

Thoughts, news and comments concerning the art and craft of Connick stained glass, published periodically by...
The Charles J. Connick Stained Glass Foundation, Ltd., Orin E. Skinner, Founder Marilyn B. Justice, President
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Final phase of cataloging of MIT's Connick Collection is underway

Steven D. Horsch

This fall marked the beginning of the second and final phase of processing and cataloging the Charles J. Connick Stained Glass Collection at the MIT Libraries. Made possible by grant funding, this project will be completed over the next 16 months. The primary goal of the project is to professionally catalog the entire collection following standards used for recording metadata and other information for archival collections. This cataloging and documentation will allow for easy searching and retrieval of the information related to Charles Connick and the Connick Studio's output that is part of the collection. We are delighted that Jeremy Grubman of the MIT Libraries, who did the initial processing of the collection when it was transferred from the Foundation to MIT, will continue his work with the collection in this second phase.

As part of the project, all of the artwork on paper in the collection will be carefully conserved. Secure yet accessible storage will be constructed to ensure the long-term preservation of the artwork and stained glass. The art and stained glass will be photographed as well so digital images can be included as part of the related archival record. When these images are combined with the already-completed digital scans of the Connick Studio job files, almost the entire Charles J. Connick Stained Glass Collection at MIT will have been digitized for easier access.

Among the most exciting aspects of this project will be the development of an online research tool that will seamlessly retrieve information and images from the new catalog records, including the digital images. Once launched, the contents of the Connick Collection will be easily accessible to anyone directly from the MIT Libraries' website. Thus, researchers and stained glass enthusiasts wanting to use the collection will be able to get the information and images they need themselves without having to travel to Cambridge.

Plans are underway already for a multi-media exhibition at the MIT Libraries upon the completion of the project that will explore the Connick Collection in the context of other collections and materials related to glass at the MIT Libraries. A series of public programs related to the Connick Collection and related topics will be developed and presented as well. It is expected that the exhibition will coincide with the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Connick Studio in Boston. We expect it to be an exciting part of the observance of this momentous anniversary!

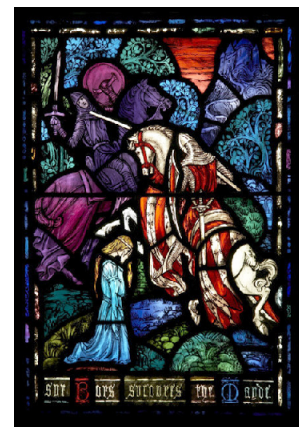
Steven D. Horsch is the Head of Stewardship and Donor Relations at the MIT Libraries.



Astronomy (1911)

Although Charles Connick did not open his own studio at 9 Harcourt Street until April 1913, beginning in 1909 he began to design and make windows using the Boston studios of Arthur Cutter, Vaughn, O'Neill & Company, and Horace Phipps. Connick describes this window, made at Vaughn, O'Neill & Company, as a "sample panel" which could be shown to prospective clients. The panel may have been inspired by the April 1910 appearance of Halley's Comet, first recorded by astronomers in 240 B.C. In 1915, Astronomy was exhibited with two other panels at the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco and Connick was awarded a gold medal.

Sir Bors panel made by Connick Studio for exhibition purposes from the design used in creating the Holy Grail window for the Graduate School, Proctor Hall, Princeton University 1919.



Astronomy panel and Sir Bors panel are both part of the Connick Collection, Rotch Library, MIT

Connick Up Close

Mary Alice Stanton

Driving along Memorial Drive in the late summer I noticed the cocoon of grey mesh enveloping St. John's Monastery. These venerable old Boston buildings are forever needing re-pointed and re-patched, so I folded it into that category of 'watch for the new look'. Then came a call from Marilyn Justice would we like to climb the scaffolding of St. John's Monastery and see the newly cleaned Connick stained glass windows up close. She barely got the words out before we had our calendars in hand to give top priority to such an opportunity.

Missey Carter aptly named the day for us: "an ecclesiastical outward bound". A contingent of eight enthusiasts were welcomed by Brother Kevin and then fitted with hard hats by a most solicitous 'clerk of the works' named Michael. With Brother Kevin in the lead, we were guided up, up and over along bouncy boards. "Watch overhead, especially at the corners, and there's a bit of a gap there" - all the while 18 inches from a glorious treasure trove of magnificent stained glass. Those saints of the clerestory windows were vibrantly close in all their green and gold and rich brown robes. We wanted to stop forever at each window, but we also wanted to see every one we possibly could. The rose window with its dancing and trumpeting angels realized for me that goal of Charles Connick - it sang! And how those holy men were rendered-vibrant but balanced and each one a unique person.

I held every ropey rail and had to look down annoyingly often, but the view from the scaffolding has greatly enhanced my appreciation of the stained glass artists. The windows were installed 70 or 80 years ago and with all those years of sun and rain they remain as vivid and uplifting as their makers could have dreamed.

Mary Alice Stanton was introduced to Connick glass by a tour of the studio just before it closed - a tour conducted by Marilyn Justice and Orin Skinner. Thus began a long term education and appreciation of this art form.

Father Benson gouache study for clerestory window in the Monastery Chapel of St. Mary and St. John, Society of Saint John the Evangelist (SSJE). Charles J. Connick Studio records, Fine Arts Department, Boston Public Library. Father Benson was the founder of SSJE in Oxford, England which is the oldest Anglican religious order for men.



Photograph of the scaffolding in the SSJE Monastery Chapel of St. Mary and St. John, Cambridge, MA, 2010.

Photograph by Mary Anderson

