

## *In glass thy story: a symposium addressing over 70 years of innovation and iconography in the glass art of British and European churches and cathedrals*

### Outline of programme

In the course of the last seventy years some astonishingly inventive solutions have been found for commissions for stained glass and other forms of glass art in churches and cathedrals. Yet public and academic discussion of this work has been sporadic: it has often focused on individual buildings or individual stained-glass makers and produced surprisingly little in the way of a sustained body of knowledge and understanding about glass art, in terms of patronage, technical developments, use of iconography, and its role or purpose in relation to liturgy or the needs of the congregation. Consequently, proposals for new commissions for glass art in this country often reflect only limited understanding of the practice, possibilities and purpose of stained glass, and of the many traditions which lie behind it.

*This two-day symposium, to be held on 8/9 September 2017, seeks to redress this situation. The symposium will take place at Robinson College, Cambridge (where John Piper's Light of the World window can be seen in the Chapel) and it will explore the shifts in methods, style, and iconography found in glass art for churches and cathedrals over the last 70 years. It will make reference to European models and influences, and will also address particular exemplars from British churches and cathedrals of all denominations, through which to understand better the challenges and opportunities that are present in the exceptional medium of glass, coloured or plain. The symposium will seek to draw out what glass means theologically as an integral part of a place of worship, a vehicle of light, and a boundary between within/without.*

Taking the 1950s as its point of departure – and recognising the enormous contribution of the Arts and Crafts movement as documented by Peter Cormack in his recent book (Yale UP and Paul Mellon Centre BA) and by Nicola Gordon Bowe in her recent monograph on Wilhemina Geddes – the symposium will seek to attract speakers with expert knowledge of major works by internationally renowned figures such as John Piper, Patrick Reyntiens, Geoffrey Clarke, Keith New and Evie Hone but also by leading regional stained-glass artists and influential teachers such as Leonard

Evetts and Jonah Jones. These talks will reflect both knowledge of British examples but also an awareness of the explosion of post-war French and German stained glass, often used to great effect in medieval churches or new buildings such as the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial church (1959-63) in Berlin, with its glass by Gabriel Loire.

The second day of this conference will address more recent commissions from the 1990s and early years of this century, in particular the development to invite artists of world-renown, such as Sigmar Polke, Gerhard Richter, John McLean, Sean Scully, Hughie O'Donoghue, Christopher Le Brun and, most recently, David Hockney, to design and collaborate with glass technicians or stained-glass makers on spectacular examples of glass art in both old and new church buildings.

A recurrent topic in this conference will be different categories of commission and the variant responses they have received from today's artists in the making of relatively small or large memorial windows, or architectural glass screens for new churches, by means of a range of techniques, from the use of full-saturation colour through to monochrome or etched glass. Few designers of stained glass are also the makers of glass art, and it will be important in this section to give stained-glass makers and technicians, as well those responsible for setting up commissions, the opportunity to speak.

### Friday 8 September, 11am

**Opening Lecture: Becky Clark**, (Director of the Cathedral and Church Buildings Division of the Church of England) *New glass commissions and their significance in the life and worship of a church or cathedral*

**Jasmine Allen** (curator of The Stained Glass Museum in Ely Cathedral) *Post-war glass in British churches (including Geoffrey Clarke, Lawrence Lee and Margaret Traherne)*

**Frances Spalding** (art historian, biographer and critic) *Observations on the commissioning of Piper/Reyntiens glass for Coventry Cathedral and for the Cathedral of Christ the King, Liverpool*

**Inge Linder-Gaillard** (École supérieure d'art et design de Grenoble) *French post-war churches and the renewal of glass*

**Diana Coulter** (historic buildings consultant) *Keith New: Using colour and form to advertise God*

**Martin Crampin** (author of *Stained Glass from Welsh Churches*) *A change in direction: modernism in the stained glass of the diocese of Llandaff in the 1950s (including the work of AL Wilkinson, Celtic Studios, John Petts)*

**Andrew Derrick** (Director, Architectural History Practice) *Stained glass in RC churches after the Second Vatican Council*

**Wine reception and conference dinner (optional) held at Robinson College**

**Saturday 9 September, 10am**

**Caroline Swash** (designer, maker, writer and teacher) *Vision and Material: an overview of innovation 1980-2000*

**Jonathan Koestlé-Cate** (Associate Lecturer at Goldsmiths College, London and author of *Art and the church: A Fractious Embrace*, Routledge, 2016) *From Noirlac to Conques: stained glass as minimalist intervention*

**Deborah Lewer** (Senior Lecturer in History of Art at the University of Glasgow) *Windows on the Sacred and (Post-)Secular: Richter, Polke and Rauch in Cologne, Zurich and Naumburg*

**Fanny Drugeon** (art historian and member of the InTRU research lab at the University of Tours, associated with Labex Création, Arts et Patrimoine) *What happened after Nevers? Abstraction in contemporary French stained glass for churches*

**Thomas Denny in conversation with Sophie Hacker** (artists) *Biblical and literary narratives in glass*

**Andrew Moor** (architectural glass consultant) *Architectural glass for the 21<sup>st</sup>-century church*

**Claire Todd** (artist and researcher at University of Sunderland) *Glass as a contemporary art form in churches*

**Jeremy Haselock** (Vice-Dean of Norwich Cathedral) *John McLean's three windows for Norwich Cathedral*

**Ends 4.30pm**

**About the venue**

[Robinson College](#) was formally opened in 1981 and is designed by Gillespie, Kidd and Coia. The College is set in extensive gardens which are open for delegates to spend

time in. The symposium itself will take place in the new [Crausaz Wordsworth Building](#) which has state-of-the-art AV equipment and full catering facilities.