

38. Facts about Glass: Sanguine and Carnation

In the late 15th or early 16th century an iron-based glass paint was developed called sanguine or carnation (sometimes also referred to as Jean Cousin Rouge). This pigment created shades of pink to red-brown on firing, and was mainly used for highlighting and reddening areas of the glass, such as lips, cheeks and for creating flesh tones on limbs.

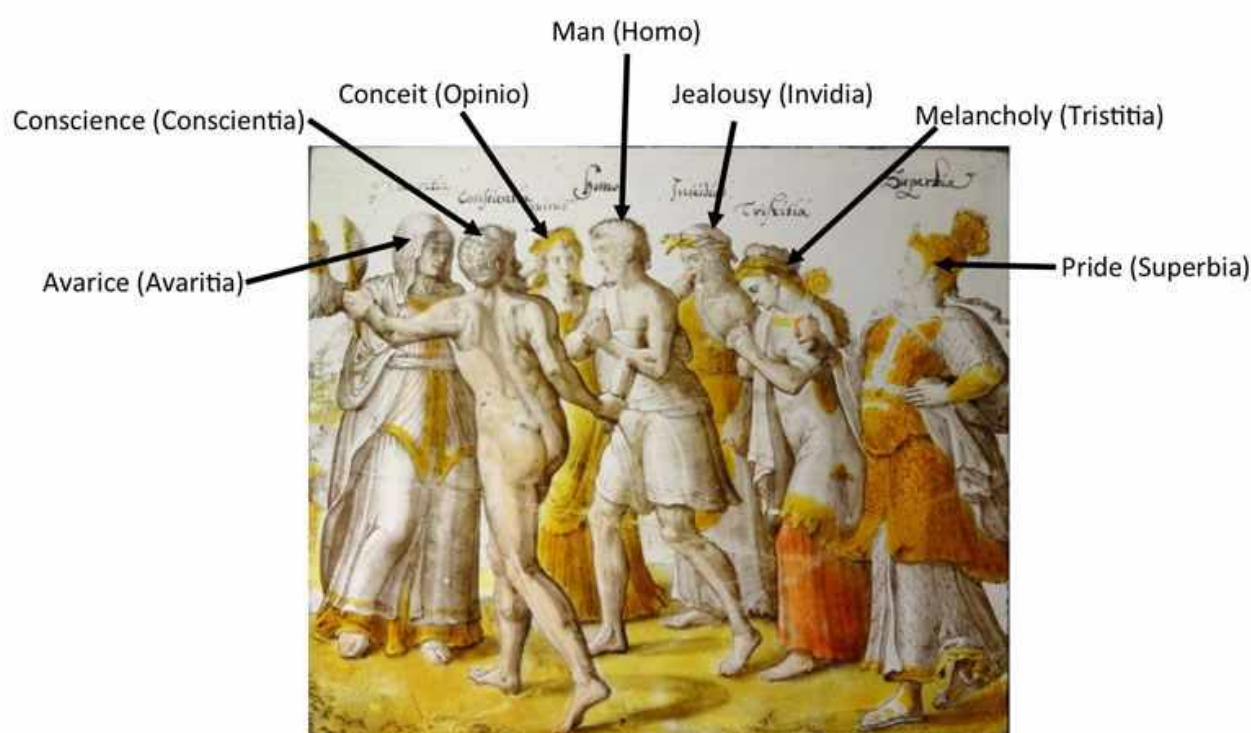
The term sanguine is often used to describe a redder colour for highlighting cheeks and lips, while the term carnation is used to describe a lighter more subtle pink ideal for colouring the body. These pigments were in use until the 18th century, but during the 19th century they were replaced by a similar colour of enamel. [<http://webh01.ua.ac.be/mitac4/jaas1997a.pdf>].



ALLEGORICAL SCENE – FLEMISH 16TH CENTURY

The composition of both sanguine and carnation was very complex, and the recipes varied greatly. They are based around crushed hematite (a mineral form of iron oxide, also contained in blood). This is diluted in a little water, producing a red colour when crushed very finely, and brown if used in larger grains. "A historical and chemical study about glass painting 'Rouge Jean Cousin' (Jean Cousin Red)", by O. Schalm, K. Janssens, F. Adams, J. Albert, K. Peeters and J. Caen, concluded that "the aim of the recipes was to separate the biggest pigment grains from the smaller ones, since only grains with a diameter of about 0.01 μm [micrometers] give the painting powder the red tint."

[<http://www.bcin.ca/Interface/openbcin.cgi?submit=submit&Chinkey=170630>].



ALLEGORICAL SCENE – TITLES

There are some beautiful small silver stained panels that use sanguine and carnation on display at the Burrell Collection. Perhaps the best of these is the Flemish example below of an Allegorical Scene, dating to the 16th century. It shows 'Conscience' guiding a man past the vices of Avarice, Conceit, Jealousy, Melancholy and Pride.

In the centre, a bearded half-naked man walks clasping his hands in contrition (Homo); he gazes earnestly at another bearded naked man holding a chopper in

one hand and a birch in the other (Conscientia) and he is followed by a young woman with clasped hands and bowed head (Tristitia); facing the man from the other side are an elderly fully draped woman (Avaritia), a young woman with wild expression and hand raised to her head (Opinio), and a woman biting a heart (Invidia); a large matron, wearing a peacock plumed helmet, with puffed chest and arms akimbo, follows on the right (Superbia).*

* *The description of this object is from the catalogue, "Stained and Painted Glass – Burrell Collection" 1965.*

The lower skirt of Tristitia is painted with sanguine to give it a redder colour, and the body of Conscientia is painted with carnation to give a good flesh tone, and it was used to paint the pattern on Suberbia's cothing. Carnation was used to create the flesh colour, particularly noticeable on the figure of Conscientia.

Another lovely example on display is "A Virtue: Charity", in which carnation has been used to delicately give a flesh tone to the face, arms, and legs of the figure of Charity (below).

The detail below shows the area with carnation stain and the delicate little hatching used to create extra variation in tone and three dimensional effect.

In art, Charity is often expressed as the love of God. Here, Charity holds a cross in one hand and a flaming heart in the other which depicts the love of God.

VIRTUE: A CHARITY
ON THE RIGHT WITH DETAIL BELOW

