

The Easel

A Quarterly Newsletter of the Lochac Guild of Painters and Limners



St Luke, egg tempera and gold leaf on panel
Copy of a painting by Simone Martini c1330,
painted by Antonia di Lorenzo

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The Easel is back!

After a long rest the newsletter is up and running again with a new editor.

I'm hoping that the next year will see a renaissance of the Guild of Painters and Limners, and a much higher profile for the Guild in Lochac.

The newsletter format won't change much and will still feature artwork and short articles by members, book/ video/ website reviews, guild news and member news & bios so that members of the guild can get to know each other better.

We are a small guild, with less than 30 members on the email list, and at present no patron or guildmaster. I am sure there are more Lochac artists out there who would like to share their knowledge and news - please spread the word about joining the Guild.

Antonia di Lorenzo
Barony of Stormhold
Editor

About the Guild

The primary aim of The Painters' and Limners' Guild is to advance the study and practice of the medieval painter's art prior to 1600AD. The Guild shall endeavor to encourage all who are interested in the painter's art.

The secondary aim of the Guild is to recreate a medieval or renaissance guild of painters, and the Guild encourages research and activities towards this end.

It should be noted that Illumination and Calligraphy remains under the aegis of the Lochac College of Scribes and Illuminators.

Guild Master: vacant

Patron: vacant

**Web Minister/List Keeper - La Signora Onorata (THL) Katerina da Brescia:
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Raising our profile

In the last quarter I've been trying to find out what painting activities are going on in the Kingdom and how we might encourage more activity.

From talking to people over the last few months at events it seems to me that one obstacle to getting more members is the perception that the guild is just about fine art painting. Many people don't think they are "artistic" enough to join the guild despite being excellent painters of silk banners, shields, furniture etc.

The current King and Queen are very keen to see more heraldic display at events, and this presents a fine opportunity to encourage more painters by working on group projects at local level making banners, wall hangings, floor cloths, painted shields, thrones and arms chests.

There are also a number of opportunities at upcoming Kingdom A&S competitions for potential guild members to showcase their talents. Here are some suggestions...

Twelfth Night 2010: silk painting
painted banner or wall hanging

May Crown 2010: an item of clothing or armour from a portrait /illumination/ woodcut
painted shield, fabric surcoat, caparison for horse (as seen in the Luttrell Psalter)

Midwinter 2010: carving
*woodblock print
carved and painted statuary, furniture, toys*

November Crown 2010: glass
*painted glass goblets and plates
gilded glass*

Twelfth Night 2011: bestiary
an illumination project, but at least you'll be keeping your hand in.

May Crown 2011: item used on a hunt
*painted and gilded leather hawk's hood
decorated leather dog armour (as seen in the Devonshire Hunting Tapestries)*

also: Tudor or Elizabethan jewellery
*limned portrait medallion
enamelling*

Midwinter 2011: jousting equipment
*painted shields, banners, surcoats, caparisons,
helmet crests*



Luttrell Psalter

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What we need from members

- short articles for the newsletter
- pictures of your work
- member news and bios

The guild is in need of a badge or token for members to wear. This topic has been tossed around for some years but nothing much has happened - there is currently a discussion forum on the email list. Once we've decided on a badge, any volunteers to do the casting? It's not a huge job with our current membership.

We are also in desperate need of a new Patron and a Guildmaster if we are to remain a guild. According to the current Guild Ordinances, the Patron should be a royal peer who is prepared to promote the guild and its activities, judge rankings within the guild, and donate prizes for competitions.

The Guildmaster need not be a peer, but at the very least should have submitted enough work to meet the ranking of a master in the guild, if not a Laurel. This might be a little tricky as I don't know if anyone has been formally ranked yet.

If you would like to recommend yourself or someone else for either position please do so by email to the group mailing list.

Short article: Gilding on Glass

Unfired gilding on glass is commonly used in modern times for signwriting and decoration of

mirrors, however the technique dates back to the 2nd or 3rd century BC. Hellenistic sandwich gold-glass vessels consisted of two pieces of glassware carefully ground to fit one in the other, with a pattern of gold leaf laminated between them.

In the 4th century AD the Romans revived the technique to produce medallions with portraits, mythological scenes, and Jewish and Christian motifs which were set in the bottom of bowls and other vessels. The Christian medallions are mostly found in burials, the rest of the glass having been broken off to leave just the decorated portion. The technique was not used again for vessels until *zwischen goldglas* in the 18th century.

In the Middle Ages the technique was used for small flat panels which decorated reliquaries and the frames of panel paintings and altarpieces. The gilding is done on the back of carefully cleaned glass. A sheet of gold leaf is attached using egg glair, gelatine solution or gold size. Working over a black cloth, the design is etched in reverse using a fine needle mounted in a handle. Larger areas of gold can be scraped away with a small stylus. A contrasting layer of black oil paint can then be applied, or a design in coloured oils. After allowing to dry thoroughly the glass is turned right side up. A second sheet of glass behind will protect the image.

References:

Klein et al *The History of Glass* Little, Brown & Company 1992

Cennini, C *Il Libro dell'Arte* 15th century

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Wing of a reliquary diptych by Tommaso de Modena, 14th C
tempera and gold leaf on panel
with insets of marble, ceramic and
reverse gilded glass

Gold glass medallion
4th C Rome



Baptism of Christ
Reverse gilded glass
(Antonia di Lorenzo)

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Book and website review

Thompson, Daniel V
The Craftsman's Handbook
(a translation of Cennino Cennini's *Il Libro dell'Arte*) Dover Publications 1933

Thompson, Daniel V
The Practice of Tempera Painting
Dover Publications 1936

Daniel Thompson's is the definitive translation of Cennini's 14th/15th century work on techniques and materials used by artists of the day. It covers drawing in plummet and silverpoint; preparing and tinting paper; preparation of gesso and pigments; painting in fresco and egg tempera; and gilding. As well as being a reference for your documentation it is a genuine handbook that you can use to reproduce medieval techniques.

Daniel Thompson spent a lifetime studying the techniques of painting in tempera, and the second book is the distillation of his experience. It takes *The Craftsman's Handbook* one step further and explains in detail how to actually execute the techniques.

A translation of Cennini's book is also available online at
<http://www.noteaccess.com/Texts/Cennini/>

Both books are available to buy at an excellent online bookshop, The Book Depository. Their prices are reasonable, delivery is free, and the books arrive quite quickly. Buy now while the exchange rate is good!
<http://www.bookdepository.co.uk/>

Member bio - St Luke

For this issue of the newsletter, rather than the customary member biography we'll focus on our patron saint, St Luke.

St Luke is the patron saint of artists, physicians and surgeons, butchers and brewers.

The Feast Day of St Luke is 18 October.

It is believed that Luke was born in Antioch in Syria, of Greek descent. He was a physician, and became a disciple of the apostle Paul, accompanying him on his mission from about the year 51, and is believed to be the author of the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. His relics lie in Padua cathedral, having been brought there in the 12th century.

There is also a tradition that he was the first iconographer, and painted portraits of the Virgin Mary and Jesus, which has led to him becoming the patron saint of painters and artists. The guilds of St Luke in the cities of Flanders, and the Accademia di San Luca in Rome, and other similar confraternities formed to protect the interests of painters in the Middle Ages.

His emblem is a winged ox, which has led to him becoming the patron saint of butchers. He is also the patron saint of brewers (for reasons unclear).

He is usually depicted with a winged ox, either writing the gospel or painting a portrait of the Virgin and Child.