

# DRIEHAUS MUSEUM

***ETERNAL LIGHT: THE SACRED STAINED-GLASS WINDOWS OF LOUIS COMFORT TIFFANY*  
EXPLORES TIFFANY'S ARTISTIC AND COMMERCIAL PROWESS  
THROUGH 11 OUTSTANDING ECCLESIASTICAL STAINED-GLASS WINDOWS**

**Featured Works Are Brought Together from Private and Public Collections Across the U.S.,  
Providing Audiences with a Rare Opportunity to See Them Together**

**Exhibition is Accompanied by Interactive Citywide Tour, *Chicago's Tiffany Trail*,  
Highlighting Prominence and Impact of Tiffany's Religious Works**

**Chicago, IL—July 29, 2019**—On September 7, the Richard H. Driehaus Museum will open *Eternal Light: The Sacred Stained-Glass Windows* of Louis Comfort Tiffany, an exhibition featuring 11 outstanding, ecclesiastical stained-glass windows made by Louis Comfort Tiffany and his workshop artisans between 1880 and 1925. The exhibition captures the artistic range and intricacy of Tiffany's output, while drawing particular attention to his religiously-themed works as important signifiers of America's rapidly shifting social, economic, and religious landscape at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. As religious communities responded to these changing norms by erecting new churches, Tiffany worked to leverage his technical prowess, his skilled workforce, and glassmaking innovations to meet the newfound demand. The windows included in the upcoming exhibition, along with a selection of other Tiffany objects, preparatory drawings, and archival materials, highlight Tiffany's incredible creative and commercial vision and provide a new opportunity to examine him as a key purveyor of America's modern future. The exhibition will remain on view through March 8, 2020.

To further contextualize the prominence of Tiffany's religious works and to underscore his impact on Chicago's art and architecture, the Driehaus Museum has also organized a 14-stop interactive self-guided tour through the city, titled *Chicago's Tiffany Trail*. The tour, which will be available via the app Vamonde, will build on themes explored in the exhibition and provide details on the patrons who commissioned the projects, the technologies used to realize the designs, and how each Tiffany work is incorporated into the architectural design of their environment. Highlights include the Chicago Cultural Center, Church of Our Savior, Hyde Park Union Church, the Marquette Building, Macy's on State Street, Rosehill Mausoleum, Second Presbyterian Church, and the Levere Memorial Temple. Together, these sites underscore the ways in which Tiffany took advantage of a critical moment in American history to further establish himself and attain new financial success and notoriety. The Driehaus Museum has also been named a partner site for the 2019 Chicago Architectural Biennial, creating further connections between *Eternal Light* and the city's architecture, past and present.

*"Eternal Light* looks without sentiment at the ecclesiastical windows of the Tiffany firm as rich reminders that America is ever-changing," said Richard P. Townsend, Executive Director of the Richard H. Driehaus Museum. "Tiffany's masterpieces tell stories of American entrepreneurship, of places of worship as community incubators, of our country's evolving relationship to religion. This exhibition is not only about beautiful objects exceptionally crafted, it is also about the ideas and stories behind the windows: progressive technologies, designers, and patrons."

As the social and economic climate in the United States shifted—driven by the wealth created through industrialization, internal migration following the Civil War, and an influx of immigrants—the nation’s religious views shifted, too. This was, in part, an appreciation for the country’s achievements and a desire to celebrate what many saw as divinely inspired success. By some estimates, cited at the time, thousands of churches were commissioned and under construction at the end of the 19th century.

*Eternal Light* provides audiences with a rare opportunity to see 11 of Tiffany’s ecclesiastical windows together and to examine Tiffany’s technical and creative approach to distinguishing these houses of worship. Works in the exhibition are drawn from major public and private collections across the United States, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Neustadt Collection of Tiffany Glass, and Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art. The exhibition also includes a number of works that have not been on public view since the 2016 closure of the Richard H. Driehaus Gallery of Stained Glass at Navy Pier, which housed one of the largest collections of Tiffany stained-glass windows in the nation.

“Creating a Tiffany stained-glass window was a complex process that required the skills of a designer along with many well-trained craftspeople,” said Catherine Shotick, curator of the exhibition. “Louis Comfort Tiffany employed numerous window designers and artists—notably Agnes Northrop and Frederick Wilson—and this exhibition sheds light on the stories of those individuals, as well as how their involvement affected the different window styles produced by the firm.”

**Eternal Light has three distinct sections:**

The first section, “Tiffany’s Process: The Making of a Stained-Glass Window”, examines the progression of an idea from design to finished product within the workshop’s Ecclesiastical Department. Presenting a number of drawings and colored illustrations, audiences will learn how Tiffany and his artists worked through a commission from its initial concept, to creating watercolor-infused examples that suggest how light will filter through the final, stained-glass product.

Included in this section are pieces by two of the workshop’s leading designers Jacob Holzer (1858-1938) and Frederick Wilson (1858-1932). Holzer, who served as chief designer at the Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company from 1890 to 1897, was a skilled architectural draftsman. His *Design for Chancel of Christ Church, Bedford Avenue, Brooklyn, New York* (c. 1899) epitomizes his skill as both an architect and an artist, showing the depth of perspective necessary to understand the space to be built, while conveying its pre-production beauty. Wilson began working for Tiffany in 1893, and in 1897 became head of the Ecclesiastical Department. In addition to his strengths as an artist, Wilson’s grasp of religious imagery is seen in the *Cartoon for Window, Saint Anselm, St. John’s Chapel Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, Massachusetts* (1912).

The second section, “Tiffany and the Chicago World’s Fair”, presents Tiffany’s marketing genius and, in particular, the firm’s successful efforts to promote its services to Christian congregations and their patrons. Expanding upon the traditional modes of advertising—such as placements in architectural and design magazines or promotional events when new church windows were installed and dedicated—Tiffany seized on a new opportunity for the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The firm designed and built a chapel within its broader exhibition space, featuring elements such as 16 mosaic-clad columns; a 1,000-pound, 10-by-8-foot cross-shaped electrolier; a marble

and white glass mosaic altar; a baptismal font; and several stained-glass windows. The goal was straightforward: demonstrate the splendor an individual or congregation could expect to see by commissioning work from Tiffany.

Several important pieces on view will convey to contemporary audiences the ornate and majestic nature of the Tiffany chapel. The first is an altar cross from 1891, commissioned and produced for a client in New York and borrowed by Tiffany for the World's Fair; standing more than four feet tall. The cross is made of gilt-brass, topaz, amethyst, and glass, and was designed to catch light from nearly every direction. The second is a monumental candelabrum, made in 1893, of bronze and molded glass. These objects are complemented by some of the marketing materials that give insight into the language that Tiffany used to sell his firm's specialties.

This section closes with the *Antependium* window (c. 1892-1893), a leaded glass work that closely mirrors the fabric antependium that would have been seen hanging over the lectern in the chapel. At its center is a white and green opalescent crucifix, enlivened by textured, swirling leading, and set against a background in rich crimson and purple glass that conveys a sense of a velvet-like texture. This window, which demonstrated Tiffany's skill to viewers at the time and possibly designed by Agnes Northrop, was sold off during the bankruptcy sale for Tiffany Studios and, for all practical purposes, lost. It resurfaced in the 1970s, when it was identified and subsequently conserved.

The final section of the exhibition presents ten stained-glass windows and one memorial chandelier, demonstrating—in glass—the incredible creative and artistic capacity of the Tiffany firm's Ecclesiastical Department. Spanning the firm's four decades of ecclesiastical commissions from churches across the United States, the windows demonstrate the Tiffany artists' ability to convey movement and emotion through stained-glass, as well as the Gilded Age's appetite for decoration. Among the windows included in this section are:

- *Poppies and Passion Flowers Rapelye Memorial Window* (c. 1915) and *Lilies and Palms Underhill Memorial Window* (after 1895), both designed by Agnes Northrop and created for St. John's Episcopal Church in Jersey City, New Jersey to memorialize prosperous citizens of the town; each is approximately 4 feet by 2 feet. Despite being created more than fifteen years apart, they demonstrate the firm's artistic consistency and cohesion across two different commissioned pieces for the same church.
- *Christ and the Apostles* (c. 1890) is one of the largest works in the exhibition, measuring nearly 8 feet by 8 feet. Attributed to Frederick Wilson, the window is a triptych depicting Christ and 11 of his apostles in the Garden of Gethsemane. The presentation of the apostles' hands, feet and faces, all finely enameled, reflect the skill and artistry involved, allowing each figure to be seen as a distinct individual, set against a vibrant landscape of mottled and striated opalescent glass in shades of blue and green.
- *Ecclesiastical Angels* (1905), also designed by Wilson, is another large-scale work, also approximately 8 feet by 8 feet. The window honors ten women who were killed when their sleigh was hit by a train on a snowy night in February 1905. The memorial features two angels with opalescent rippled glass wings standing at the center of a three-part window and includes the names of those who died.
- *Charity* (1925) is the latest window in the exhibition; it is approximately 9 feet by 4 feet and is attributed to Frederick Wilson. It depicts Mary, a young Christ, and a young John the

Baptist, all clad in colorful layered opalescent drapery glass robes. They are set in a landscape of pine and cypress trees, sky, and mountains, rendered in naturalistic shades of blue, gold, green, and mauve. It is paired with its preparatory drawing from the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

### **Exhibition Catalogue**

*Eternal Light: The Sacred Stained-Glass Windows of Louis Comfort Tiffany* will be accompanied by a full-color hardcover catalogue featuring illustrations of each work, as well as contextual and comparative plates. The catalogue includes historical context and commentary by exhibition curator, Catherine Shotick, a foreword by Richard P. Townsend, Executive Director of the Driehaus Museum, and an essay by curator and noted Tiffany scholar Elizabeth De Rosa, on the history, design, and production of sacred stained-glass windows at the Tiffany firms.

### **Public Programs**

In addition to *Chicago's Tiffany Trail*, the Museum will present a range of public programs exploring Tiffany and his workshops' history, the art of glassmaking, and the connections between history and contemporary questions about artistic production and representation. A few highlight programs are listed below, and the full roster of events will be available on the Driehaus Museum website in the fall.

#### **Beyond the Glass Ceiling: Agnes Northrop**

**Wednesday, September 25, 6 - 7:30pm**

Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen, Anthony W. and Lulu C. Wang Curator of American Decorative Arts at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, will consider the work of Agnes Northrop, the most important woman artist at Tiffany Studios. Northrop, who is featured prominently in *Eternal Light*, worked with Tiffany for five decades and her popular floral and landscape windows played a key role in the success of the firm's ecclesiastical business.

#### **Alternative Truths: The Tiffany Women**

**Wednesday, October 23, 2019 6:00 – 7:30 pm**

Jennifer P. Thalheimer, Curator and Collection Manager at the Morse Museum of American Art, will discuss the extraordinary life of Clara Driscoll and several other female artists from Tiffany Studios. A skilled artist, savvy businesswoman, and Director of the Women's Glass Cutting Department for over 30 years, Driscoll was essential in sustaining Tiffany Studios' reputation as the leading American glass and design company of the time.

#### **Saturday: American Commemorative Art and the Sacralization of Memory**

**Sunday: Visit Levere Memorial Temple with Dr. Jay Winter and Dr. Elizabeth De Rosa**

**Saturday, November 23, 10 am – 1 pm and Sunday, November 24, 1 – 4 pm**

The signature event for *Eternal Light* will examine the development of America's culture of commemorative practices particularly as it relates to war. The world's foremost specialist on World War I, Dr. Jay Winter of Yale University, will examine the vital importance of war memorials and the nation's desire and need to memorialize, remember, and heal. Dr. Winter's presentation will be followed by noted Louis Comfort Tiffany scholar, and exhibition catalogue contributor Dr. Elizabeth De Rosa, who will examine how the Tiffany firms, in the late-19th and early-20th centuries, were at the forefront of establishing the appropriate way to commemorate war and the loss of life. Sunday provides an extraordinary opportunity to

explore of one of Tiffany's most remarkable war memorial commissions, The Levere Memorial Temple in Evanston, Illinois, with these two renowned experts.

### **Exhibition Organization & Support**

*Eternal Light: The Sacred Stained-Glass Windows of Louis Comfort Tiffany* is organized by the Richard H. Driehaus Museum. The exhibition webpage is available at <http://driehausmuseum.org/exhibition/eternallight/>.

This exhibition is presented by Northern Trust and made possible by the Terra Foundation for American Art. Additional support is provided by William and Irene Beck and the Richard H. Driehaus Annual Exhibition Fund.

The Terra Foundation for American Art is dedicated to fostering exploration, understanding, and enjoyment of the visual arts of the United States for national and international audiences. Recognizing the importance of experiencing original works of art, the foundation provides opportunities for interaction and study, beginning with the presentation and growth of its own art collection in Chicago. To further cross-cultural dialogue on American art, the foundation supports and collaborates on innovative exhibitions, research, and educational programs. Implicit in such activities is the belief that art has the potential both to distinguish cultures and to unite them.

### **About The Richard H. Driehaus Museum**

The Richard H. Driehaus Museum explores the Gilded Age through the art, architecture, and design of the late nineteenth century to the present. The Museum was founded by Richard H. Driehaus, who oversaw the restoration of its home, the Nickerson Mansion. Mr. Driehaus—who has a long history of funding projects in the arts and culture, including historic and contemporary art, and with an emphasis on projects engaging Chicago institutions—subsequently gave the Museum its collection. Once known as Chicago's "Marble Palace" and located just steps from the Magnificent Mile, the collection of period decorative arts is presented in an immersive experience within the Mansion. Temporary exhibitions organized by the Driehaus and its partners place the Gilded Age in context, as do vibrant educational and cultural programs designed to appeal to diverse audiences and illuminate the history, culture, and urban fabric of Chicago.

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