

GLENCAIRN MUSEUM



Glencairn Museum houses a renowned collection of religious art and artifacts. Objects from a variety of cultures and time periods – including ancient Egyptian, ancient Greek and Roman, medieval Christian, Islamic, Asian and American Indian – are interpreted within their religious context as expressions of belief and practice.

The Pitcairn collection of medieval stained glass and sculpture is considered to be one of the country's finest. The collection is unique in that the pieces were selected and purchased by Raymond Pitcairn as inspirational models for the artists working on Bryn Athyn Cathedral.

While Glencairn today is as a museum of religious art and history, it was the Pitcairn's family home for 40 years. Pitcairn designed Glencairn as Romanesque-style "castle" for his outstanding collection of medieval objects, several of which he built into the fabric of the building. Visitors also experience magnificent, handcrafted creations in stone, wood, stained glass, metal and mosaic, produced on-site during Glencairn's construction.



Glencairn Museum, founded in 1878, has been called “the first ever museum of religion.” The collection includes objects from the Ancient Near East, Ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome, medieval Europe, Asia and the Islamic world. According to Philippe de Montebello, former director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the “art that was assembled by Raymond Pitcairn... represents the world’s finest and most extensive collection of medieval sculpture and stained glass still in private hands.”

Relief from Palace of Assurnasirpal II

This large Neo-Assyrian wall relief is one of several in Glencairn’s collection from the Northwest Palace of Assurnasirpal II (883-859 BC) in Nimrud, Iraq. The Northwest Palace is one of the most important monuments to have survived from the Ancient Near East. The *apkallē* (or “genii”) depicted on the walls of the building have been identified as otherworldly beings, due to their wings and horned headdresses. They were positioned at crucial entrances in order to magically protect the palace. Glencairn is currently participating in a project to create a 3D-digital reconstruction of the entire palace.



Ancient Egyptian Libation Bowl

This black granite libation bowl from the Egyptian New Kingdom (1550-1070 BC) is perhaps the most striking and well-preserved example of its kind in the world. A woman leans over the bowl’s basin to make an offering to the goddess Hathor. It was purchased by Raymond Pitcairn in 1923, and in 1939 the bowl was installed in a special granite niche at Glencairn, with a large glass mosaic as a backdrop.

Roman Statue of the Goddess Minerva-Victoria

This Roman statue, made in the 2nd century, represents Minerva-Victoria, the Roman goddess Minerva in the guise of Victory. Both the Greeks and the Romans deified the idea of victory. Within the past few years, a 5th-century BC Greek original of this statue has come to light. In the spring of 2014, the two statues were the subject of a symposium in Italy. Glencairn's Minerva-Victoria provides scholars a rare opportunity to examine an original Greek sculpture alongside a later Roman adaptation.



Medieval “King Window”

Raymond Pitcairn began collecting medieval stained glass and sculpture in order to inspire the craftsmen at Bryn Athyn Studios to create original works of art of the same outstanding quality for Bryn Athyn Cathedral, and later for Glencairn. In 1921 he made a record-breaking purchase when he obtained a colorful stained glass panel depicting a king from a 13th-century window at Soissons Cathedral in France. This purchase established Pitcairn as a figure of international importance, competing with other wealthy collectors for the best objects.

Hand-carved Teakwood Bed

Frank Jeck, a Czechoslovakian woodworker who worked at both Bryn Athyn Cathedral and Glencairn, carved this teakwood bed for the Pitcairns’ master bedroom in the early 1930s. On the corner posts of the bed are carved pairs of doves, symbolizing love in marriage. Around the base is engraved a passage from Raymond and Mildred’s wedding ceremony: “Unite our hearts in love to one another and to Thee. Give us one heart, one mind, one way.”

