

The Techniques and Secrets of Beautiful Glass Painting—Shading

Design, Fabrication, and Text by David Williams and Stephen Byrne



Glass

Any light-colored glass

Reusche Glass Paint

DE401 Tracing Black mixed with Bistre Brown DE402 in a 3:1 ratio mixed with Water and Gum Arabic

Tools and Materials

Light-Colored Paint Medium-Colored Paint

Thin Wide Brush Blender Brush

Fine Tracing Brush Scrubber Brush

Pointed Wooden Stick Painting Bridge

Light Box Kiln

This is the second of a four-part series on the techniques of stained glass painting. Part one on silhouettes appeared in Fall 2008. Here in part two we show you an amazing way of shading and matting stained glass when you make this enchanting festive decoration.

Here's a lovely dove of peace that we designed and painted at our stained glass studio. People look at it and ask, "How many times did you fire it in the kiln?" They often think we're joking when we reply, "Just once!" But it's true. We painted all the shading and tracing in just one firing.

The reason this surprises people is that most books on stained glass painting tell you to fire your glass each time you add a layer of paint. So if the painted stained glass image consists of four layers of paint, for example, this traditional approach will mean you'll fire your glass four times. Indeed, most books tell you to trace the outline, then fire your glass; then shade and matt and fire your glass a second time. And if you need to trace or shade some more, you just continue painting and firing, painting and firing . . . until you've finished.

All this firing isn't great for the planet's resources; that's for sure. It's also not great for your productivity, since there's so much waiting around for the glass to fire. But on top of everything else, all of this firing is downright bad for the "vitality" of your painted image, because each layer is harshly fixed and cannot be adjusted when you come to paint the layer above it. So to enhance the vitality of your work, we are thrilled to show you a technique that will allow you to trace and shade and then fire your glass just once. Or rather we should say "shade and then trace," because we'll show how you to shade before you trace!

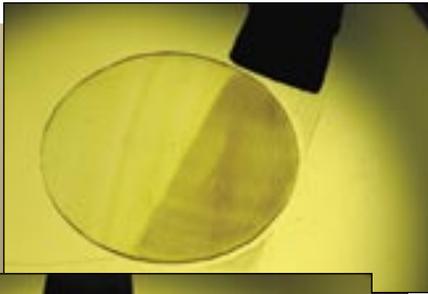
We know that most books say to trace then shade, but we are not most books. Our approach is to tell you the techniques that really work. That's why in part one we explained the importance of painting an undercoat. And that's why, here in part two, you'll discover how to shade before you trace.

As you'll see, there are ten stages to painting this festive star. We'll show you each stage in turn.

Preparing the Glass

Let's begin by cutting the glass to size and grozing its edges. This is so you can handle the glass safely. It also stops the sharp edges from ruining your brush. Then clean your glass.

1



Paint a light-colored undercoat onto the glass.



Prime the whole surface of the glass with an undercoat of light-colored paint. To apply the undercoat, take a thin, wide brush; load it with light paint; and paint light, broad stripes over the whole surface of the glass. As needed, while the paint is wet, take your blender and smooth the stripes away. Then let the paint dry. This is a technique we revealed in part one of this series, which you can find on the *GPQ* website under "Patterns." Also watch our Facebook demonstration. There's a link at www.beautifulglasspainting.com. And remember, it's best to paint with a lump of glass paint, not a teaspoonful. Our e-book tells you why and how to do this.

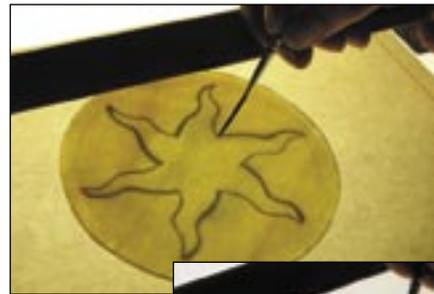
Place the glass on top of the design and prepare some medium-colored paint (a little darker than you used to paint the undercoat).

Painting the Design

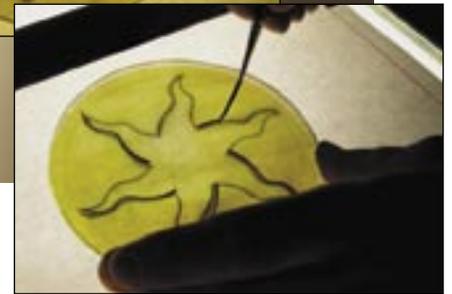
2



Take a fine tracing brush and load it with paint.



3



Make a careful trace of the main lines.

Remember to move the glass and design so that you can paint each stroke comfortably.

4



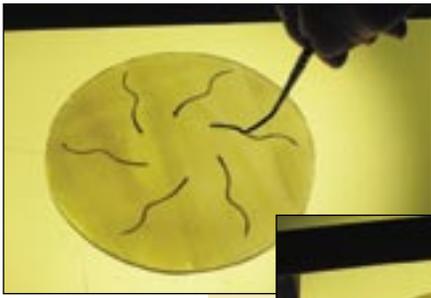
Each time you load your brush, test it on the light box first.

If the paint comes out right on the light box, it'll come out right on the glass.

5

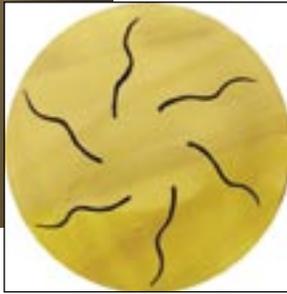
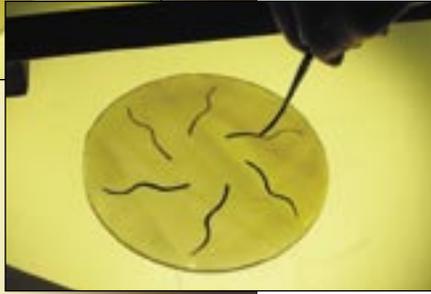


When you've finished tracing these lines, let the paint dry.



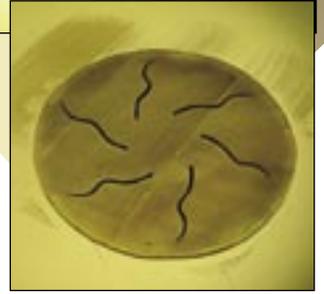
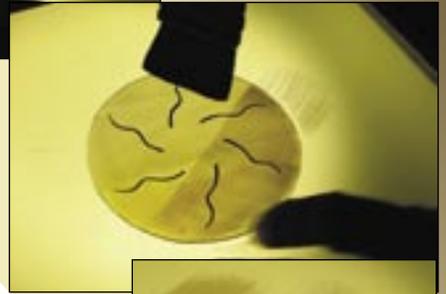
6

Strengthen the main lines.



8

Turn the traced lines into shadows.



Put the design on one side where you can see it. Use the same fine brush as before. Prepare some glass paint that is the same color as before. Load the brush. Paint over the lines again to strengthen them. Paint over them as exactly as you can. Let the paint dry.

Paint light, broad stripes over the whole surface of the glass.

Take a thin, wide brush and load it with light-colored paint.

7



While this top coat of paint is wet, take your blender and blend together the traced lines and the top coat.

9



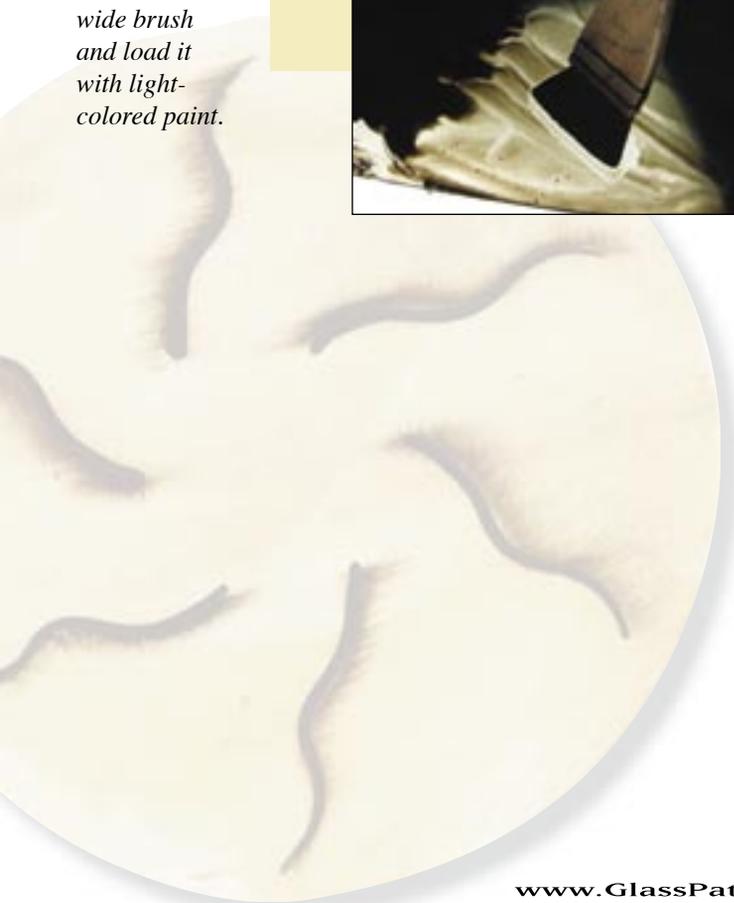
10

Stop blending before the paint begins to dry.



11

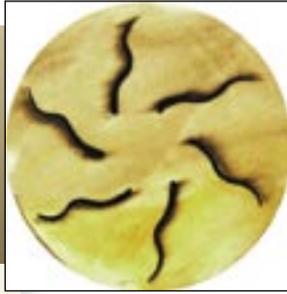
Reinstate the traced lines.



Place the glass on top of the design again. Take a fine tracing brush and load it with medium-colored paint. Paint lines just to the inside of the shadows you created in the previous step so you won't lose the shadows by tracing directly on top of them.

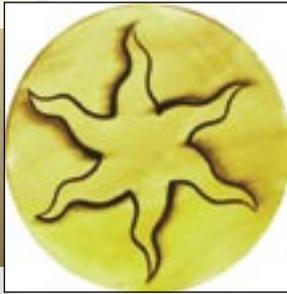
Let the paint dry.

12



Trace more lines.

13

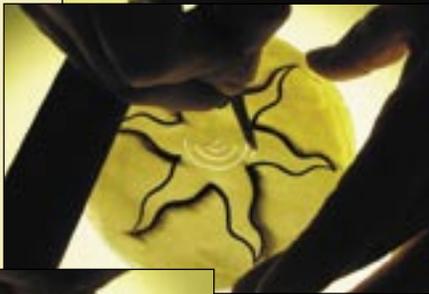
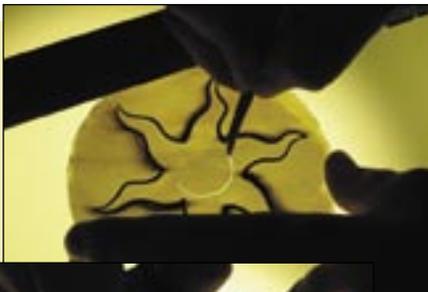


Again with your glass on top of the design, now use your fine tracing brush to trace the remaining lines.

Finishing Touches

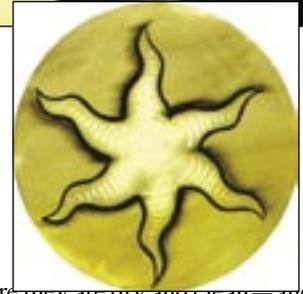
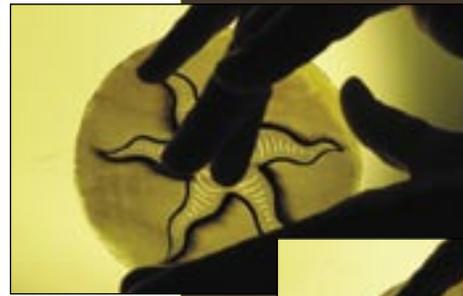
14

Use a wooden stick to pick out highlights.



15

Soften the highlights.



Use your fingers—making sure they are dry and clean—and gently rub the highlights so you blend them with the initial undercoat. Clean your hands thoroughly.

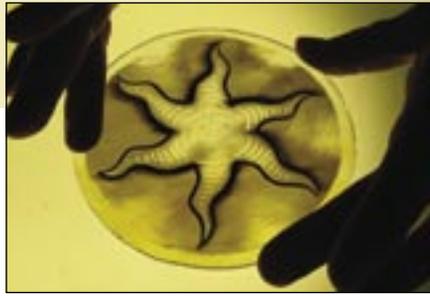
16

Use a scrubber brush to make a border.



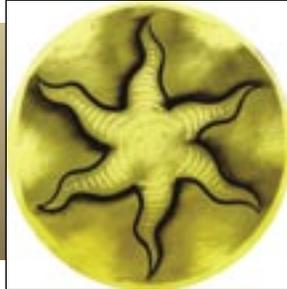
17

Use your fingers to soften the undercoat around the outside of the star.



18

Fire the star.



The star is ready to fire. Ramp to the top temperature 1250°F at 500°F per hour and hold for 3 minutes or as the paint manufacturer recommends. Then descend and anneal the glass as needed.

This is a wonderful technique. And it's how we painted the stained glass dove—undercoat, shading, tracing, and then high-lighting—all in just one firing.

Isn't it interesting how you can paint lines that, to all intents and purposes, can be described as "trace lines," and then—here's the marvelous tip—transform them into shadows on which you then trace further details? Just imagine how useful this is. Yes, it takes a bit of practice to master the process, but it's one of those techniques that can transform the way you paint on glass.

Please send any questions to studio@williamsandbyrne.com and we'll post as many answers as we can on our notice board at www.beautifulglasspainting.com.

GPO

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You'll find this and many other great projects in the Winter 2008 issue of *Glass Patterns Quarterly*.

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Tips for Successful Tracing

- Practice steps 1–5 on your light box several times before you do it for real.
- Do not make the traced lines too dark and thick. Otherwise they will be impossible to soften and blend.
- Do not make the top coat too dark or you'll lose the contrast with the lines and shadows.
- When you blend the top coat with the lines, wait a moment for the top coat to soak into the paint beneath and then blend vigorously and quickly to begin with. As the top coat starts to dry, blend more slowly and gently.
- Stop blending before the top coat dries.
- Remember that things may look untidy for the moment (look at the star in the photo for step 10, for example), but just wait and see what happens next.
- Watch our Facebook demonstration.



David Williams, director of Williams & Byrne, attended art school as a young boy and then went on to study Fine Arts at the university. This was followed by an eight-year apprenticeship in stained glass painting with Patrick Reyntiens. Next came fifteen years as chief designer and studio manager at the John Hardman Studio in Birmingham, England—the same studio that Stephen Byrne joined some ten years later. Here they worked together on many projects including eight windows for the Houses of Parliament and a ten-door stained glass walk-in wardrobe for a pop star.

David and Stephen established Williams & Byrne in 2004. Specializing in custom-made designs and handpainted stained glass, they now work for private clients the world over. David and Stephen are the authors of *Glass Painting Techniques* and *Secrets from an English Stained Glass Studio*, which you can download from www.beautifulglasspainting.com.

