

A collaborative loan scheme: the Art and Christianity Enquiry Trust and the Victoria and Albert Museum

In 2005, the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) proposed a collaborative loan scheme to the [Art and Christianity Enquiry Trust](#) (ACE). The scheme was initially of six years' duration but, having proved successful, it was extended.

ACE was founded in 1991 and acquired Trust status in 1994. The organisation seeks to further the interaction of faith communities and places of worship with the visual arts. ACE has held eleven international conferences since its inception and also promotes educational projects, produces publications, and offers advice and information. The Trustees set up an award scheme in 2003 which commends achievements in religious art, architectural design and scholarship. From 2005, the scheme has been open to all faiths.

On display in the Sacred Silver and Stained Glass Galleries of the V&A are two artworks lent by ACE to the Museum for the duration of the collaborative scheme. ACE commissioned these stunning pieces from two established glass artists, Graham Jones and Colin Reid. Every other year the artworks have served as 'trophies' to accompany the monetary prizes given to the winners of the art and architectural awards. Once the winners are announced, the V&A organises the loan of the two pieces to the clients of the winning artists and architects to display in their own sacred spaces for several months. This imaginative scheme fulfils one of the Museum's strategic objectives to 'promote, develop and contribute to the UK creative economy by inspiring designers and makers, commissioning excellent design and stimulating enjoyment and appreciation of art and design...'. At the same time, ACE demonstrates in visible form its own principles of good commissioning and collaborative work between artist, patron and community.

The commissions

Ichthys Font by Colin Reid (born 1953) is the 'trophy' for the award for 'Art in a Religious Context'. Made in 2004-05 from cast and polished optical glass, the design recalls the Greek word for fish, ichthys, whose letters represent the words for 'Jesus Christ God Son Saviour'.

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The early Christians used the fish image to communicate their baptismal creed. It appears in the 1st-century catacombs in Rome and is still a potent sign of Christian faith today. It rests on a blackened oak plinth by Jim Partridge (born 1953).

Sister Moon...Mother Earth by Graham Jones (born 1958) is the 'trophy' for the 'Religious Architecture' award and was made in 2005. This panel is made of hand-blown flashed glass, and has been decorated with acid-etching, enamelling and silver stain. Inspired by St. Francis of Assisi's 'Canticle of the Sun', written in 1225, it reflects the influence of the Moon in maintaining the Earth's stability, tides and seasons and, indeed, the evolution of all life. Two panels are displayed at the V&A while a third is lent out in its own purpose-made travelling frame, designed by John Ronayne.



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The commissioned artworks as 'trophies'

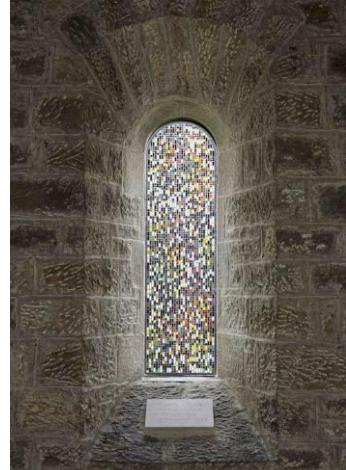
Past winners of the ACE Award for 'Art in a Religious Context' and their clients who have displayed *Ichthys Font* as their 'trophy' have been:

2011-12 St John's Church, Healey, Northumberland

For *Contrary Rhythm* and *Untitled*, stained glass windows by James Hugonin and Anne Vibeke Mou



Untitled stained glass window by Anne Vibeke Mou
©John McKenzie



Contrary Rhythm, stained glass window by James Hugonin
©John McKenzie

2009-10 Liverpool Cathedral
For Tracey Emin's *For You*



©Barry Hale

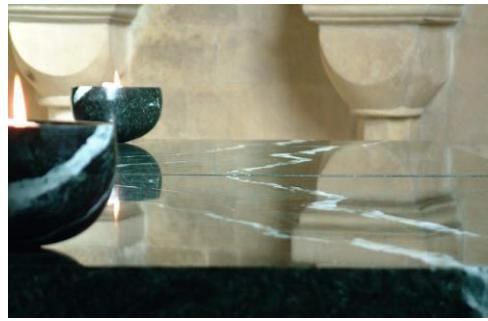
2007-08

Canterbury Cathedral for *St. Anselm's Altar* by Stephen Cox and
St Paul's Bow Common for *Angel* by Rose Finn-Kelcey

This was a shared award so *Ichthys Font* was displayed first at St. Paul's Bow Common and then at Canterbury Cathedral.

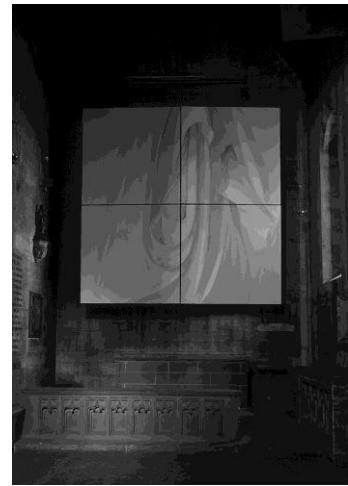


Angel by Rose Finn-Kelcey
©Duncan Ross



St. Anselm's Altar by Stephen Cox
©Canterbury Cathedral

2005-06 Old St Paul's Church, Edinburgh
For *Still* by Alison Watt
The *Ichthys Font* was displayed at the City Art Centre, Edinburgh



©Hylda Kosaniuk Innes

Past winners of the ACE/RIBA award for 'Religious Architecture' and their clients who have displayed *Sister Moon...Mother Earth* as their 'trophy' have been:

2011-12 St Peter's Church, Peterchurch,
Herefordshire
For works by Communion Design



©Infinity Unlimited

2009-10 New Salvation Army Chelmsford Corps
Building, Chelmsford, Essex.
New building by Hudson Architects



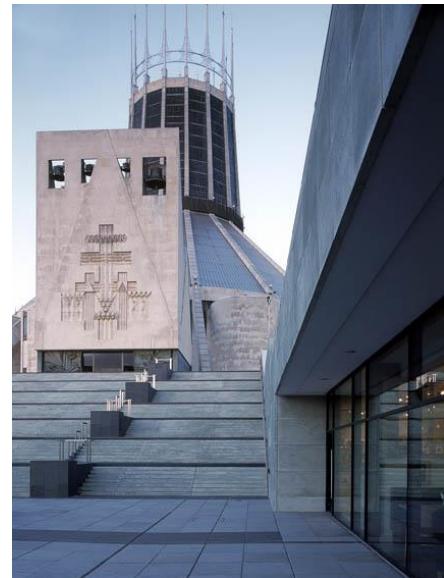
©Keith Collie Photography

2007-08 St. Bede's Roman Catholic Church,
Basingstoke, Hampshire
New building by JBKS Architects with Robert
Maguire



© @charlotte wood photography

2005-06 Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King,
Liverpool
For exterior works by Falconer Chester Architects (with
Landscape Projects)



©Shaw+Shaw

Future plans

Colin Reid's *Ichthys Font* was lent to [The Wilson, Cheltenham's Art Gallery and Museum](#) for the retrospective exhibition of Reid's work, *Casting Brilliance: Colin Reid Glass* between 5 October 2013 and 5 January 2014.

Forty of the delegates who attended the ACE Trust's summer conference in 2014 visited the V&A's Sacred Silver and Stained Glass Galleries to participate in an introductory tour of the galleries in which the ACE artworks are sited. The tour was led by two members of the Department of Sculpture, Metalwork, Ceramics and Glass, who looked at the past and present significance of historic and contemporary work in silver and stained glass to places of worship and their local communities.

The next ACE awards are due to be announced in November 2015.