

Larry Zgoda

Genuine and Permanent Beauty in the Built Environment

Larry Zgoda began working in stained glass in the mid-'70s. He began in the craft repairing windows in an antique store in Chicago; now, more than 30 years later, he is creating high-end installations primarily for residences in Chicago and the surrounding cities. While Zgoda said that he does undertake one or two liturgical, public arts, or corporation installations, he commented that it is the renaissance Chicago is experiencing in ornamental residential architecture that provides opportunity for stained glass coupled with the area's tremendous expansion in

residential building that has created the opportunity to introduce stained glass into upscale homes.

Zgoda sees the function of stained glass as primarily ornamental. He designs windows that augment the architecture and are in sympathy with the building. While the works are primarily ornamental, though, they are not solely ornamental; Zgoda commented that his works also have their own statement.

"They can have a fine art aspect," he said. "It can elevate the architecture to what it would not be without stained

glass. It can read in sympathy with the architecture and still add something too, with the light and color.

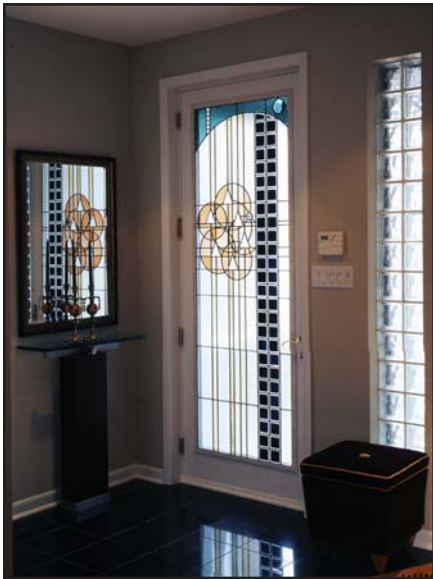
"The role of color changes," Zgoda observed, commenting on his love of intense color. "Orange is a problem color; it is always interesting to find colors that blend and work in union with other colors. Color is an intuitive thing... I'm not even sure we understand how we create with color any more than we understand where symphonies come from."

Larry Zgoda's goal in stained glass is to create a beautiful environment. In a recent project, he created a transom for a townhouse that has some of the qualities of the older Chicago townhouses. The installation was such that in the evening light, the interior of the room could be completely lit with the stained glass. The project uses colored crystal pieces, triangles in golden amber, square multi-faceted pieces with gold ruby and other glasses to create a palette of colors in the interior.

"The glass must be sympathetic to the environment," Zgoda stresses. "You can bathe the environment with light and create a connection with nature." The more sympathetic the glass is to the environment, the more successful this connection will be.

Zgoda aims to create genuine and permanent beauty in the built environment. He does this by designing and installing stained glass that works in conjunction with the architecture in creating a connection to nature; this way, his installations are not tied to fashion trends that will change in a few short years. "For things like architecture, it is silly to match trendy today with what will look very dated in ten years. You should have beauty today and fifty years from now, and a hundred years after that.





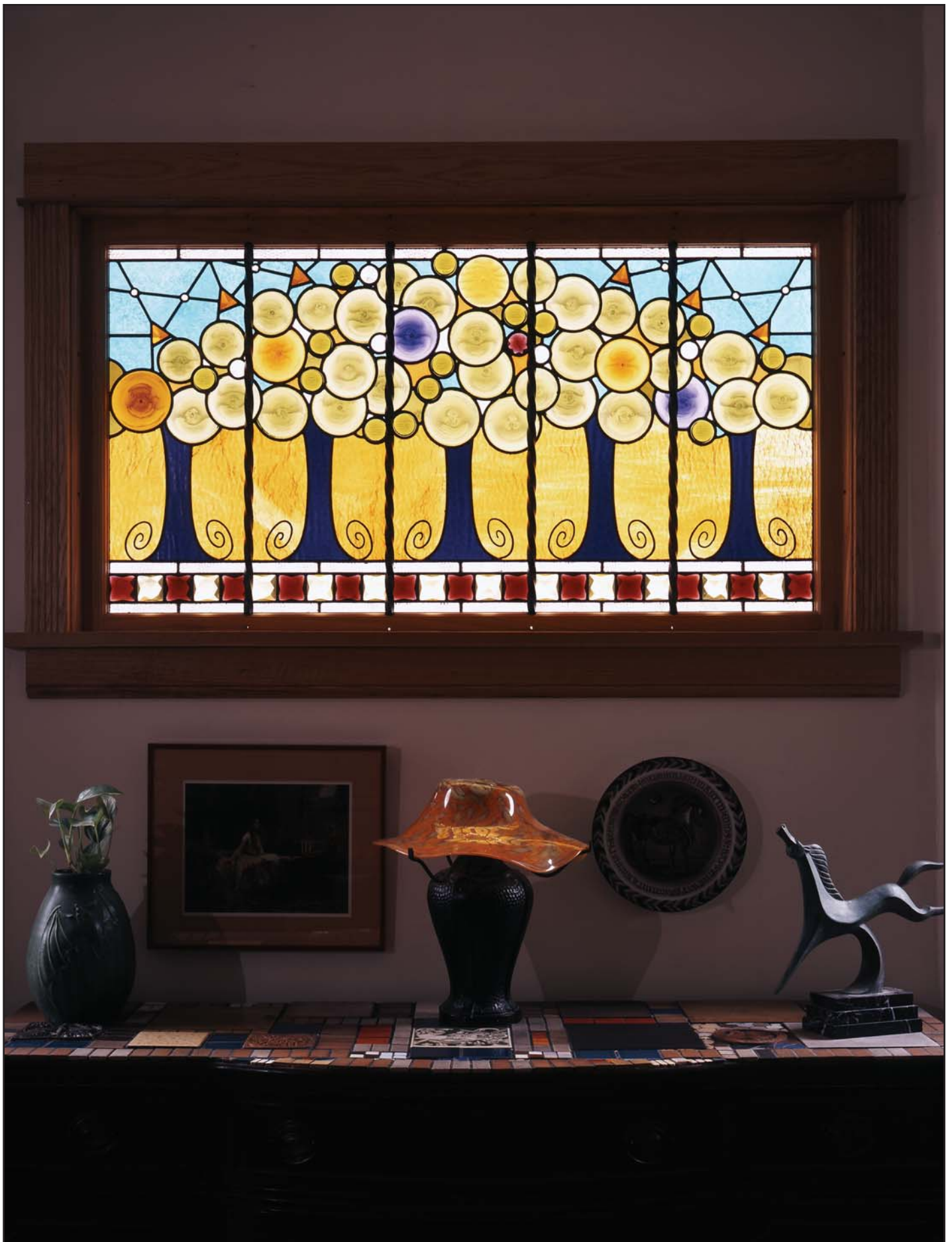
*Opposite page: Interior Entry,
Logan Square Branch of the Chicago
Public Library, 1990.
Photo by Christopher Kean*

*Above top: Winter Moon, 2005,
Photo by Richard Bruck.*

*Above: Residential Door, 1998 ,
Photo by Richard Bruck*

*Right Top: Interior Sidelight,
1989, Photo by Christopher Kean*

*Right: Wall of Glass, TCF Towers,
Minneapolis, MN, 1996.
Photo by Steve Schneider*





Opposite page: Sacred Grove, 2002. Photo by Richard Bruck

Above: Forest, Interior Light, 2004. Photo by Richard Bruck

Top right: Sailing, faux window, 1983. This installation was originally built as a freestanding autonomous screen; it was later purchased and installed with artificial light to create a window in a space with few windows. Photograph by Christopher Kean.

Bottom right: Boquet, 2004. Photograph by Richard Bruck

“Some great old buildings are genuinely beautiful and not dated. Things that have real beauty are saved. It might be repurposed, but the thing itself is beautiful. The things we make today should have that quality, then they will be saved in the future.”

