

A Bright Future for Stained Glass

Voice-over 1:

At the University of Ghent, physicists use tomography to unveil the morphology of a sample of stained glass from the thirteenth century, restored twenty years ago.

Manuel Dierick:

We can investigate, er, if the sample is globally damaged or just in small parts of the object. And because we are able to also investigate the inside structure, we can also study if the damage has gone deep into the object or just, er, marginally, er, to the outer surface of the object. In this case we can see that the glass itself is very homogeneous, but there are a few air inclusions inside. And here, on the outer edge, you can see starts of corrosion. The corrosion layer has a certain thickness, which is in this case relatively limited.

Voice-over 1:

Researchers can also understand how old and new restoration methods behave between the layers of glass.

Patric Jacobs:

The technique provides us with information on the weathering crust. How thick is the weathering crust? Is it still sticking to the glass or not? Is it flaking off from the glass? Another example is, most of the time, during conservation, pieces of glass have been put together with glue or with consolidants to consolidate them, to keep them together. And also, these consolidants and these glues, exposed to external weathering conditions, they deteriorate.

Voice-over 1:

And these measurements provide priceless information for the restorers.

Voice-over 2:

The knowledge and the images we provide, the analytical research, the knowledge of the material, and the transformation of the material, guide us in our work.

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