

Beadmaking Presentation and Demonstration Outline

This Outline was developed in response to requests from ISGB members who have been asked to demonstrate glass beadmaking. Margie Shanahan's original presentation, which she has used for a number of years when demonstrating for high school art classes and adult art groups as well as other organizations, is the basis of this Outline. It has been refined and expanded by the following members of the ISGB Student Outreach Committee: Susan Matych-Hager, chair; Margie Shanahan; Allison Johnson; Kendra Bruno; and Hayley Tsang Sather.

Can be used in schools as well as for other venues (40-50 minutes)

Preparation

1. Gather appropriate ISGB materials (Student Membership card – request from ISGB's home office, Consumer Brochure – purchase from ISGB), your card/postcard, local bead group information. Be sure to leave enough time to get items ordered/requested.
2. Prepare samples for "show and tell": Glass rods, beads, finished jewelry in small trays to pass around or to share near you. Some venues may ask that trays not be passed around but kept close to you for safety/security.
3. Prepare all other items (torch, fuel, glass, tools, materials, etc.) for demonstration.

Presentation

It is helpful to practice the presentation a number of times.

Incorporating information with demonstration is an excellent way to keep audience's attention.

Discussing the steps as you create your bead adds interest.

Introduction

Introduce yourself – how you started, how long you have been making beads, and anything else related to glass/beads. You may want to ask how many in the audience have ever seen a bead being made.

Bead History

This can be very brief. Glass beads have been found in ancient burial sites in Egypt, Greece, etc. Beads have been used for embellishment and trade for a long time all around the world. Murano (near Venice) is considered the epicenter of all things glass. The current American bead movement and renaissance can be tracked to a meeting in Arizona in 1993 when some beadmakers got together and promised to share techniques rather than hide them (this was also the beginning of ISGB).

Pull Stringer/Make Twisties/Make Frit (using the paddle/water technique*)

Talk about preparation and the properties of glass. Embellishments often start as stringers, twisties, and frit.

Make a Round Bead

Talk about mandrels, bead release, torches, etc.

Embellish the Round Bead

Talk about different ways to embellish beads and the importance of heat control.

Make a Barrel Bead

Talk about tools such as handheld paddles as well as the importance of good shape and ends.

Embellish the Barrel Bead

Talk about the particular embellishments you're using.

Make a Sculptural Bead (fish, flower, angel, whatever works for you)

Talk about the different elements that make up the sculpture as you are building the piece.

If time permits, you can make additional beads; but leave time for questions.

* At the end of a rod, make a small thin lollipop of glass. Slowly reheat the lollipop in a circular motion taking care not to let the lollipop roll back onto itself. Plunge the lollipop into a small container of water (clear votive glass holders allow all to see what happens next). After a moment, the glass lollipop will shatter into pieces. The thinner the lollipop, the smaller the frit.