What do you get when you mix bright colors, melted sand, and sunshine?

The magic of a stained-glass window!

Let's look at two stained-glass windows in the Museum.
MEDIEVAL ART GALLERIES

Stained-glass windows can tell stories or be decorative. They can be in public buildings or private homes. Sunshine from outside makes them sparkle inside, showing off their brilliant colors.

First, stand several yards away from the window.

Most vertical windows of the European Middle Ages (300–1530 A.D.) are read from bottom to top. Like a comic book, people and objects in the story are often repeated.

This window is pieced together from two different ones made for the same chapel. The windows illustrated Saint Vincent’s life and the history of his relics. The main story in this window is about the Roman Governor Dacian ordering two henchmen to capture and torture Saint Vincent.

Start at the bottom:

1. Can you find Dacian with his sword? What are the henchmen carrying with which to capture Saint Vincent?
2. Can you find Saint Vincent? Hint: he is wearing a blue robe and has a halo.
3. Where else in the window do you see Saint Vincent, Dacian, and the henchmen?

Now, move closer to the window.

• The bold blue, a very popular medieval color, was made with cobalt.
• To create the horses’ manes, facial features, and folds in clothing the medieval artist painted on top of the glass.
• To make the deep red the artist mixed copper into the liquid glass.
• Notice that each figure and object in the picture is perfectly outlined with a lead strip called a came.

Now, move closer to the window. The artist Louis Comfort Tiffany used five different techniques to make this window. Can you find them? (The diagram will help you.) Match the numbers and letters.

W hich technique makes it look like sunlight is filtering through the leaves?

W hich makes the meandering stream look like it is moving?

W hich makes the look of dappled light on the large boulders?

W hich makes the bark on the green tree look so rough?

W hich technique creates the appearance of distant mountains?

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How do you make a stained-glass window?

1. melt sand and plant ash
2. mix in a powdered oxide to add color
3. make a cartoon (drawing) to plan how the window will look
4. cut pieces from whole glass
5. edge glass with came and fasten together
6. set into frame

You’re the artist: Make your own cartoon!

In the frame below create your own window cartoon. You may want to use colored pencil, watercolor, craypas, or crayon. Design a story or a decorative scene.