

Holy Land

Texts on the inauguration of the glass window on 20 October 2012

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All good things come in threes.

In the Christian numerical symbolism of the Middle Ages, the number three which has been a holy number since ancient times is a symbol for God and the theme for the glass-painted triptych "Holy Land" by Otmar Alt.

In the pattern and colouration typical for Otmar Alt and with his own particular imagination, he created this unbelievably complex work of art consisting of nearly 400 (!) pieces of glass and about 60 different shades of colour in three parts: Jerusalem, the Nativity and the Bible.

Jerusalem .

When looking at the colourful abstract representation of the city, a song text by J.M. Meyfart comes immediately to mind:

Jerusalem

Du hochgebaute Stadt (you high-built city)

Wollt' Gott, ich wär in dir! (would God I stayed within)

Wonderful, how Otmar Alt depicts the magnificent house fronts with the splendid gardens made of nearly 200 pieces of glass. The religious importance of Jerusalem can be sensed, as the city of the four monotheistic abrahamic religions, Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Bahaism.

The Nativity

A birth is a reason for joy, it makes us celebrate and be merry. A whole new way of celebrating Christmas?

Not everywhere does Christmas mean celebration and joy.

Unlike in Otmar Alt's "Nativity". A birthday party with joyfully celebrating people can be seen.

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, the everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." (Isaiah, 9,6)

The prophet Isaiah foretold this about 2,500 years ago; he wrote about a light, a hope und a new beginning which will liberate the people from their desolation and their powerlessness. It is ingenious how Otmar Alt succeeds in creating this light mentioned by the prophet Isaiah in his glass window with its brilliant colours: The child that is born brightens the darkest night.

The Bible

Otmar Alt's pictorial language consisting of formal elements and the colours characteristic of him dominates the third part, but with a difference to the first two parts. In the third part, he dispenses with all figurative representation and thus respects the ban on pictures of the Old Testament. In the segment "The Bible", Otmar Alt concentrates only on colours and symbolism, with 72 pieces of glass.

In Alexandria, the Torah, the five books of Moses, was translated from Hebrew into Greek in 72 days by 72 Jewish scholars. The number 72 was rounded down to 70 (Septuaginta) and is a reminder of the 70 chosen people who were endowed with God's spirit to help Moses in administering justice.

With his glass-painted triptych "Holy Land" made in the glass-painting workshop Oidtmann in Linnich, the oldest still operating workshop in Germany, Otmar Alt created an artistic gem. There are glass windows from the family business Oidtmann in Linnich, founded in 1857, in the cathedrals of Aachen, Hildesheim and Cologne, in the Paulskirche in Frankfurt, in Beit-Jala/Israel, El Monte/California, Kopavagur and Skalholt/Iceland, Nagasaki and Yokohama/Japan, Cairo (German school) and in the Victoria and Albert Museum/London (these are only a few examples).