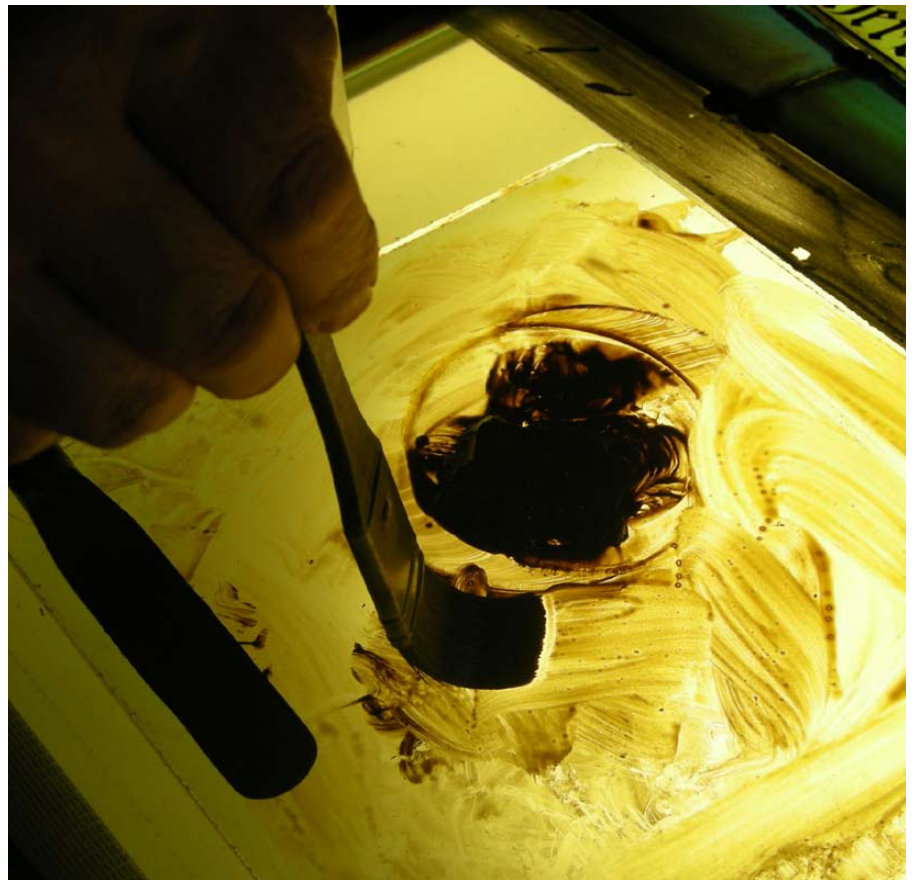




WILLIAMS & BYRNE

# Glass Painting Techniques & Secrets from an English Stained Glass Studio by David Williams & Stephen Byrne

## Stained Glass Painting - Don't Make These 7 Big Mistakes!





Start with a lump of well-mixed glass paint (not a teaspoonful)

## Don't Make these 7 Big Mistakes ...

### Mistake #1 - Starting with a *teaspoonful* of paint

**T**he worst thing you can do when starting out is work with just a *teaspoonful* of glass paint mixed with water.

One minute it's wet – probably too wet! – and the next minute it's dried up again.

How is anyone supposed to paint stained glass like that?

The answer is to mix a *lump* of paint.

This lump is like a *concentrate* of paint, because of course the lump itself is far too thick to use.

But ... it dries out very slowly.

So the trick is to start by preparing yourself lump, then you just use your palette knife to cut off *slices* as and when you need them, adding extra water to these slices to dilute them to whatever consistency and colour you want.

Yes, it takes a leap of faith and courage to say, "Never mind one tiny teaspoonful – this time I'm starting out with 8!"

But just try it: a lump of paint really will dry out far more slowly than a teaspoonful.

AND REMEMBER, YOU JUST CUT OFF A SLICE OR TWO AT A TIME, AND WORK WITH THAT ... THEN WHEN THAT'S ALL USED UP, JUST CUT SOME MORE AND CARRY ON

Does this strategy work?

Here's what Jerry Quinn (Virginia, US) wrote to say:

*"I hope you'll feel wonderfully vindicated when I say I really like painting from a lump of paint much better than using a runny pool whose consistency is impossible to judge."*

### Mistake #2 - Working from a tiny palette

**P**eople often think the palette doesn't matter very much ... as if any old scrap of glass will do.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

And the reason is, a *brush* is *not* a magic wand. It doesn't and cannot change your paint. It's *simply* a tool for carrying paint from

one surface to another, and for letting it go in a particular way.

Now, since *nothing happens inside your brush*, it follows that your palette itself is absolutely crucial, because the paint on your palette will become the paint on your glass.

So you need enough space to mix your paint and *care for it* as it requires. And you cannot do this on a tiny palette. A good size for a palette is the size of this sheet of paper (if possible, made from toughened glass, sandblasted on one side plus with bevelled edges to prevent accidents with fingers and damage to your brushes).

### Mistake #3 - Uncovered paint

**W**hen you were painting with a *teaspoonful* of paint, it probably dried up so fast you didn't even have the time to keep it covered up.

Now you've got a lump, *everything is different*.

Keep the lump covered when it's not in use and you'll protect it from airborne dust and grease. The reason is, you don't want this dust and grease contaminating your paint because dust and grease are a *big cause* of failed painting.

Also, covered up, your lump will keep its moisture even longer, remaining in peak condition for when you want to slice off another piece or two. A porcelain kitchen ramekin will do the trick.

### Mistake #4 - Doing things on the cheap

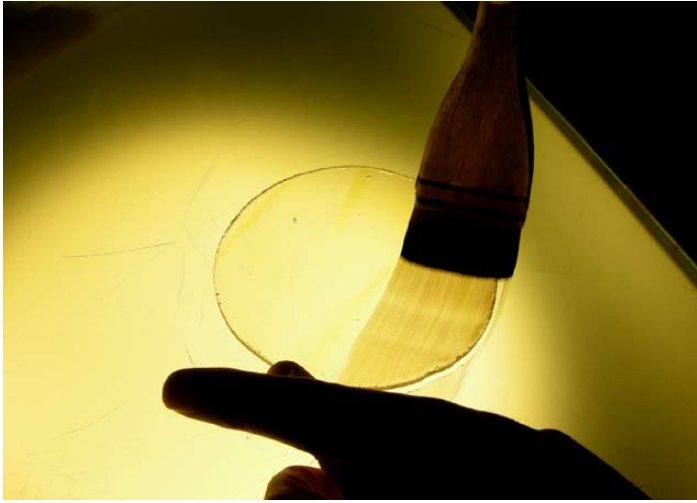
**I**t's enough to make one cry. Well-fired painted glass can easily last a *lifetime* or more, yet time and again people try to do things on the *cheap* ... with disastrous results (even though family and friends may smile politely and say nothing).

Cheap brushes, cheap paint, the wrong kiln (because it was going cheap), refusing to buy the best information – such a waste of time and money! The brushes lose their hair, the paint doesn't work, the kiln over-bakes the glass, and the free advice is only free because it's worthless.

When you believe in yourself enough to invest in the best of whatever you can afford, your glass painting will benefit. It's always best to save up for the best rather than rushing to throw money away on *anything* you can afford.



Always use a good-sized palette



*It's often best to apply an undercoat before you trace and shade*

### Mistake #5 - Tracing on *bare* glass

**I**t's such a silly mistake to make but nearly everyone does it. After all, all the books *tell* you to do it:

“Clean your glass,” they say; “place your glass on top of the design,” they say; “then trace your glass,” (they say).

What simple-minded inexperience idiocy, *we* say.

Consider what happens when you decorate a room.

Yes, you clean the surface of the walls, we all agree on that.

But do you immediately paint your chosen colour?

Not a bit of it!

First, you paint an *undercoat* to prime and prepare the surface of the wall.

Just so with *glass*.

Not always, mind; but it's nearly always easier when you do.

You cover the whole surface of the glass with a light dry wash of glass paint, then, while the paint is still wet, you use your blender to smooth out any wrinkles.

Let this dry, and in a few moments you'll have a lovely receptive surface on which to trace and shade.

### Mistake #6 - Trace and fire, then shade and fire

**A**gain this is such a big mistake if it's all you ever do. But from what you read in the books and from what other glass painters tell you, you might imagine it's *impossible* to paint on top of unfired glass paint. The myth is, if you paint on top of unfired glass paint, your paint will blister in the kiln.

Which is such bad science!

Blistering's real causes are:

1. Too much gum Arabic,
2. Not waiting for your paint to dry before going over it, and
3. Badly mixed paint on your palette.

You see, it's perfectly possible to paint as many as five layers on the front *and* two on the back, and then do a *single* firing which finishes your work completely.

It's not that this is the “only way”.

It's just it's so useful, beautiful and quick.

But people always think, “Trace and fire, and shade and fire”.

Which means you have to wait so long to get things done.

So just remember that another way *is* possible – all your tracing and shading and highlighting, front and back, in just *one* firing.

### Mistake #7 - Tracing first, then shading

Here's another “bombshell” of an idea: now you know it's possible to paint on top of *unfired* paint, you can also believe us when we say it's possible to trace ... and then ... to *turn* these traced lines into *subtle, gorgeous shadows*. Once you've done that, you simply reinstate the original dark lines and *voila!* And in this sense you shade *before* you trace. In this way you'll accomplish glass painting with such subtlety and life – all in just one firing.

The sequence goes like this:

1. Undercoat;
2. Fine light tracing with your glass on top of the design;
3. Strengthened tracing with the design on one side where you can see it;
4. An undercoat again, only this time of course it's technically an “overcoat”, and, while all the paint is still wet, take your blender and *blur* your traced lines from steps 2 and 3;
5. Reinstate your traced lines and fill in around the edges;
6. Finish off by picking out the highlights.  
Heaven!



*Undercoat, traced lines plus some half-tones then softened and blended with an “overcoat” ...*



*... then further tracing and filling in around the outside – all in just one firing!*



David Williams (left) and Stephen Byrne (right)

## You've done well to join the newsletter

**N**ow you see the kind of tips and techniques you'll learn from the e-mail newsletter. Watch out for the next one every five days or so.

Plus there'll be new posts and discussions on the website every week.

And of course there's so much more (and several hours of video demonstration) in *Glass Painting Techniques & Secrets from an English Stained Glass Studio*. Part 1 covers the classical techniques of *water-based* stained glass painting. Part 2 shows you how to paint with *oil* on top of unfired water-based paint. And Part 3 tells you *how to succeed with silver stain*.

Remember this: when you invest in *yourself* as a glass painter, we too will invest in you. That's the way we work. So be sure to spend time at <http://www.realglasspainting.com>.

All the best,

David      Stephen

P.S. If you know someone who would find this guide useful, then please e-mail or give them a copy. This is important. We share with you so that you can share with others. That way the knowledge and skills can be remembered. Thank you!

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*Glass painting techniques — we can help you*