

51. Boppard Abroad – at the Schnuetgen Museum, Koeln

In 2010 the Schnuetgen Museum was moved to a new building, shown on the right, that it now shares with the world cultures Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum. The complex is also referred to as the “Kulturquartier am Neumarkt”.

The whole lower half of the 10 Commandments Window from Boppard is on display here, beautifully lit and easily accessible for a curious conservator.



This window was acquired from the Spitzer Collection in 1893 by the collector Caspar Bourgeois from Cologne. His collection was auctioned in 1897 and the window was then bought by the Kunstgewerbe Museum in Cologne and in 1932 amalgamated into the Schnuetgen collection.

The Burrell and the Schnuetgen panels were separated in 1893 – so every restoration they have in common must have been added earlier than that date. It is very interesting to see how much they have in common.



For instance the windows in both collections have been retouched with a cold (unfired) grey paint which can often be found on edges of the lead as well – we assume this work was carried out by the Royal Institute for Glass Painting in Berlin in 1871.

When you look at the back of some of the Schnuetgen panels you can see at the very top that the tracery is leaded into a black quarry background.

This was done to square the panels off and make them easier to frame. The quarries were then painted black – with a water-based paint which was also -rather carelessly – applied over the lead. The interesting thing about this is that we have the same intervention at the Burrell!



So this means that the quarries were added either in the Berlin workshop, or while the glass was in the care of the collector Friedrich Spitzer.

I tend to think that the Royal Institute of Glass Painting in Berlin would have had slightly higher standards – even if it was only to black out the gaps in a square frame. So here is another alluring reason to explore Friedrich Spitzer and to find out more where – and how – the glass was displayed while it was in his care for 18 years.

Marie.