

# EINLADUNG

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# VORTRAG

von

**Prof. Dr. Joost CAEN**

Antwerp University Association, Artesis University College Antwerp  
Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Conservation Studies,  
Blindestraat, 9, B-2000 Antwerpen, Flanders – Belgium

**The Production of Stained Glass in the County of  
Flanders and the Duchy of Brabant from the 15<sup>th</sup> to  
the 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries: Materials and Techniques'**

Donnerstag, 6.Mai 2010, 16:00 Uhr

Akademie der bildenden Künste, Schillerplatz 3

Vortragssaal EA1 (Erdgeschoss)

## The Production of Stained Glass in the County of Flanders and the Duchy of Brabant from the XV<sup>th</sup> to the XVIII<sup>th</sup> Centuries: Materials and Techniques'

Prof. Dr. Joost CAEN, Antwerp University Association, Artesis University College Antwerp  
Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Conservation Studies, Antwerpen, Flanders – Belgium

### Abstract

The presentation focuses on materials and techniques used in the art of stained glass in the Low Countries and more especially in the County of Flanders and Duchy of Brabant during the Renaissance and Baroque eras. This was without doubt the golden age of stained glass in our region and stained-glass artists at the time were sometimes highly respected draughtsmen and painters.

To give a clear picture of material and technical developments, the period under consideration starts with a prologue (from the early fifteenth century) and ends with an epilogue (into the first decades of the eighteenth century). The subjects of research were not restricted to the glass still present in our region, but included case studies on stained glass from the Low Countries found in Spain (Miraflores, Leon and Seville), Portugal (Batalha) and England (Oxford). Stained glass windows from the Low Countries were in any case highly desirable luxury products that were exported all over Europe.

The approach based on the conservation-restoration perspective is largely innovative, since past studies on stained glass in our region have mainly been founded on one well-defined approach. It was unusual to make connections between, for example, the results of chemical analyses of glass and the art historical interpretation or correct dating. The uniqueness of the modern conservationist-restorer's approach lies in the fact that he or she is required to consider our cultural heritage in a broad and integrated way with a view to correct diagnosis and suitable treatment.

This research, although only an initial exploration, has already resulted in some highly relevant new insights. *The study among other things determined that enamel paint and carnation red had already been introduced into stained glass-making in the Low Countries during the second half of the fifteenth century and not during the second half of the sixteenth century, as many art historians asserted in the past. Chemical analysis has also demonstrated that sometimes several artists were involved in one work of stained glass. Chemical analysis will therefore certainly be a more reliable approach in future to dating different 'signatures' in a stained glass window. It was also possible to show that the impact of the guilds on the specific materials and techniques in the course of the period under study constantly declined. The ban (repeated ad nauseam) on the use of lead mills for making lead strips, for example, and the repeated exhortations to use high-quality French crown glass, show the diminishing influence of the guilds.*

This study is also able to demonstrate that the art of stained glass, contrary to what was generally assumed, was still technically very refined into the first half of the eighteenth century, although mainly in the Northern Netherlands, where worldly clients continued to value stained glass windows as an expression of their wealth and prestige.

The conclusion emphatically confirms the importance of interdisciplinary cooperation with a view to conserving our cultural heritage. Historical and scientific research is after all an essential complement to visual observation. Together, these various analytical methods are a guide to better interpretation of the heritage we seek to preserve, its story of decay, and the efforts at restoration. Without this integrated collection of information, every study will be limited by its own shortcomings and prejudices, which could of course be a hazard when actively intervening to conserve stained glass.

## Curriculum Vitae

*Prof. Dr. Joost M.A. CAEN*

Antwerp University Association, Artesis University College Antwerp – Royal Academy of Fine Arts,  
*Conservation Studies*, Blindestraat, 9, B-2000 Antwerpen, Flanders – Belgium  
e-mail: [joost.caen@skynet.be](mailto:joost.caen@skynet.be)

Studied Monumental Arts and Conservation at the National Higher Institute and Royal Academy of  
Fine Arts, Antwerpen.

*Diplome of the 'Monumental Arts' section and a Ma-diplome in Conservation-Restoration.*

PhD-studies at the Antwerp University, Antwerpen.

*Doctor in Conservation-Restoration.*

Independent glass-conservator and stained-glass artist since 1985.

Professor (conservation-restoration of glass and stained glass) at the Artesis University College of  
Antwerp since 1988. Head of the Conservation-Restoration-section from 1997 until 2001.

Guest-professor at several conservation-institutes: Vantaa (Helsinki), Göteborg, Kopenhagen,  
Hildesheim, Erfurt, Würzburg, Vienna, Warsaw, Krakow, Amsterdam, York, Leon, La Granja, Lisbon,  
Porto, Washington.

Several lectures at ICOM, ICOMOS, Corpus Vitrearum, AIHV-conferences, and others.

Scientific collaboration with the Fraunhofer Institut für Silicatforschung, Würzburg; the I.C.N., Amster-  
dam; the Antwerp University, Antwerpen; the Catholic University, Leuven; the Ghent University,  
Ghent; the K.I.K. Brussel; the Universida Nova Lisbon and others.

Conservation-restoration projects in numerous monuments and museums in Belgium, the Nether-  
lands, Germany, Spain, Portugal.

Vice-secretary of E.N.C.o.R.E. (1998 – 2008).

Member of I.C.O.M.; I.C.O.M.O.S.; I.I.C. (Fellow of IIC); the Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi; A.I.H.V. and  
the Royal Commission on Monuments and Sites (Flanders).

Several publications (articles and books) on conservation-restoration and especially glass-conser-  
vation.