



THE STAINED GLASS MUSEUM

Press Release

SPITFIRES

NEW ACQUISITION FEATURING THE ICONIC AIRCRAFT ASSOCIATED WITH THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN GOES ON DISPLAY AT THE STAINED GLASS MUSEUM

The Stained Glass Museum is delighted to announce the recent acquisition of *Spitfires* (2017), an autonomous stained glass panel by leading British artist Brian Clarke (b. 1953). The printed and hand-painted artwork has been generously gifted to the museum by the artist to mark the Museum's 40th birthday, celebrated earlier this year. The panel has been placed on display in the entrance to the Stained Glass Museum in time for annual commemorations marking the Battle of Britain on 15 September.

The Spitfire is the most iconic and recognisable British aircraft associated with World War II. Its superior speed and agility gave the RAF a critical edge over the Luftwaffe during a number of crucial battles, including the Battle of Britain.

For innovative artist Brian Clarke the distinctive form of the Spitfire has provided the inspiration for a number of artworks on paper, canvas and in architectural and autonomous glass works since 2010, treating the shape as a heraldic emblem like the medieval fleur-de-lis. *Spitfires* is one of a series of seventy unique panels made by Clarke – the first autonomous works in stained glass to combine the techniques of water-jet-cutting, ceramic glaze-printing and lamination – each showing the aircraft in the same formation, but with different Spitfires illuminated in glorious colour.

In the ceramic glaze-printed cloud – a digital reproduction of one of Clarke's oil paintings – the silhouettes of 16 Spitfires can be seen. The seven coloured Spitfires, in various tones of pink and blue, have been cut from sheets of coloured antique (mouth-blown) glass.



Caption: Brian Clarke (b. 1953), *Spitfires* (2017), digital print in ceramic paint on glass, with seven water-jet-cut antique glass Spitfires laminated verso, 800 x 800 mm. Donated to The Stained Glass Museum by the artist.
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Spitfires is one of the first 21st century works to be acquired by The Stained Glass Museum, whose collection spans from medieval to the modern period.

Brian Clarke was born in Oldham in 1953. He is best known for radically updating and innovating the medium of stained glass, but is also celebrated for paintings, sculpture, mosaic and tapestry. Since the early 1970s, he has collaborated with some of the world's most prominent architects, including Norman Foster and the late Zaha Hadid, to create stained glass designs and installations for hundreds of projects worldwide.

For more information visit www.instagram.com/brian.clarke_

About The Stained Glass Museum

The Stained Glass Museum, the United Kingdom's only museum dedicated to the art of stained glass, is housed in the south triforium of Ely Cathedral. The Prince of Wales, the museum's patron, visited the collection in 2018 in anticipation of this year's 40th anniversary. The museum houses an internationally significant collection of windows spanning eight centuries, illustrating the development of the art from the medieval period to the present day.

The Stained Glass Museum, South Triforium, Ely Cathedral, Ely, CB7 4DL

For more information visit www.stainedglassmuseum.com

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