



The GLAZIER

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A live virtual tour of Murano

On 22 April Glaziers embarked on a live virtual tour of the island of Murano in the Venice Lagoon, with the real time viewing taking in various treasures such as the church of Santa Maria e San Donato and the Museo del Vetro.

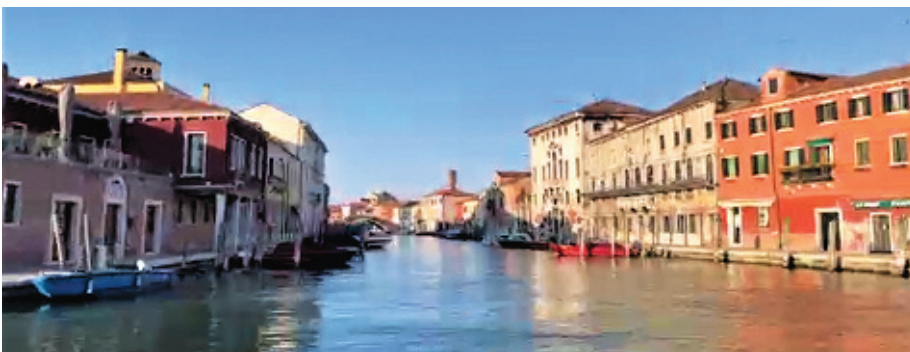
The last stop on the island with its famous glass workshops was the showroom of the “master” glassmaker Lino Tagliapietra, now in his 80s. Having spent 70 years in the craft beginning as an apprentice at the age of 11, his work has been exhibited in museums and institutions all over the USA where he also has a base.

SUSAN KEANE, who was the inspiration for the Glaziers’ visit, writes: I was impressed by the guide, Luisella Romeo, when I watched on-screen one of her live walks around Venice with the Art Society Richmond. She was charming, informed and ready to take questions.

As a result, I booked her for a guided live virtual walk around St Mark’s Square for my Past Consorts group 2018/19. It was a magical experience to see the square in detail, without struggling amongst the usual throng of tourists. The walk was received so well that I booked Luisella for a walk around the Dorsoduro area of Venice with my other Past Consorts group 2008/9.

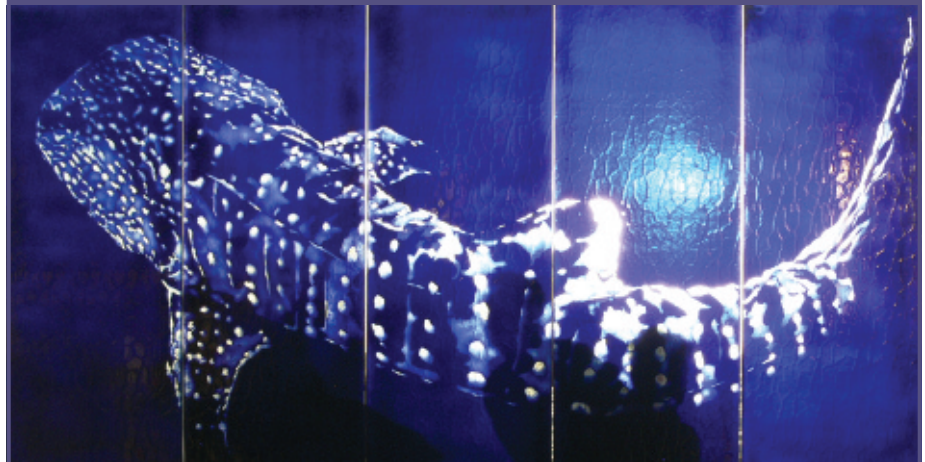
Spectacularly colourful

I noticed that Luisella’s website described a visit to the showroom of Lino Tagliapietra to see his spectacularly colourful glass creations. This prompted me to ask if she could devise a live virtual walk around the



The Glaziers take a live virtual water taxi ride through Murano with its famous glassworks.

Looking out from Australia



This magnificent three-metre glass whale shark sculpture, looking out towards the Indian Ocean from a balcony in the Western Australian Maritime Museum, reflects the uninhibited approach of Australia’s stained glass artistry, always looking for new horizons. Its creator, Vaughn Bisschops, points out that as the marine emblem of Western Australia, the whale shark symbolises much about the area – its magnificent coast, its biodiversity and its burgeoning tourism industry. It was designed to play with light that constantly flickers and interacts with the glass to create a piece that changes with the conditions and the environment. See inside Vaughn Bisschops’ quest for new frontiers in his work.

island of Murano with a visit to the showroom for the Glaziers.

Unlike many Glaziers, I had not visited Murano, so I was fascinated to learn that the island had been known for its highly innovative work with glass since the 13th century when the dangerous glass-blowing furnaces were moved away from the city to avoid fire spreading through the tightly packed buildings.

Luisella arranged to show us the locations of a few old glassblowing works and the temporarily closed glass museum

before we reached Lino Tagliapietra’s showroom

We were lucky because the pandemic had delayed Lino’s intended travel to his Seattle studio so that he had time to show us his work in Murano. I had not anticipated this great glass artist being so charmingly modest about his exciting work.

I passed this information to the Master and Clerk, who were enthusiastic about the idea and took over the organisation. The Master’s only condition was a good view of sunset over the lagoon at the end of our visit. Luck was on our side and the sunset was magnificent.

Participants’ comments

The Glaziers visiting party for Murano was joined by numerous representatives from other livery companies, this outside participation being an aspect of the event’s success. This kind of participation has been a growing feature of online events organised by the Company. Here are some of the comments on the Murano visit from these other livery participants who were warmly welcomed by Master Glazier Michael Dalton:

VAUGHN BISSCHOPS is a leading Australian stained glass artist with his free-thinking approach taking him into new areas for his work. While the breadth of his work ranges from repair and restoration and residential windows to church windows and major public commissions, e.g. churches and hospitals, his painting ability is one of the aspects which marks him out, as evidenced by the detail of his depiction of figures in church windows. His designs consciously mirror aspects of life in Australia and a desire to bring new and interesting dimensions when carrying out commissions, for instance his three-metre whale shark glass sculpture, as pictured on the front cover.

Expanding the frontiers of stained glass – an Australian approach

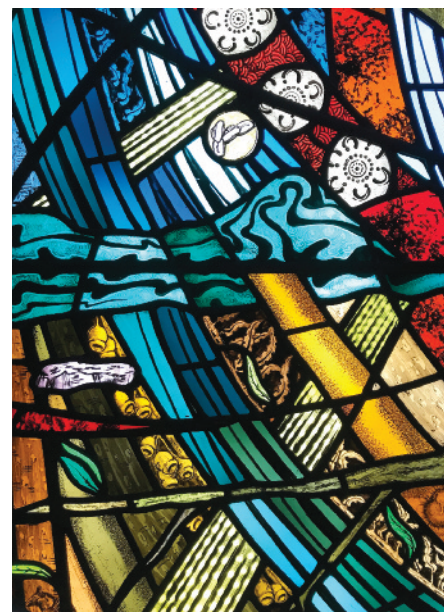
VAUGHN BISSCHOPS describes an artistry that reflects where he lives.

I am a New Zealand born artist who arrived in Australia in 1980 at the age of 14.

So I have spent most of my life here in Australia. I have a strong connection with both NZ and Australia and feel it has a strong influence on my style

I started my working life as a chef and spent a few years in Europe cooking. I had no idea that later in my life I would have anything to do with glass but was besotted by the cathedrals and architecture in Europe.

One of my most memorable experiences was arriving in Berlin. It was minus 10 degrees and I went into the Kaiser Wilhelm Cathedral. I was completely overwhelmed by the dalle de verre (slab) glass made by Loire Studios.



Healing in its Wings (detail), Perth Children's Hospital.



Cast glass head for exhibition, 2018. Called Connected.



Healing in its Wings (detail, Perth Children's Hospital).



Cartoon for an exhibition – Mary, Queen of Heaven 2007.



Mary, Queen of Heaven in glass.

Thirty years later I would have a drive to try and accomplish something in Australia that would produce a similar feeling that only glass can achieve.

WHAT HAS INFLUENCED ME. I have a few influences, my biggest being Harry Clarke. His ability to make his windows almost child-like and his understanding of how the paint works on glass and what it can achieve are mind blowing.

My early understanding of glass was rooted in Burne Jones and Tiffany Glass but I am still so inspired by Atelier Loire in France.

I find I get a lot of inspiration from friends I work with in glass. I find it exciting when I learn something from them I didn't know was possible.



Healing in its Wings, Chapel of the Multi Faith Centre, Perth Children's Hospital (4.5m x 2m) 2018. Celebrating the life of the hospital and remembering the people who have helped shaped it, as patients, families or as staff who have worked there – particularly the nurses. With images of nature and the many symbols of the faiths and cultures of those within the community of Perth.



Mary and Jesus (1 of 3 panels) 2007.
Rowethorpe Chapel, Bentley, Western Australia.



Geraldton Cathedral windows, Prestation sisters and Nano Nagel.

My own influences are coming to Australia at a young age and being fascinated by all the wildlife, red landscapes, plants, amazing blue skies and oceans. Over the last few years it has felt so important to portray this in my stained glass windows for public buildings and church windows.

WHAT DRIVES ME. I took up stained glass at the age of 29 as a hobby as a form of stress relief from cooking. I then decided to start up my own business making stained glass and leadlight windows with my partner Jane who was instrumental in helping get me started with advertising budgets and tax etc. She was and still is my biggest critic – that is so important I think.

I am a self-taught glass artist and taught myself everything there is to know about the craft. When I started painting on glass I read *The Art of Painting on Glass* by Albinas Elskus many times. I called it my Bible. I would refer to it for any information as there were only a couple of people here that knew anything about painting on glass.

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Attuned series – cast glass on bronze body.

HOW MY WORK HAS DEVELOPED. I did a painting course in the Eastern States of Australia with stained glass artist Jerry Cummins.

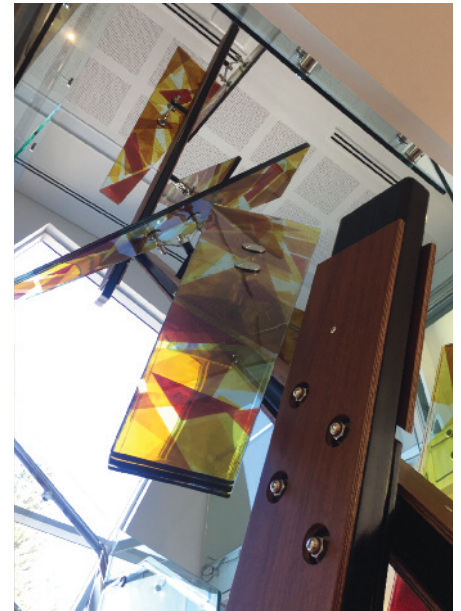
In 2006 I embarked on a self-driven and funded sabbatical in France for three months with Jane and our three small children.

I have now done numerous courses in glass, in sculpting, painting and other various techniques.

My main drive today is making stained glass windows as good as I possibly can, not worrying about how much money I make or worrying how much they are worth. And making them feel very Australian in the subject matter and colours.

Improving skills

I think, like all artists, my skills are improving with understanding and practice, and understanding the product. So I am excited to see the next 20 years' progress. I am now interested in 3D glass or free-



The Half Way Tree, Claremont Council Building, Claremont, Western Australia, 2014.



Rose window at the Holy Trinity Chapel, Rottneest Island, 2003. Drawn by Earley & Co. studios in Ireland.

standing glass panels. When I have time I am exploring new ideas such as using glass blocks to make sculptures in glass, and developing dalle de verre glass.

THINKING DIFFERENTLY FROM A EUROPEAN ARTIST. I would say Australian artists are less traditionally trained than European artists so maybe they have less mental constraints.

The sun here is much brighter than in Europe, so in my opinion this allows the windows to be so much brighter.

In doing many repairs to European windows here I have noticed they often put a light wash on the outside to lessen the impact of the strong Australian sun. I, on the other hand, love this aspect and deliberately don't paint glass in all sections so the sun can blast through the glass. ■

Contributions should be sent to the editor: Richard Blausten
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