Cold Paint on Stained Glass in Nuremburg around 1500

Patina, Varnish and Glazes

The conservation of stained glass in the churches of St Lorenz and St Sebald have provided opportunities to examine the painting technique of stained glass production around 1500 in detail. In addition to the extensive and skilled use of silver stain, etching techniques and iron red on monumental stained glass, there are various layers of paint that are difficult to categorize. New findings support the hypothesis that these layers represent residues of cold paint, applied on top of the classic three-layer structure of fired paint. The systematic, extensive, and highly variable use of unfired varnishes and glazes on stained glass in the late 15th and early 16th centuries in Nuremberg is illustrated with examples of windows executed in the workshops of Wolgemut and Hirsvoegel and the Strasbourg Workshop-Cooperative. On the basis of these new findings, the concepts of ‘cleaning’ stained glass surfaces must be questioned critically and these discoveries have wide-ranging implications for our understanding of the relationship between design and execution in stained glass manufacture in Nuremburg in the years around 1500.

MA in Stained Glass Conservation and Heritage Management in association with The Stained Glass Research School

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The Philip Rahz Lecture Theatre, The King’s Manor, York YO1 7EP