



WILLIAMS & BYRNE

# Glass Painting Techniques & Secrets from an English Stained Glass Studio

by  
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## A trio of stained glass owls



## Little Owl

**I**n our e-book, *Glass Painting Techniques & Secrets from an English Stained Glass Studio*, you discover a method of painting many layers of stained glass paint on top of one another and then firing your glass just once.

But we've said all along that there are many different ways of doing things: there is no such thing as "the" correct way to paint stained glass.

In our studio, sometimes we soften lines (as described in Part 3), sometimes we don't.

We sometimes paint with oil on top of water-based paint, sometimes we don't.

We sometimes do all our painting in just one firing ... but *sometimes* we want to build up such depth and intensity that we paint and fire, paint and fire, paint and fire. And there's nothing wrong with that if that is what is needed by the design.

This is very different from the situation where someone uses a technique because it is the *only* technique that they know how to use!

Now, in this particular project, we fire the glass *three* times.

But *you* don't have to do the same as us.

Perhaps you'll be happy with just one firing (steps 1 to 14).

Or with two firings (steps 1 to 22).

Or with three, or even four.

That's for you to judge and decide.

## Rock 'n' Roll ...

**B**UT, in this project, we especially want to show you how sequences can be repeated and combined in different ways. And these sequences are all ones which you already know.

That's what we mean by "rock 'n' roll".

There are many different sequences. The more you know, the better. With any particular design, you consider it carefully and, from your repertoire, you choose the techniques you want to use.

Let's look at this point in detail.

When you've read through the next section, you'll probably want to look at the photographic sequence, and then return to the next section and read it once again.

## Analysis

**I**n our e-book, *Glass Painting Techniques & Secrets from an English Stained Glass Studio*, here's the typical sequence of events:

1. Paint a light-coloured undercoat.

2. Copy-trace the main lines.
3. Reinforce the main lines.
4. Soften and blend the main lines.
5. Trace minor details.
6. Shade and trace on the reverse of the glass as required.
7. Oil paint on the front of the glass.
8. Fire the glass.

In this project in front of you now, you'll assemble things *differently*, and also show you *variations* on things you've seen before.

Here's how.

You'll see that, in this project, we *don't* soften the tracing lines.

Rather, we copy-trace and strengthen the them (steps 3 and 4) – and here it is absolutely essential to use dry and sticky paint to do this detailed tracing – and then (after flooding and highlighting) we *straightaway* paint an oil-based wash and oil-based shadows (steps 8 and 9): so now it's the *oil-based* paint that we soften (steps 10 and 11).

Then, after the first firing, we soften water-based shadows which we have made with a *large* tracing brush (steps 15 to 18), whereas, in other projects, we've always softened lines that were made with a *small* or medium tracing brush.

And here take note that we *don't* even reinforce the water-based shadows: we just soften them straightaway with a wash then blend them gently.

Be comforted by this: when you soften *these* water-based shadows, there is very little to be anxious about. That is because the glass has just been fired for the first time. So, if you don't like the shadows and blending, you can just wipe them off and start again.

Also observe the following point: in the steps leading to the second firing, we *repeat* the oil-based shading exactly as we did it for the first firing. The point is that we want to build up and develop a particular impression of depth within the shadows on the glass. We want shadows on top of other shadows. But not exactly on top of one another: just more or less: this helps to create depth. And depth is just what glass needs. That's why we paint on it.

You'll also see that the highlights are picked out *several times*. We do this carefully, but it's inevitable that, when we "reinstate" a highlight – that is, when we pick it out a second and a third time – there are some small differences. And these differences are important: they make the painting *live*. They make the feathers shimmer. They make the eyes gleam.

Glass painting isn't surgery, after all.

(And we know the surgeons amongst our readers are glad about this – probably as glad as the non-surgeons are, but in a different way).

Another point you'll see is that, just before the third firing, we cover the entire surface of the glass with the lightest, thinnest wash of oil-based paint. We do this for two reasons:

1. When water-based paint is top-most, a significant amount of darkness is lost in the firing. But, by coating everything with oil – even with a *thin* wash of oil – the darkness is retained (which is what we want).

2. We (personally) like the smooth surface which is produced by this final coat of oil.

One last point: however many firings you do, you'll need to clean your glass thoroughly after each one. It's surprising how much cleaning the glass needs after it's been fired.

## Onto the dance floor

So now, look at the step-by-step photographs.

Contemplate the sequences that we have used.

And then decide what YOU want to do.

It's up to you.

After all, unlike rock 'n' roll (and surgery), you *can* paint glass on your own.

## Barn Owl and Tawny Owl

**I**n this guide you'll also find designs and summaries for the first firing of the barn owl and the tawny owl.



Flat wide brushes for the undercoat and for softening lines.



Flat wide blenders for blending and softening water-based paint.



Small round-headed blenders for blending and softening oil-based paint.



Various thin tracing brushes.



Various large tracing brushes.



Various scrubs, stipplers, sticks and needles.



Light box, paint palettes, covers, water, palette knives, water-based paint (our usual mixture of tracing black and tracing red).

Also:

- Oil-based paint;
- Paper tissue;
- Kiln;
- Controller;
- Glass.





1. Choose and cut the glass. Clean it thoroughly on both sides and around the edges.



2. Cover the whole surface of the glass with an undercoat of light-coloured paint. As needed, blend it while it is still wet.



3. When the undercoat is dry, place the glass on top of the design. Prepare some light-coloured glass paint. Copy-trace the main details. Use dry and sticky paint as we suggest. Take your time: there is no rush. Rest often. Re-mix your paint as needed. Let the paint dry.



4. Remove the design from beneath the glass. From now on, keep it on one side. Mix some medium-density glass paint. Strengthen and thicken lines as you see here. Let the paint dry.



5. Mix some paint for flooding (see Part 2): flood around the head. Let the paint dry.



6. Use sticks and needles to pick out highlights around the eyes and beak.



7. Continue picking out highlights around feathers and on top of the head.



8. As described in Part 6, prepare some oil-based glass paint, cover the entire surface of the glass with a wash of thin, light oil-based paint.



9. Prepare a medium-dark blend of oil-based paint. Use it to paint shadows like these.



10. Take a round-headed blender. Carefully and lightly blend the oil shadows into the oil tone beneath.



11. Continue blending ...



12. ... until the oil shadows are soft and placed exactly where we want them.



13. Leave the oil-based paint to dry overnight. Then use sticks and needles to reinstate the highlights. At this point, also carefully use scrubs.



14. Fire the glass for the first time: this is how it looks once fired. Clean your glass thoroughly.



15. Begin again with water-based paint. Take a large tracing brush. Paint more shadows. Let them dry.



16. Cover the entire surface of the glass with a wash of light-coloured water-based paint.



17. While the wash is still wet ...



18. ... take your blender and merge the shadows with the wash.



19. This is what the glass looks like away from the light box! But, on your light box, things appear completely different ...



20. Repeat steps 8 and 9: paint a light-coloured oil-based wash and then paint some medium-dark oil-based shadows. And then ...



21. Blend the oil-based shadows until they are smooth. Let the paint dry. Use sticks and scrubs to pick out highlights again.



22. Fire the owl a second time: this is ours now. Once fired, clean your glass thoroughly.



23. As needed, use water-based paint and repeat steps 15 - 18.



24. Away from the light box, the owl looks like this.



25. Back on the light box, use sticks, needles and scrubs to reinstate the highlights.



26. Before firing, cover the entire surface of the glass with the *thinnest, lightest* wash of oil-based paint. Fire the glass for a third time: ours came out like this. That's it.





1. Copy-trace.



2. Strengthen and thicken.



3. Flood.



4. Highlight.



5. Highlight.



6. Soften highlights.



7. Light, thin oil wash.



8. Oil shadows



9. Soften oil shadows. Leave to dry.



10. Reinststate highlights.



11. Fired glass





1. Tawny owl: copy-trace.



2. Strengthen and thicken.



3. Flood.



4. Highlight.



5. Highlight.



6. Highlight.



7. Soften highlights.



8. Light oil wash.



9. Oil shadows.



10. Blend and soften oil shadows.



11. Softened and blended.



12. Reinstate highlights and fire.

## Conclusion

**THANK** you for downloading this project. We hope you enjoy painting it.

If you have questions, please email us at [studio@realglasspainting.com](mailto:studio@realglasspainting.com). and we'll always do our best to help.

## Glass painting courses

**WE** run glass painting courses at our studio. These courses are in small groups of no more than six students. That way, with two of us to teach, you'll get truly individual attention. We prepare the designs and course-contents beforehand so that everything is tailored to your requirements. We concentrate on techniques rather than artistic expression so that you'll leave us with a thoroughly practical grounding in glass painting essentials.

For full details, see [www.williamsandbyrne.com](http://www.williamsandbyrne.com).

## Using the designs

**To** change the size of a design and its resolution, copy the design to a different application such as Adobe Photoshop or Ulead PhotoImpact and make your changes there.

To copy the design to a different application, click on the Select Tool to activate it.

Note: do not use the Snapshot Tool, because this may decrease the resolution and print-quality of the design.

Place the Select Tool over one corner of the image: the pointer changes to a cross-hair. This means that the pointer is now in image-selection mode.

Click the image and drag the box around it.

Note: to deselect an image and start again, click outside the selected image.

When you have dragged the box around the image, right-click (Windows) or Control-click (Mac OS) and choose Copy Image to Clipboard.

You can now paste the design into a different application: open the application and a new window, then right-click (Windows) or Control-click and choose Paste.

Important: also specify 300 dpi for the resolution.

## Printing

**To** get the best results on printed paper, always change your printing preferences to "Text and

Image" or to "Photo" as appropriate.

Also use the best paper that you can.

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