

MADELEINE IN GLASS

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In this glass-stained window, the figure of Magdalena is described as a modern and youthful woman with her hair freely flowing in the wind. She is depicted in a dynamic pose with an outstretched hand towards the center of a church window. The message conveyed through this artwork is: that it is perfectly alright to experience difficulties and lose faith momentarily. Magdalena is portrayed as a welcoming figure, extending her hand to the viewer unctuously. She's inviting you to join her and continue on the journey together. This is a powerful message, especially in light of recent events, such as the negative portrayal of the church. The image of a woman in the church, and in society, as a second-class citizen is challenged through this artwork. It sends a message of inclusiveness and support, encouraging the viewer to move forward.

Additionally, Magdalena is depicted half-turning, a reference to the Gospel of John, chapter 20 verse 16. In this verse, Magdalena recognizes Jesus and calls him "Rabouni, master". Augustine refers to this as a step in Magdalena's spiritual journey. In the original text, 'turning' is used in verses 14 and 16. There must be a reason the evangelist uses this because when she turned around, her back was to Jesus. Augustine sees two conversions in Mary Magdalene: the first time she looked, she followed, but she did not recognize him and did not believe. The second time, Mary turned spiritually and recognized who Jesus was. In this image she turns again, to be a guideline for those who, like her, perhaps did not see it the first time.

Mary Magdalene is often known as a prostitute, but she is also recognized as a woman who repented and turned to faith. We want to highlight her sensual character by keeping her hair red, in stark contrast to how saints are traditionally depicted with headscarves or dark hair. Mary Magdalene was not a saint, but rather a woman who had to endure a difficult life and survive in a patriarchal society.

The church window incorporates SYMBOLISM through different **colors**. Blues at the bottom left represent water and are associated with sadness, stability, trust, wisdom, and heaven. Shades of green at the bottom right reference the Earth and symbolize new beginnings, balance, and harmony. Green is also associated with healing, renewal, safety, growth, and development. Ferns, ivy, and a devil hiding among the bushes is representing one of the seven devils, Mary Magdalene chased away.

In the juxtaposition with the blue at the bottom left we play with red and orange tones. The passion. Life. The fire. Red is the color of strength and life, warmth, love, and passion. However, it can also represent daring and courage, anger, violence, and the devil.

The top left symbolizes the sky. The openness, the breathing, the zest for life, and the pleasure you get from this. Yellow also represents happiness, self-confidence, and wisdom. It is also a direct reference to the new logo of the Magdalena Church. The yellow or ocher

that was used in the logo returns here, the reference to earthly thinking, standing with your feet on the ground. Yellow also symbolizes the sun, life, happiness, bloom, well-being,...

Another way in which we load the window with symbolism is the **florals** used.

We place the flower wreath on Madeleine's head. This refers to nature, from which everything originated. In the neo-Gothic style (the other windows of the church) flowers were often depicted, crockets, finials, etc. The flowers that we want to associate with Mary Magdalene were not chosen by accident.

The peony: The word Peony comes from the word "Paieon". According to Homer, this was the doctor for the Greek gods. In the Middle Ages there was a belief that a peony could ward off evil and magic. According to them, the peony could also render the devil powerless. Today the peony represents love, happiness, prosperity and romance.

The rose is also associated with a hidden message: "Always try to act honestly and respectfully, don't be afraid to admit your mistakes and share your love with as many others as possible." A message that Madeleine naturally shares. The rose represents passion, love, lust. A red rose represents love and respect, a pink rose represents happiness, gratitude and purity.

This flower received one of its first mentions in printing by a Brabant plant expert. Rembert Dodoens compiled the "Cruyde Book" in 1554.

- We also **make a reference to Islam**, because according to them Mohammed hung his shirt on a tree, and this tree was so honored that he transformed into a geranium. A geranium also represents ingenuity, but also as an invitation for a meeting or friendship.
- The climbing bindweed: This is a plant that was often used in ancient times to make religious objects. It was also often used for medicinal purposes. Another meaning is "uncertainty". It also represents affection, vitality, alertness, help to break old habits.
- sweet-smelling lathyrus or sweet pea: This flower represents both pleasure and farewell, but also sensitivity and friendship.

In the right lancet we also cover the window with flowers:

Ferns: Ferns were once considered powerful, mystical plants. They were often sold because they would protect you from the devil. Here we also make a nod to the history of glass art. In the past, ferns were used to produce glass.

Ivy: This is an evergreen plant. That is why it symbolizes eternal life. Due to its strong roots, it also stands for loyalty and tenacity, but also for victory and (male) strength. In Ancient Egypt the plant represented Osiris, who stood for immortality.

A third way in which we bring symbolism to the window is **the ointment jar** with cloth in the lobe. This involves making a clear, simple reference: "This is Madeleine."

Mary Magdalene is a multifaceted figure in the Gospels. She is like a diamond with many different angles and that is why she represents so many of us. Each of us can identify with one of her facets. We want to highlight this complexity and never-ending change in the stained glass window. The window being created in this neo-Gothic church should also demonstrate the progress in glass art. Just as Mary Magdalene cannot be dismissed as a historical figure, we want to show that glass art, especially in Bruges, is not an art form of the past.

Our aim is to blend classic techniques like stained glass and fire painting with newer methods like sandblasting and fusing. This combination results in an interesting mix of different techniques that exist today. We also use the traditional fire painting technique in a unique way to give it a modern touch. Our team utilizes a variety of lead thicknesses to create extra dynamics in the window, which guides the viewer's attention towards different elements.

In addition, we have utilized the variety of glass types and production methods available today to create a unique window design. By combining mouth-blown and industrially produced glass, we have achieved a window that is rich in texture. We have used different types of glass such as transparent plain glass, water glass, structured glass, opal glass and more.

Since the time of Gregory the Great, many artists have depicted Mary Magdalene as a sinner who was forgiven. Veronese, for instance, portrays her washing Jesus' feet with her hair during Simon's meal. However, the Bible does not explicitly state that this woman was Mary Magdalene. In Veronese's typically exuberant style, she is seen in a red dress at the feet of Jesus.

During the 16th century, many artists painted Mary Magdalene as a sinful woman. One of the most famous depictions is by Titian. Mary Magdalene is also often portrayed meeting Jesus after his resurrection. In one such scene, when she wants to touch him, Jesus forbids her (*noli me tangere*). Rembrandt painted this scene next to Jesus' tombstone.

Mary Magdalene's name has been making rounds lately, with references to her in works of art such as Marlene Dumas and David LaChapelle's pieces about the 'independent woman.' Additionally, the Da Vinci Code has also brought her into the limelight, causing her to become a well-known figure, even among non-believers. However, we want to distance ourselves from this image of Mary Magdalene. We believe that she should be free to represent anyone, and that's why we associate her with Madeleine, who represents the inviting woman. This way, she becomes the symbol of the new church, one that is welcoming and inclusive.

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