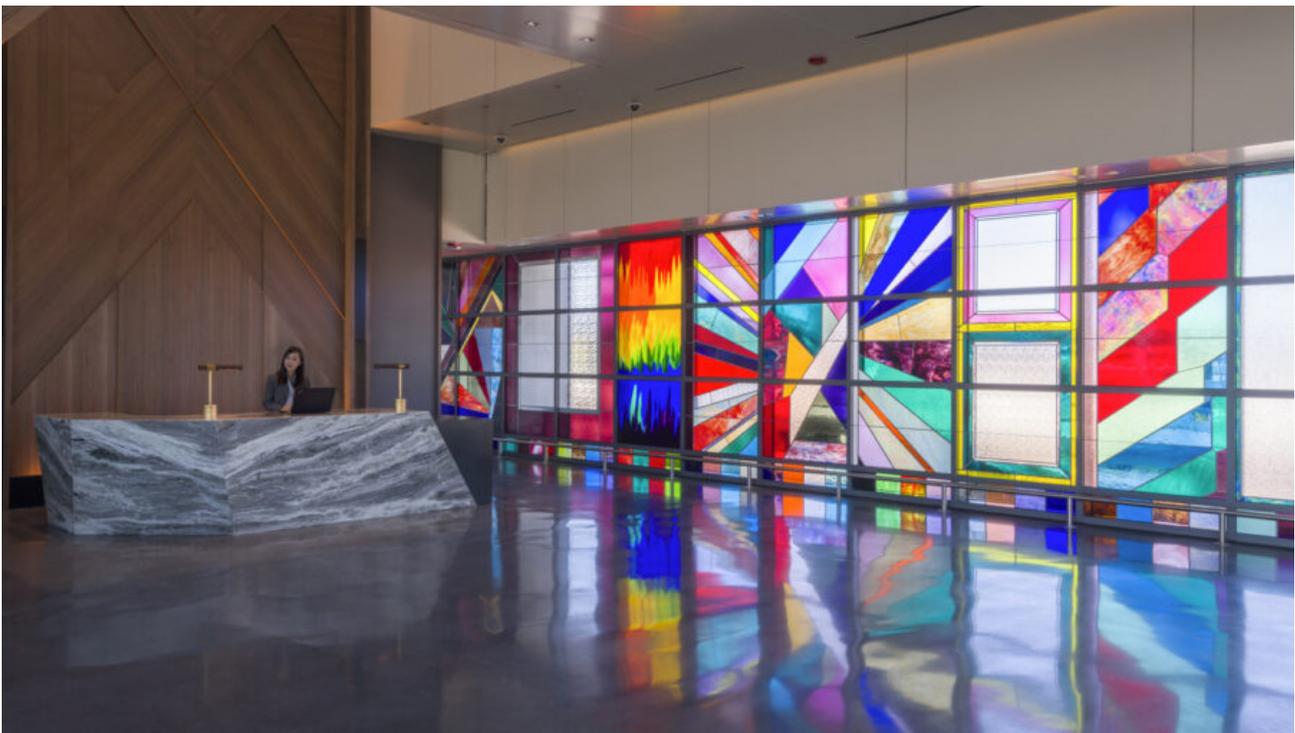


Figure 21. Sarah Cain and Judson’s Studios Collaboration.

trained in stained glass, and yet, it is reflective of the bright, abstract aesthetic that is so popular in a post- Instagram world. It offers an example of the type of stained glass work that can be achieved at a large scale in public spaces, and more importantly, it demonstrates the possibilities achievable when a collaborative approach is held between artists across glass, paint and installation mediums.

The Fellow was also very lucky to spend time with the works of Amir Fallah in the Studio before they were to be shipped for a solo exhibition in Greece. “Primarily a painter, the Iranian artist Amir Fallah had previously incorporated fluorescent tubes and other light fixtures into some of his installation work” before upscaling to use painted stained glass windows within light boxes for his pieces. Fallah was the first artistic collaboration with Judson’s Studios that truly demonstrated the possibilities of stained glass painting in combination with other glass techniques, and after he initially made two windows for solo art gallery shows, “he was awarded a commission to create a large public art piece for the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health” (4). In his book, David Judson, owner and operator of Judson’s Studios reflect, “Moving from an initial single work made for an art gallery to a large commissioned project intended for the public confirmed my hope that glass would be accepted within an increasingly wider range of venues, resulting in more opportunities to work with fine artists.”(5) It is in this statement that the potential can be felt in the future of stained glass, used in collaboration with artists who have a fresh approach to the medium, opening up more opportunities not only for glass as a medium, but for glass artists. The presence of Fallah’s work in a healthcare facility and public gardens, demonstrates just how visible stained glass can be and how we should be pursuing it to be engaging with new dynamics and new audiences.



Figure 22. Detail of Amir Fallah's work on the walls of the Judson's Studios glass painting room. This piece was designed by Fallah, containing fused glass created by Quentin Black and painted by Indre Bileris.



*Figure 23. Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Public art by Amir Fallah and Judson's Studios.*



*Figure 24. Detail of Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Public art by Amir Fallah and Judson's Studios.*

25

It was through conversations with Melissa Valentin, Judson's Administration Manager, tour guide, executive assistant and all round "does everything", that the Fellow was able to discuss the process of artistic collaborations in the context of Public arts and funding. Valentin has been instrumental in finding and inviting artists to Judson's Studios to encourage them to consider working with glass in their upcoming public commissioned artwork applications. Valentin says that "it may not happen straight away, but usually, eventually, the artists have an idea that involves glass" and they approach Judson's Studio and Valentin to help with the application. Judson's Studios begins the process of collaboration immediately and helps the artist with a proposal towards any public art's Initiatives. These applications can require the artist to submit digital renderings, material photos, approved conceptual designs, illustrations and diagrams. In order to ensure the structural integrity of a proposal, it is crucial that any artist without a background in glass who is wanting to work with glass, is able to work in a collaborative approach with a glass artist, studio or technician to ensure the viability and structural integrity of the project.

In addition to conversations and research into Judson's studios history with public art and collaboration, field trips were also organised for the glass painting team to gain new perspectives on art and glass at Frank Lloyd Wright's Hollyhock House and The Huntington Library Museum and Gallery.

Frank Lloyd Wright was one of the western world's most valued architects and had a long history with Judson's Studios, Judson's having built windows for both his Ennis House and Hollyhock House. Hollyhock was built between 1919 and 1921, just south of the Los Feliz neighbourhood and it was a hot day in 2022, when the glass painting team arrived for a private tour of the premise. Wright, possessed by art deco stylings when it came to his predilections in stained glass, really exemplifies how, in the past, stained glass would progress forward in parallel with other mediums



*Figure 25. Detail of a window at Hollyhock House, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and fabricated by Judson’s Studios.*



*Figure 26. The Fellow, standing in front of windows at Hollyhock House.*

as they marched on through different artistic movements in fine arts and in architecture together. The issue now, seems to be that the marching has continued in the arts, but stained glass and glass painting has not marched along with it. It was powerful for the Fellow to observe, not only the details of Wright’s stained glass window designs, executed by Judson’s studios, but also how perfect the windows seemed to feel insitu, that, in the 1920’s, stained glass was synonymous and at peace with architecture in relevance. It pushed forth an internal dialogue with the Fellow about how and what spaces must be created now in contemporary society to achieve the same fitting “sense of place” for larger scale architectural glass. Ideally, the Stained Glass Industry must be inventive not only with where it envisions stained glass to exist but also “push the envelope” stylistically in a way that still conforms to the needs of the space, just as Wright and Judson’s Studio did in Hollyhock House.

The following week, the painting team spent the day at the Huntington Library and Museum in San Marino, California. The Huntington is famous as the home of the “The Blue Boy”, a full length portrait in oil by Thomas Gainsborough which was the most expensive painting in the world when

it sold to American railroad magnate, Henry Huntington in 1921. The painting team arrived to visit the Huntington a year after a new portrait by Kehinde Wiley, a Black American portrait painter, was unveiled as a response to Gainsborough's "masterpiece". Wiley's "A portrait of a Young Gentleman" illustrates a young black man, standing before a background of flowers, exhibiting the same pose and body language as the young boy in "The Blue Boy".

The paintings are hung opposite one another in an exhibition space containing only portraits of white people in oils (with the obvious exception of Wiley's piece) in the Huntington library and between the two central paintings an invisible conversation can be felt. Again, this harks back to a dialogue around progression in art, in who is represented and how. The Huntington commissioned Wiley to create a response to this room filled with art of the lavish white faces and wealth, epitomised by the "The Blue Boy" in his fancy attire and feathered cap. Wiley took what was already there, filtered it, and added to it, creating something truly unique in response. Wiley, like Gainsborough before him, was using oil paints in his expression, however wielded them for completely different results.

The presence of Wiley's painting in the room, and at the Huntington, promotes representation and diversity, and in doing so engages a new demographic in an artistic institution and welcomes more people to the medium. This is all done without destroying the paintings that already exist, but by creating a conversation around them. In this same way, the traditional skills of painting on glass and stained glass fabrication, that have always lacked representation, do not need to be ignored, but can be honoured and utilized in a fresh and exciting way that would promote new voices and diversity within the medium. This ultimately entices more artists to feel and desire to be involved with making their own mark using the materials and promoting the longevity of painting on glass that is currently lacking in an Australian context.



*Figure 27. Wiley's 'A portrait of a young Gentleman' on the left. Gainsborough's 'The Blue Boy' on the right.*

# Personal, Professional And Sectoral Impact

## Personal and Professional Impact

The opportunity to explore the art of painting on glass in North America has contributed immediately to the Fellow's ability and quality of practice, and through sharing this experience via social media and networking functions, other young Australians have also been encouraged to pursue creative expression and education in glass painting. In late 2022, the Fellow was asked to speak to Melbourne Polytechnic Glass students to discuss her experiences during this fellowship and to encourage others to seek education and training in glass painting from as many teachers and mentors as possible.

29



*Figure 28. Maling, presenting to the Melbourne Polytechnic Students at the end of 2022.*

The most significant advancement in technique can be demonstrated in the Fellow's ability now to create realistic portraits on glass by employing the multi-layered firing approach. Knowing the fundamentals of painting on glass is not adequate experience to arm an artist with the understanding of which brushes, paint and mixing mediums to use, and at which stage of the glass painting process in order to execute portraiture on glass. Having access to teachers such as Bileris and Chao, with a wealth of experience, and working through a variety of approaches to painting on glass, with the ability to ask questions along the way, is what has enabled this Fellow to truly understand the medium of glass painting and consider its potential in their practise. The confidence garnered from finally having access to adequate education in painting on glass is an immeasurable relief.

Already, the Fellow has a large scale, original commission for the entirety of 2023. This fellowship has equipped them with the skills required to pursue this undertaking to the highest quality. However, the impact really feels as though it has only just begun. What this fellowship achieved was to offer exposure, not only to increasing skill and technical ability, but also to the variety of ways in which these skills could be applied to exciting contemporary projects that encourage a diverse range of voices in the stained glass industry. It began conversations for the Fellow about what voices are omitted from stained glass historically and how this may be remedied. Particularly, in an Australian context, it promoted thought about how Indigenous Australians could be recognised and included in Stained glass through collaboration and representation between First Nation's artists working in traditional techniques and stained glass painters and artists. It reaffirmed the idea that the survival of a medium or craft is dependent on its engagement with people and how much representation matters, particularly in the realm of public art. This conclusion is based on the success of Amir Fallah's successful collaborations with Judson's Studio, which eventuated in their public artwork at the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health and the engagement of Wiley's 'Portrait of a young Gentleman' at the Huntington Library.

As a result of their findings, the Fellow is also actively seeking to apply for public art's initiatives with stained glass proposals with the confidence instilled within them that stained glass can and should exist in all spaces where there is light. This conclusion is based on the success of Sarah Cain's bright and well-received stained glass installation in Los Angeles. The Fellow is also in talks with BIPOC artist's about future collaborations and adaptations of their work into glass painting and how this could be promoted and funded. Conversations with Melissa Valentin really encouraged the Fellow to approach artists they admire to begin discussions around the potential of glass intersecting with their voice and work

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## The Broader Sector

As mentioned above, the Fellow was invited by GLAAS INC to deliver a presentation to the current glass students at Melbourne Polytechnic in November of 2022. The Fellow is still in frequent contact with several of the students they encountered at this time and shares advice and discussions on glass painting techniques and tips. In addition to this, the Fellow was also able to apply for funding with the International Year of Glass, United Nations, for seed money to hold workshops in glass for regional Australians following their fellowship placement. Access to the education in glass is definitely one issue to be conquered within the sector as GLAAS INC currently offers the only accredited stained glass education in Australia.

31

The first small workshop enabled by this Seed money was held in January of 2023 and gave three women the opportunity to work with glass for the very first time. The broader the reach of education, the more likely the sector will see the inclusion of new voices and new ideas. Continuing to have only one centralized course for stained glass in Naarm/ Melbourne is not viable for all Australians who are unable to move state in order to practise their craft and gain education in glass or glass painting. It would be highly recommended that the TAFE system include Architectural Glass courses alongside their glazing courses in all states of Australia.

Furthermore, the inclusion of stained glass and painting on glass has to be more seriously recognised by the existing glass and art institutions within Australia. In particular, Canberra Glassworks, Jam Factory and The Australia National University. This will ensure that stained glass and painting on glass can be considered more seriously by artists interested in becoming involved with the processes, and also benefits a more sustainable career and sector for those working within stained glass. The Fellow has already had discussions with Canberra Glassworks on this topic and looks forward to continuing them into the future. The topic of a larger scale project to raise awareness of stained glass as a medium has been addressed and this is a goal we look forward to seeing realised. Witnessing the respect by which artists from other mediums and organisations interacted with the staff and artists of Judson's Studios made it abundantly clear that a relationship of mutual respect and benefits must be developed in order to preserve and innovate stained glass.

The Fellow is also offering the first painting workshops available in Western Australia that will enable those working in the industry and artists in other fields to explore glass painting within their projects. The approach to this teaching will be sure to include an overhaul of issues surrounding inclusion of different skin colours, and a relaxation of the typical regimented approach to glass painting which can be off putting to those just at the formative stage of their learning.

Overall, however, what is required within the sector seems to be a third pathway created for artists working within stained glass studios. Currently, stained glass is taught and treated as a trade, and artists are educated in fine arts institutions. Rarely do they intersect. Contrary to this, in North America, all studios have glass painters on staff that are usually educated in fine arts. This is not to say that every glass painter requires a fine art's background at all, however what it is suggesting is a recognition in North America that stained glass and glass painting is an art definitely is helpful. In order for this framework to be implemented into an Australia context, there would need to be a general increase in desire for bespoke stained glass at a higher end and, in particular, inclusive of glass painting. This is indeed achievable and the only thing standing in the way is simply the lack of visibility of stained glass and glass painting in people's day to day life and in the public art world. If stained glass was more consistently promoted as public art and engaged with Australians in new contexts, then it would be far more likely to be considered for larger local government projects, insightful collaborations and gallery shows. Judson's Studios has demonstrated how the inclusion of stained glass in art shows and in public art initiatives has already begun to give stained glass more exposure in a North American context. This seems like a thoughtful model to emulate in the Australian sector.

Another highlight of the 2022 Mason Fellowship can be found in the fact that two Fellows were appointed from either side of Australia. Nadine Keegan and Hannah Maling have been able to share their fellowship experiences with one another and begin to forge ideas for the future to increase education in stained glass within their sector. Both Keegan and Maling are involved with GLAAS INC. who have already contributed vastly to the revitalisation of stained glass in Australia. They share passion and plans for exhibitions, talks and workshops in 2023 for glass artists and the general public. Being privy to the guided tours given to the public by Judson's Studios reminded the Fellow that ensuring people from all walks of life feel involved with the medium is the greatest way to promote it. Further to this, Keegan and Maling are both dedicated to a free flow of information in techniques, materials and approach to one another and all budding and existing Australian glass artists. The withholding of information between artists and studios in the stained glass sector is in the process of an overdue overhaul. To this end, social media can be a powerful tool in sharing information and education. In this way the Fellow is already changing the sector through sharing process videos, materials and tips and connecting with other Australians in the sector online to offer new methodologies and approaches to working with glass painting. There are already several fresh stained glass painters emerging nationwide, which is extremely encouraging for the sector.

Finally, the long process of ensuring diversity and inclusion in stained glass will see effective change over time as collaborations between a wide range of artists begin to be executed in a manner that offers representation to all people and places. As aforementioned, the Fellow has already begun discussions with BIPOC artists to collaborate on glass painted work that offer a reprieve from white

saints in church buildings. Naturally, as people begin to see themselves represented in works of glass, they will feel more inclined to explore the medium of glass and glass paint. As it currently sits, the Fellow can only speak for themselves with a commitment to diversity in all their works.

## Recommendations and Considerations

The most absolute of the Fellow's considerations are informed by the requirements of accessibility and representation when discussing stained glass and painting on glass. As a result of this, their recommendations highlight the potential of stained glass as public art due to the following:

33

- Public art is accessible for free to all people.
- Public art is (for the most part) secular. Therefore, restrictions of inclusivity around stained glass art (as can be problematic in ecclesiastical settings) are minimised.
- Public art is currently legally required by currently Australian guidelines for every new housing development over 2 million dollars.
- Public art is often funded by government bodies, therefore putting the onus of diversity and representation in a contemporary Australian context squarely where it belongs.

As a result of the conversations the Fellow had with Melissa Valentin about public art initiatives and processes in Los Angeles, they feel confident and capable to begin approaching these opportunities within Australia at a government, and private level. From their learnings about the process of collaboration with marginalized artists to realize their visions in stained glass, the Fellow feels they are well equipped now to make change in the sector through the application of glass painting skills in partnership with a diverse range of artists. In this way the artist feels that recommending stained glass be considered for public art initiatives, with particular consideration to collaborations, in Australia would have the following affects:

- See stained glass engagement with new audiences, encouraging a recontextualization of the medium for the general public. This in turn would lead to people considering it a sustainable career, or to consider commissioning glass work within their home or community, which would provide new work and opportunities for glass artists.
- Encourage a feeling of inclusion and representation of minorities within Australia. For example: working in collaboration with First Nation's artists to realise their work in glass for a public art structure that clearly identifies the land you are standing on ie. The Traditional Land Owners of your current whereabouts.
- Elevate the understanding of exactly what public art can be and where exactly stained glass belongs. As previously mentioned, Judson's Studios have a large collaborative work with Amir Fallah in the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health. Imagine the positive impact on

the well-being of patients and visitors to public health care facilities, hospitals, hospices and patient care that are able to engage with an ever changing piece of artwork. In its very essence, a stained glass piece of art cannot remain static, as a painting or a sculpture does. It changes every day through its interaction with light, time, shadows and refraction. This ability to alter consistently would, without a doubt, have a profound impact on shared public spaces for those in difficult circumstances.

34

To achieve these recommendations the Fellow has already made the following steps:

- Conducted a meeting with installation artist and sculptor, Tom Fruin, in Brooklyn, New York to discuss his large Perspex public art structures that emulate stained glass. These discussions particularly relate to the potential of welding to create 3D structures suitable for glass as Public Art
- Contacted Aimee Frodsham, Artistic Director of Canberra Glassworks, to discuss potential collaborations with Canberra Glassworks
- Contacted Andy Dinan, Public Art Consultant at MARS GALLERY, to put forward ideas of Stained Glass as public art percentage in upcoming Melbourne/ Naarm housing developments.
- Submitted and applied to exhibit stained glass works in painting competitions that do not specifically preclude glass from being the medium upon which the painting occurs. This is a step forward to exposing stained glass in a recontextualised context to new audiences, which begins considerations towards painting on glass in other arenas.
- Begun discussions with BIPOC painters about future collaborations.

Further to considerations of public art initiatives, the Fellow makes the strongest recommendations possible to consider all the methods by which stained glass, and painting on glass, can be adapted to a contemporary artistic, and Australian, context with specific aims in skill development and an increased flow of information. This recommendation is informed by the Fellow's first-hand experience of learning under master glass painters, all of whom cited multiple teachers, methods and learning opportunities for their skill and craftsmanship. Due to the Fellow's extensive skill enhancement through workplace immersion at Judson Studios, they feel like they are able to make change in the sector through the following methods:

- Skill sharing and exposure on social media of learning opportunities and techniques. The Fellow already engages with many emerging glass artists, in Australia and abroad, pursuing education in painting on glass and makes themselves available to share as much as possible of their craft.
- Attending as many learning opportunities as possible abroad to widen their skill set to share within their sector in Australia. In 2023, the Fellow will be travelling to Philadelphia in the USA

on a scholarship from the American Glass Guild, to study further techniques to manipulating the surface of stained glass with world renowned artists Judith Schaecter and Rick Prigg. These connections, on the industry level, also create pathways for future emerging Stained Glass artists to then visit with the same organisations and artists, through the benefit of an introduction by the Fellow herself.

- The Fellow has already addressed The Melbourne Polytechnic Architectural glass students with a presentation in November, 2022 to advise and encourage how to seek a variety of teachers and opportunities within stained glass, highlighting their path in upskilling overseas to disperse information within Australia.
- Frequent communication with Donna Kennedy of GLAAS INC that includes discussions on skill sharing and the potential of glass painters and stained glass educators of diverse backgrounds becoming involved with the Melbourne Polytechnic Course.
- Offering workshops in their skills. In 2023, the Fellow has already conducted one 2 day workshops for visitors from regional areas of Australia. This provides much needed access to creative education in isolated areas of Western Australia. In turn, this creates more space for voices previously omitted from stained glass.
- Sharing skills with others within their industry at a sectoral level. This includes future plans with Fellow Nadine Keegan, to conduct “cross over workshops” that highlight their contrasting approaches to stained glass.

Ultimately, the renaissance of stained glass as an art of interest to the masses will gain traction as it is shown to engage with new topics, and represent, in glass paint, something entirely separate to white saints on glass. Based on the art pieces the Fellow was able to connect and share space with during their time on this Fellowship, they are of the mind that they are able to help in facilitating these changes within their sector largely by:

- Not only featuring Caucasian people in glass painted depictions of any scene. Painting a wide variety of people in their person work.
- Engaging in conversations around representation within their industry, while being able to provide examples and education on how to approach new skin tones in painting on glass.
- Pursue collaborations with BIPOC artists that champion their work and voice.
- Encourage experimentation at all stages of the glass painting process to present work to the public that challenges their antiquated notions of stained glass. This can be done effectively by entering stained glass artworks into competitions that appear reserved for “fine art”. If the public are to see stained glass in a gallery, it instantly changes their understanding of its place and potential.

In conclusion, the future looks to be very bright for glass painting, and stained glass in Australia as people once again begin to crave for the presence of a hand or brush mark in the work they surround themselves with. The next step is to recontextualise their understanding of stained glass and redress its potential and content for a contemporary society.

36



*Figure 29. Some of the Team of Judson's Studio and 2023 ISSI Fellow, Hannah Maling.*

# References

## **Quotes 1 & 2**

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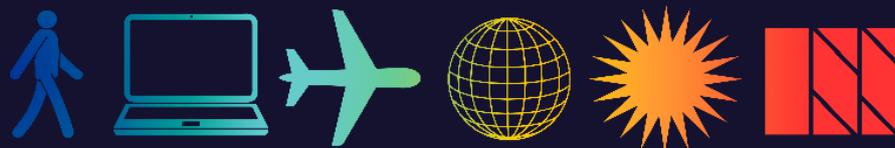
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37

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