

Secular Uses for Stained Glass

From its earliest appearance in Europe, stained glass has been used to tell stories. Few other forms of artistic expression are so well suited or have been so often used to express a story or recount important historical events as stained glass.

While the stories told by stained glass panels are regularly associated with church and religion, a forum eminently appropriate for the medium, the use of stained glass is not limited to ecclesiastical buildings. Stained glass is also used to recount the lessons of literature, music, the arts, science and myriad other fields; from fairy tales to genetics to corporate logos — or simply to decorate with light and color — the ability of stained glass to delight and inspire is boundless.

Few people realize the full potential of stained glass. It can serve as a focal point in a room or as an accent within an interior. Used in an exterior window, wall or entryway, it will beautify the interior space by allowing an exterior view and daylight to enter as it controls and enhances this imagery.

When used in the home or business environment, stained glass will give a room a brilliant and ever-changing element that will complement the interior decor. Stained glass can express a favorite theme or avocation of the homeowner. It can express a mood ranging from whimsical and creative to conservative and traditional in the corporate building. It will, as no other medium can, charge a room with energy and light.

Stained glass can be used to enhance an exterior view by incorporating clear glass with colored and painted glass. It can also be used to block an unwanted exterior view and still allow daylight into a room through the use of semi-opaque and heavily textured glass. A well-designed panel complements a building; it neither overwhelms nor is overwhelmed by the surrounding architecture. The two exist as an integrated whole, to the betterment of both.

Many people today are inhabitants of an urban environment. It is important for those people to have a place that uniquely reflects and enhances their mood and personality. As urban areas continue to grow, personal space will not get bigger, but it can be better. Stained glass is a valuable tool for enhancing the quality of personal space.

The uses of stained glass are not limited to doors and windows. Stained glass can also be used in an interior opening, such as a room or office divider. In this role, it offers a barrier between two or more rooms and yet gives a feeling of openness. In the corporate setting, it can be used to divide workspaces, thus offering privacy while increasing available light. In the home, it can be installed between rooms such as a kitchen and dining area, thus separating the two but not dividing them.

In restaurants, interior stained glass walls can separate dining areas, allowing for increased light transmission while offering the diners privacy. The stained

glass dome or ceiling is an excellent element for providing decoration and atmosphere in a restaurant; the dome can be artificially lit to enhance mood in the room.

The ability of stained glass to uplift the spirit can also be used to great advantage in a hospital. The color and light offered by the medium will serve to lessen stress in waiting rooms. Stained glass windows are an excellent vehicle for enhancing the mood in a children's ward. Even a hospital cafeteria can benefit from the use of stained glass. Anywhere people gather, stained glass will be a welcome addition.

Stained glass is a craft rooted in tradition but ever-changing to embrace the technological advances we enjoy today. Stained glass can be traditional or contemporary; it can spark a wide range of mood and emotion. Stained glass is durable and lasting; a well-built stained glass window will require no more maintenance than a regular window for decades to come.

The craftsmen and craftswomen of the Stained Glass Association of America excel at their art and can assure you a successful project, from initial design concept to installation. This *Sourcebook* is your guide to the possibilities offered by stained glass; it will help you put the knowledge and experience of the members of the SGAA to work for you.

